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# **MAIN GAME**

## **CREATURES**

### **Abomination**

"We arrived in the dead of night. We had been tracking the maleficar for days, and finally had him cornered... or so we thought.

As we approached, a home on the edge of the town exploded, sending splinters of wood and fist-sized chunks of rocks into our ranks. We had but moments to regroup before fire rained from the sky, the sounds of destruction wrapped in a hideous laughter from the center of the village.

There, perched atop the spire of the village chantry, stood the mage. But he was human no longer.

We shouted prayers to the Maker and deflected what magic we could, but as we fought, the creature fought harder. I saw my comrades fall, burned by the flaming sky or crushed by debris. The monstrous creature, looking as if a demon were wearing a man like a twisted suit of skin, spotted me and grinned. We had forced it to this, I realized; the mage had made this pact, given himself over to the demon to survive our assault."

—*Transcribed from a tale told by a former templar in Cumberland, 8:84 Blessed.*

It is known that mages are able to walk the Fade while completely aware of their surroundings, unlike most others who may only enter the realm as dreamers and leave it scarcely aware of their experience. Demons are drawn to mages, though whether it is because of this awareness or simply by virtue of their magical power in our world is unknown.

Regardless of the reason, a demon always attempts to possess a mage when it encounters one—by force or by making some kind of deal depending on the strength of the mage. Should the demon get the upper hand, the result is an unholy union known as an abomination. Abominations have been responsible for some of the worst cataclysms in history, and the notion that some mage in a remote tower could turn into such a creature unbeknownst to any was the driving force behind the creation of the Circle of Magi.

Thankfully, abominations are rare. The Circle has methods for weeding out those who are too at risk for demonic possession, and scant few mages would give up their free will to submit to such a bond with a demon. But once an abomination is created, it will do its best to create more. Considering that entire squads of templars have been known to fall at the hands of a single abomination, it is not surprising that the Chantry takes the business of the Circle of Magi very seriously indeed.

### **Arcane Horror**

"Upon ascending to the second floor of the tower, we were greeted by a gruesome sight: a ragged collection of bones wearing the robes of one of the senior enchanter. I had known her for years, watched her raise countless apprentices, and now she was a mere puppet for some demon."

—*Transcribed from a tale told by a templar in Antiva City, 7:13 Storm*

Demons, of course, have no form in our world. When they enter, either where the Veil is particularly thin or through blood magic summoning, they must take possession of a body.

When a pride demon takes control of the corpse of a mage, an arcane horror is born. Although they appear to be little more than bones, these are fierce creatures, possessing not only all the spellcasting abilities of a living mage, but also the capacity to heal and even command other animated corpses.

## **Archdemon**

"In Darkness eternal they searched,  
For those who had goaded them on,  
Until at last they found their prize,  
Their god, their betrayer:  
The sleeping dragon Dumat. Their taint  
Twisted even the false-god, and the whisperer  
Awoke at last, in pain and horror, and led  
Them to wreak havoc upon all the nations of the world:  
The first Blight."

—*Threnodies 8:7*

The false dragon-gods of the Tevinter Imperium lie buried deep within the earth, where they have been imprisoned since the Maker cast them down.

No one knows what it is that drives the darkspawn in their relentless search for the sleeping Old Gods. Perhaps it is instinct, as moths will fly into torch flames. Perhaps there is some remnant of desire for vengeance upon the ones who goaded the magisters to assault heaven. Whatever the reason, when darkspawn find one of these ancient dragons, it is immediately afflicted by the taint. It awakens twisted and corrupted, and leads the darkspawn in a full-scale invasion of the land: A Blight.

Urthemiel was once the Tevinter god of beauty. In ancient times, he was worshiped by musicians, artists, and poets. The Feast of Urthemiel was the grandest celebration of the year, an event that lasted a full twelve days. Plays and entire symphonies were written in his honor. Now, he is a maddened husk of his former self, filled with nothing but a desire to destroy all life.

When the first Blight began, many brave men and women threw themselves at Dumat, the first archdemon, trying to strike him down. But no matter the numbers, no matter their strength, he would always return. This was proof, some said, of his divine power.

But the Grey Wardens soon learned otherwise. Their tainted blood bound them to the archdemon, and they could hear it, feel it, as it died and was born anew, its spirit drawn to possess the nearest tainted creature. The darkspawn were mindless, soulless, empty shells of flesh that could be bent and remade in the dragon's image. But a man... a man's soul was not so malleable. When a Warden's hand struck a fatal blow against Dumat, the Old God's spirit was drawn not to a darkspawn but to the man who had slain him. In that moment, the souls of both the Warden and the archdemon were utterly destroyed. And the dragon rose no more. The Blight was over.

## **Ash Wraith**

Legend has it that when Andraste's Ashes were taken into hiding, some of her closest disciples gave themselves to the fire, that their restless souls might remain to guard her final resting place forever.

Whether they are the spirits of Andraste's disciples or merely Fade spirits, the temple that houses the Sacred Urn is filled with wraiths. Created from a burnt corpse, an ash wraith is a powerful and amorphous opponent able to lash and smother while being immune to most physical attacks. Even if successfully dispersed, it can reform at a later time. Magic is the only real way to fight such a creature, wind and ice attacks being the most useful.

They are capable of creating small whirlwinds that are devastating to anyone unfortunate enough to get close, and their touch leaves a person drained.

## **Bear**

"No beast is more beloved by Dirthamen than the bear. When the world was new, Dirthamen gave one secret to each creature to keep. The foxes traded their secrets to Andruil for wings. The hares shouted theirs to the treetops. The birds sold theirs for gold and silver. Only the bears kept Dirthamen's gift, deep within their dens, they slept the months away in the company of their secrets and nothing else.

When Dirthamen discovered what had been done with his gifts, he snatched the wings from the foxes, silenced the voices of the hares, and turned the birds into paupers. but the bears he honored for their steadfastness."

—*Transcribed from a Dalish tale, 9:8 Dragon.*

Normally, it is almost unheard of for bears to attack travelers. They are, in fact, so shy and so inactive during the day that most people never encounter a bear at all. However, should a bear be provoked, they are remarkably dangerous. The normally placid-seeming creatures become enraged, and can strike massive blows with their paws, capable of knocking a man off his feet.

## **Bronto**

"There's only two things a noble will step aside for: Paragons and angry brontos."  
—*Dwarven saying.*

This hulking beast was originally bred by the dwarven Shaperate as a beast of burden and food source, the rough equivalent to surface oxen and cows. Some versions of bronto have even been developed as dwarven mounts, valued far more for their sure-footedness and stamina than for their speed. While present within Orzammar in large numbers, some bronto still exist in packs within the Deep Roads, having returned to a wild state after the fall of the dwarven kingdoms. They require remarkably little sustenance, consuming organic material from water, fungus and even rocks (hence the "rock-licker" appellation used by many dwarves to describe bronto), and exist in primarily dormant states until provoked. An angry, charging bronto is considered to be a rather dangerous opponent.

## **Broodmother**

It is well-known that darkspawn carry off those captured in their raids to underground lairs. Most assume that the prisoners are eaten, or somehow tainted and turned into darkspawn themselves, though this could never account for the sheer numbers of the horde. Forays made by Grey Wardens into the underground have uncovered the answer.



When exposed to the darkspawn taint, men are driven mad and eventually die. Women, however, undergo great pain and gross mutations that cause most of them to perish. Those that survive, however, become the grotesque broodmothers. These giant, twisted behemoths birth many darkspawn at a time; a single broodmother can create thousands of darkspawn over the course of her lifetime. Each type of darkspawn is born from a different broodmother: Humans produce hurlocks, dwarves produce genlocks, elves give birth to shrieks, and from Qunari are born the ogres.

## Corpse

"To anyone who doubts the wickedness of blood magic, I say: With your own hands, strike down the corpses of your own brothers who have fallen in battle to a maleficar, then we may discuss morality."

—*Knight-Commander Benedictus, in a letter to the Divine, 5:46 Exalted.*

The walking dead are not, as superstition would lead you to believe, the living come back for revenge. They are, rather, corpses possessed by demons.

The shambling corpse, controlled by a demon of sloth, causes its enemies to become weak and fatigued. Corpses possessed by rage demons go berserk and simply wade into their opponents mindlessly. Devouring corpses are held by hunger demons and feed upon the living. The more powerful demons rarely deign to possess a dead host.

## Deepstalker

"A fool trusts his eyes. A wise man fears every rock is a deepstalker"

—*Dwarven saying.*

Possibly the strangest of all the creatures found in the Deep Roads is the deepstalker. Tezpadam, as the dwarves call them, hunt in packs, generally by burrowing underground and then striking when their prey is in their midst.

Stalkers come in several types. Spitters have venom glands and can spit secretions that slow or injure their prey. Jumpers hurl themselves at their targets, knocking them down and making the kill easier. The most common variety scares its prey, leaving the unfortunate victim helpless against the rest of the pack.

## Desire Demon

"In all my studies, I must say that the most intriguing was my interview with the desire demon. That the creature was willing to speak with me was a sign that this was no mere monster, mindlessly driven by its nature, but rather a rational being as interested in me as I was in it. It took a form that I would call female, though I had no doubt that it could appear otherwise. I wondered if it appeared as it did because I wanted it to or because I expected it to. She... and, indeed, I could only think of her as such now... smiled warmly at me and laughed a musical sound that seemed to thrill my old heart.

So frightened was I of this creature's legendary abilities to twist the hearts of men, and so relieved was I when I looked across the table into her dark eyes. This was a fearsome creature of the Fade, but as I spoke with her I slowly came to realize that this demon was merely as misunderstood as we mages are, ourselves."

—*From the journal of former Senior Enchanter Maleus, once of the Circle of Rivain, declared apostate in 9:20 Dragon.*

Of all the threats from beyond the Veil, few are more insidious and deceptively deadly than the desire demon. In folklore, such demons are characterized as peddlers of lust, luring their prey into a sexual encounter only to be slain at the culmination. While a desire demon can indeed deal in pleasure, in truth they deal with any manner of desire that humans can possess: wealth, power, and beauty, to name a few.

Far more intelligent than the bestial hunger and rage demons, and more ambitious than the demons of sloth, these dark spirits are among the most skilled at tempting mages into possession. Many who serve the whims of a desire demon never realize it. They are manipulated by illusions and deceit if not outright mind control, although these demons are reluctant to resort to such crude measures. Instead, they seem to take great pleasure in corruption. The greater the deceit, the greater their victory.

Only demons of pride prove more fearsome opponents when roused. Their abilities to affect the mind allow them to assume disguises and even alter the environment to their purposes, not to mention the great strength and speed they possess if they should have to resort to more physical means. Most often a desire demon will attempt to bargain its way to freedom if overpowered—many stories exist that depict mages defeating desire demons to the point where a wish can be wrested from them. It should be noted that in such stories the demon almost always gets the upper hand even when the mage thinks his wish has been granted.

## **Dragon**

### **Dragonlings**

Newly-hatched dragons are roughly the size of a deer and voraciously hungry. They live for a short time in their mother's lair before venturing out on their own. The slender, wingless creatures are born in vast numbers, as only a few ever make it to adulthood.

### **Drakes**

Male dragons never develop into the winged monsters of myth. At most, their forelegs grow the vestigial spurs where wing membrane might have been.

Once they have fully matured, males immediately seek out the lairs of adult females. When they find one, they move into her lair and spend the rest of their lives there, hunting for her and defending her young. They will aggressively defend her nest, and many would-be dragon hunters have been lost to their fiery breath and crushing blows from their tails.

### **Dragons**

Female dragons take much longer to mature than their male counterparts. They too undergo a metamorphosis of sorts at adulthood; But while males lose the use of their forepaws, females actually grow a third set of limbs specifically to serve as wings.

Young females travel great distances looking for a suitable nesting site. Because of their nomadic habits, these are the dragons most frequently encountered by man.

### **High Dragon**

A fully mature adult female dragon is the high dragon: the great monster of legend, the rarest of all dragonkind. These dragons hollow out massive lairs for themselves, for they need the space to house their harem of drakes as well as their eggs and the dragonlings.

High dragons are seldom seen. They spend most of their time sleeping and mating, living off the prey their drakes bring back. But once every hundred years or so, the high dragon prepares for clutching by emerging from her lair and taking wing. She will fly far and wide, eating hundreds of animals, most often livestock, over the course of a few weeks and leaving smoldering devastation in her wake. She then returns to her lair to lay her eggs and will not appear in the skies again for another century.

## **Genlock**

These are the most common darkspawn in the underground. Stocky and tough, genlocks are notoriously difficult to kill, even by magic.

## **Alphas**

In any group of genlocks, there is usually one who is dominant. As the tallest, strongest, and smartest of their kind, alphas serve as a sort of commander, directing or bullying the others in combat.

## **Emissaries**

The most intelligent of the alphas become gifted sorcerers, with many abilities akin to blood magic. These are the emissaries and they usually only appear during a Blight.

## **Ghoul**

What the Blight does not destroy, it corrupts.

Any creature infected with the darkspawn taint that does not have the good fortune to die outright becomes a ghoul: a twisted shadow of itself.

The name originally comes from men—whether human, dwarven, or elven—who became tainted, usually while being held as a captive food source by the darkspawn. They would turn cannibal, preying on other captives, slaves to the will of the archdemon, driven mad by pain.

During a Blight, the corruption of the darkspawn spreads through the wilder areas of Thedas and infects the animals found there. This produces grotesque, enraged bears called bereskarn as well as blight wolves.

Fortunately, ghouls rarely survive their corruption for long.

## **Golem**

Once a crucial part of Orzammar's defenses, golems have all but vanished as the secret to their manufacture was lost over a thousand years ago. What few golems remain are guarded closely by the Shaperate, brought out when the battle with the darkspawn grows desperate enough to risk their loss. No one now would sell a golem for any price, but in ancient times, dwarves sold many golems to the magister lords of Tevinter.

They are devastating weapons in war, living siege engines, capable of hurling boulders like a catapult or plowing through enemy lines like an earthquake.

## Halla

No creature is more revered by the Dalish than the halla. No other animal has a god of its own. These white stags are much larger than ordinary deer, and the Dalish halla keepers carve their antlers as they grow, making them curve into intricate designs. In ancient times, these stags bore elven knights into combat, but since the fall of the Dales, they are used less as mounts and more to pull the aravels.

## Hurlock

Taller than their genlock cousins, the hurlocks are roughly of human-size but are possessed of considerable strength and constitution. The shock troop of the darkspawn, a single berserking hurlock can often be a match for numerous opponents at once. They are known to adorn themselves with roughly-carved tattoos to keep track of their kills and deeds, though it is unknown whether or not there is a uniform standard to these markings.

## Alphas

Alpha hurlocks are more intelligent and more skilled fighters, often serving as commanders or even generals.

## Emissaries

Hurlock emissaries have also been known to appear during a Blight. These darkspawn are the only ones recorded as being capable of human speech and are often capable of employing magic.

## Mabari War Hound

Dogs are an essential part of Fereldan culture, and no dog is more prized than the mabari. The breed is as old as myth, said to have been bred from the wolves who served Dane. Prized for their intelligence and loyalty, these dogs are more than mere weapons or status symbols: The hounds choose their masters, and pair with them for life. To be the master of a mabari anywhere in Ferelden is to be recognized instantly as a person of worth.

The mabari are an essential part of Fereldan military strategy. Trained hounds can easily pull knights from horseback or break lines of pikemen, and the sight and sound of a wave of war dogs, howling and snarling, has been known to cause panic among even the most hardened infantry soldiers.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## Nug

"Hip deep in mad nugs.  
Our screams deafen their keen ears.  
We will be nug poop."

—*From Songs That Only Nugs can Hear by Paragon Ebryan, 5:84 Exalted*

The nug is an omnivore common to the Deep Roads, a hairless creature that is almost blind as well as completely docile. It spends most of its time wading in shallow pools as well as mud pits, feeding on small insects, worms, and (in a pinch) limestone and simple metals. Indeed, the digestive system of the nug is legendary, able to make a meal out of almost anything a nug finds on the cavern floors. Nugs reproduce rapidly, spreading into any niche within the Deep Roads they can find, and serve to support a variety of predators such as giant spiders and deepstalkers. So, too, do dwarves make meals out of them... nugs are, in the poorer slum portions of Orzammar, one of the most common sources of meat available. Some dwarves even domesticate the creatures, claiming to find the creature's high-pitched squeaks pleasing.

## Ogre

Towering over their darkspawn kin, the massive ogres are a rare sight on the battlefield. Traditionally, they only appear during a Blight, but some records claim that ogres have been spotted in the Deep Roads hunting alone or in small groups. At least one report by the Grey Wardens claims that an ogre was spotted alone in the Korcari Wilds in 9:19 Dragon, though it was weakened and easily dispatched. Up to a hundred of these creatures can accompany a darkspawn horde at any one time during a Blight, often using their great strength to burst through fortifications and demolish the front lines of the opposing army.

They use brute force to charge their enemies like bulls, slam the ground with their fists to shake enemies off their feet, and hurl great rocks into the face of oncoming foes. Melee can be difficult against a giant that snatches a warrior up in one hand, crushing the life out of him or beating him into oblivion with the other hand. The nimble can try to wiggle his way free, or an ally can attempt an array of stunning blows on an ogre to free the comrade in danger.

Grey Warden lore urges caution when slaying an ogre. Unless it is ensured that they have received a major wound to the head or the heart, it is possible that they are lying dormant and will regenerate to full health within a matter of minutes. During a Blight, most Grey Wardens recommend burning all darkspawn to ashes... "dead" ogres in particular.

## Pride Demon

"Let me explain what it is to face a **pride demon**, my friends.

You may scoff and say that our talents exist only to face mages, but you will encounter demons often. They will be summoned by a maleficar and bound to do his bidding, and while at times they will be forced into the possession of a host, they will also face you in their true form... a powerful opponent indeed. Do not underestimate it.

Pride is powerful, and intelligent. When we have encountered one in its true form, its most common attacks are bolts of fire and ice. Fire they will use to burn an opponent, and the magical flame will combust anything you wear regardless of make. Ice they will use to freeze an opponent in place—be cautious, for they enjoy employing this against warriors in particular. More than one group of templars has made the mistake of attempting to overwhelm a pride demon and suffered the consequences, believe me. And if you think that having the aid of other mages will assist you, you are wrong. Pride demons can render themselves immune to magic for short times, and are adept at dispelling magic that is cast upon you... as much as we templars are able to disrupt spells.

Think on that for a moment, my friends. Be wary of how prideful you become, lest you find too much in common with such a fiend."

—*Transcript of a lecture given by Vheren, templar-commander of Tantervale, 6:86 Steel*

## Rage Demon

Encountered in the Fade, the true form of a rage demon is a frightening sight: a thing of pure fire, its body seemingly made of amorphous lava and its eyes two pinpricks of baleful light radiating from its core. The abilities of such a demon center on the fire it generates. It burns those who come near, and the most powerful of its kind are able to lash out with bolts of fire and even firestorms that can affect entire areas.

Fortunately, even powerful rage demons are less intelligent than most other varieties. Their tactics are simple: attack an enemy on sight with as much force as possible until it perishes. Some rage demons carry over their heat-based abilities into possessed hosts, but otherwise the true form is mostly seen outside of the Fade when it's specifically summoned by a mage to do his bidding.

*-Transcript of a lecture given by Vheren, Templar-Commander of Tantervale, 6:86 Steel*

## Rat

"What are you, mad? Even the most giant of rats isn't going to present that much of a problem to anyone larger than a cat. Even the stories in the archives that tell of Blight-touched rats still only attributed them with the ability to spread the plague. The rats themselves got no larger than perhaps three feet in length, covered in sharp bony spikes and boils. Disturbing, certainly, but dangerous? This is no fantasy conjured by madmen, young man! You have much more important creatures to concern yourself with!"

*—Transcript of a lecture given by Nalia, Senior Enchanter of Hossberg, 8:44 Blessed (Note: she was later eaten by a Blight Rat in 8:46 Blessed)*

## Revenant

An entire unit of men, all slain by one creature. I didn't believe it at first, your Perfection, but it appears that this is so. We have a survivor, and while at first I thought his rantings pure exaggeration... it appears to be no simple skeleton. The descriptions of the creature's abilities were eerily similar to those our brothers at Marnas Pell encountered almost a century ago: men pulled through the air to skewer themselves on the creature's blade, and attacks so quick that it was able to assault multiple opponents at once. No, your Perfection, what we have here is indeed a revenant and nothing less.

*—From a letter to Divine Amara III, 5:71 Exalted.*

A revenant is a corpse possessed by a demon of pride or of desire... making it amongst the most powerful possessed opponents that one can face. Many possess spells, but most are armed and armored and prefer the use of their martial talents. They are weak against physical attacks but regenerate quickly, and commonly use telekinesis to pull opponents into melee range should they try to flee. Revenants also have the ability to strike multiple opponents surrounding them. Stay at range if possible and strike quickly—that is the only way to take such a creature down.

## Shade

"It has often been suggested that the only way for a demon to affect the world of the living is by possessing a living (or once living) body, but this is not always true. Indeed, a shade is one such creature: a demon in its true form that has adapted to affect the world around it.

My hypothesis is this: we already know that many demons become confused when they pass through the Veil into our world. They are unable to tell the living from the dead, the very static nature of our universe being confusing to a creature that is accustomed to a physicality defined entirely by emotion and memory. Most demons seek to immediately seize upon anything they perceive as life, jealously attempting to possess it—but what of those that do not? What of those that encounter no life, or fail to possess a body? What of those that are more cautious by their nature?

These demons watch. They lurk. They envy.

In time, such a demon will learn to drain energy from the psyche of those it encounters, just as it did in the Fade. Once it has drained enough, it has the power to manifest and will forever after be known as a shade. Such a creature spurns possession. It instead floats as a shadow across its piece of land, preying upon the psyche of any who cross its path. Perhaps it believes itself still in the Fade? There is evidence to believe that is so.

A shade will weaken the living by its very proximity. If it focuses its will, it can drain a single target very quickly. Some have even been known to assault the minds of a living victim, causing confusion or horror and making the target ripe for the kill. The tragedy of a shade is perhaps that, once it has drained a target whole, its appetite is only heightened rather than slaked."

*—From the journal of former Senior Enchanter Maleus, once of the Circle of Rivain, declared apostate in 9:20 Dragon Age.*

## **Shriek**

Scholars call these tall, lean darkspawn the sharlock, though they are more popularly known as shrieks because of the ear-splitting cries they emit in battle. Many tales exist of soldiers being unnerved by the sounds of approaching shrieks, cloaked in darkness and never seen until the moment they strike.

As horrors of the night, shrieks are renowned for their incredible speed and agility as well as their stealth. They are the assassins of the darkspawn, penetrating the enemy lines and striking their targets using long, jagged blades attached to their forearms to rip their opponent to shreds in seconds. They have been known to employ poison, often drawn from their own blood, and have demonstrated cunning group tactics when attacking in numbers.

## **Skeleton**

The demons of the Fade are jealous of the world they sense from across the Veil. They constantly push against the boundaries of the Fade, and when they finally cross over, they attempt to possess the first living creature they see. They are unable, however, to distinguish that which was once living from that which still is... in fact, a corpse provides an even more tempting target to a weaker demon as it has no will with which to resist the possession. The demon cannot rationalize why this is so; it only sees a target and grasps at the opportunity.

A skeleton is exactly that: a corpse animated by a possessing demon. Upon finding itself trapped within a body that cannot sustain it, the demon is driven insane... it seeks to destroy any life that it encounters, attacking without thought to its own welfare.

The exact names given to skeletons of this type vary according to the nature of the demons that possesses it. A "fanged skeleton" is a skeleton possessed by a hunger demon. These skeletons devour whatever life they encounter and often possess the ability to drain life energy and mana from their victims. A "shambling skeleton" is a slower-moving skeleton possessed by a sloth demon, able to bring entropic powers against its opponents, slowing them and even putting them to sleep. More powerful demons have been known to command skeletons, but at that level they are known by other names: revenants and arcane horrors, to name two.

## **Sloth Demon**

"And I looked at the creature and it had become me. A veritable copy of my form, of my very mind, stared back at me as if from within a mirror. I thought surely that this was a trick, an illusion meant to put me off guard... but as I engaged the thing with my sword it fought me with maneuvers that I recognized. It parried as I parried; it swung as I swung. It spoke to me and said things that only I could know. I... I think this demon of sloth has no form or identity of its own. It is envy as much as sloth, I believe, and mine was not the first shape it stole that day."

*—An excerpt from a transcribed deposition of Tyrenus, templar-commander of Cumberland, 3:90 Towers.*

The most difficult assumption for some who study demons to overcome is the notion that a sloth demon is, in and of itself, slothful. If that were so, it seems highly unlikely that any such demons would cross the Veil into our own world, or once here would fight to possess any creature with a will of its own—and we know both these things to not be the case. Certainly, some demons are lazy and complacent, but who knows? Perhaps these creatures even cultivate such a reputation.

The truth is that demons of sloth are named so because this is the portion of the human psyche that they feed upon. Doubt. Apathy. Entropy. They seek to spread these things. The sloth demon hides in its forms, a master of shapes and disguises, always in the last place you look... and from its hiding place it spreads its influence. A community afflicted by a demon of sloth could soon become a dilapidated pit where injustices are allowed to pass without comment, and none of the residents could be aware that such a change has even taken place. The sloth demon weakens, tires, tears at the edges of consciousness and would much rather render its victim helpless than engage in a true conflict. Such creatures are best faced only with a great deal of will, and only with an eye to piercing their many disguises.

## **Giant Spider**

Giant spiders tend to appear in old ruins and other places where the Veil has become thin because of magical disturbances or a great number of deaths. In such places, spirits and demons pass into the world of the living and attempt to take control over living beings, spiders among them. Not all scholars accept this explanation for the presence of these beasts, however. Some claim that the thinning Veil allows magic to "leak" from the Fade, tainting such creatures as these spiders to transform into larger and more potent creatures than they ever would become naturally. While such spiders are known to possess powerful poisons and the ability to fling their webs at opponents in combat, studies of them have been few and the full range of their abilities are unknown.



Corrupted spiders are giant arachnids that originally grew in the depths of the Deep Roads, feeding on numerous species of large bats. When the Deep Roads were lost to the darkspawn, they began to feed on the numerous genlocks and their numbers grew exponentially... as did their size. The darkspawn taint has become a permanent part of their system, passed on to their progeny. This has had the effect of increasing their size abnormally, as well as their aggressiveness. Some corrupted spiders have made their lairs in surface forests, but most remain underground, close to their Blight-tainted meals.

## Wild Sylvan

For demons crossing over into our world, mankind is not always the preferred prey. Possessing humans means risking encounters with powerful mages and templars, as well as other complications. Some demons find it far easier to seek out animals or even plants, assuming that these will make as suitable a host as a human. Those that possess trees are known as wild sylvans.

Generally, only demons of rage, the weakest of the demon hierarchy, will become a sylvan. Once they do, they must spend a great deal of time twisting and molding the host in order to make it mobile, and once they have the sylvan is a powerful and deadly opponent. Other, more intelligent, spirits have also been known to become sylvans, and are generally much less violent, but these are rare.

Slow but immensely powerful, wild sylvans prefer to lay in ambush, waiting for a victim to become lost, tired, or trapped before closing in for the kill. They hide among regular trees, nearly undetectable until they begin to move and to reach. When they do "come to life" as some travelers say, they stand tall, roots forming into legs and feet and branches stretching out into lashing arms.

When not presented with a living target, however, it has been noted that sylvans often fall into a form of dormancy, perhaps brought on by the nature of their tree host. While mobile, they normally return to wherever they were rooted once their prey has been killed. For both these reasons, a forest that has sylvans within can become incredibly dangerous to pass through for very long periods of time.

## Werewolf

"And Dane he stood his ground,  
The fanged beast approached.  
He saw the rage within its eyes,  
The wolf that once was there.  
The sword he raised,  
Merciful death be praised,  
To the maker went his prayer."

—*From the popular telling of Dane and the Werewolf, a legend of Ferelden circa 4:50 Black.*

Fereldan lore is full of instances where these creatures have plagued the countryside: wolves possessed by rage demons and transformed into humanoid monsters with incredible speed and strength, able to spread a curse to those they bit that would drive them mad with unthinking fury. When in this enraged state, a human host can likewise become possessed and be transformed into a feral, wolf-like beast. Tales differ on these werewolves of human origin, some claiming that their transformation into a bestial form happens uncontrollably. Some claim the transformation is irreversible. As is often the case with demonic tales, both versions were most likely true at some point.

The ability of normal dogs to detect a werewolf even when it is in a human guise is what first led Fereldans to adopt dogs as indispensable companions in every farmhold. The alliance between humans and regular wolves is the subject of the popular Fereldan folk tale "Dane and the Werewolf."

The actual hero Dane led a crusade to eliminate the werewolf threat during the early Black Age, and while werewolves have never assumed the same prominence since, there have still been reports of individual packs lurking in remote forests. In recent years, some have even been reported to have developed an uncanny willpower and intelligence... though why this is so is still unknown.

## Wisp

"A great deal is made of the most powerful demons, those that create abominations and those that have changed the history of Thedas. It is often forgotten that not all demons are such awe-inspiring beings. Some that break through the cracks in the Veil into our world are known as wisps, a sliver of a thought that once was. A wisp is a demon that has lost its power; either it has existed in our world for too long without finding a true host or it has been destroyed—often, so we've found, by other demons. What remains of its mind clings tightly to the one concept that created it—a hatred of all things living.

While its ability to target a living creature is limited, these wisps often mindlessly attack when encountered in the Fade. In the living world, they often have been known to maliciously lure the living into dangerous areas, being mistaken for lanterns or other civilized light sources. This does, however, seem to be the very limit of their cunning."

*—From the journal of former Senior Enchanter Maleus, once of the Circle of Rivain, declared apostate in 9:20 Dragon Age.*

## Wolf

"It is rather unfair, the reputation that the wolf possesses in Ferelden. For a people that so clearly adore their hounds, Fereldans simultaneously harbor a distrust of wolves that borders on the unreasonable. Unreasonable, that is if one were not familiar with the ancient legends regarding werewolves. There was a time in Ferelden's past when demons inhabited the bodies of wolves in great numbers, causing the wars against werewolves and spreading great fear and panic. The werewolves were slain, but even today the noble wolf is still looked upon with distrust."

*—From Legends of Ferelden, by Mother Ailis of Denerim, 9:10 Dragon.*

An attack by wolves upon civilized folk happens rarely, often only in times of desperation and even then only when the wolves have the advantage of numbers. This can change during a Blight. When darkspawn rise onto the surface their presence dramatically alters the savage nature of normal beasts.

In Blights past, as the corruption of the darkspawn spread through the wilder areas of Thedas, it would infect the animals found there... and the more powerful of them would survive and be transformed into a more vicious and dangerous beast. A blight wolf is one such example, mad with the pain of its infection, and only through the overriding command of the darkspawn does it still retain some semblance of its pack instincts. Blight wolves are always found in large groups and will tend to overwhelm a single target if they can, using their numbers to their advantage. It is fortunate that these creatures rarely survive their corruption for very long.

## **Mabari Dominance**

Mabari hounds are descended from pack hunters, and like their ancestors, they are highly influenced by a defined order of dominance. The primary method of determining that order is by claiming territory through scent-marking major landmarks. Once established, the dominant mabari gains a substantial increase in confidence and stature within his territory, a trait that indirectly benefits master as well as hound.

## **ITEMS**

### **The Litany of Adralla**

Adralla of Vyrantium dedicated her life to the study of blood magic—the academic study, rather than the practice. A deeply pious mage, she was renowned in her day for having found a counter to every form of mind control, a defense against dream walkers, and even counter-spells to demonic summons.

Her efforts went unappreciated in her native Tevinter, however. After three different magisters attempted to have her killed, she fled the country, choosing to take refuge in the land of Blessed Andraste's birth. She spent the remainder of her days with the Circle in Ferelden.

The Litany of Adralla disrupts the casting of mind-control spells. Use the Litany whenever a creature tries to dominate another with magic, and it will interrupt the casting. Once the spell is in effect and a character is under a blood mage's power, it is too late.

### **Archons of the Imperium**

Archon Darinius of Tevinter journeyed deep into the lightless realm of dwarves and there forged a covenant with Endrin Stonehammer, lord of the dwarven empire. As a symbol of their pact, Endrin gave the archon a pair of rings—one that shone like the evening star, and one as luminous as the dawn. So long as the rings were united, Darinius need fear nothing, for the friendship of the dwarves is a mighty sword and shield.

The archon wore the rings of Dawn and Dusk for 20 years, never removing them, and when he died, they were cut from his fingers by magisters squabbling over his vacant throne, then separated, and finally lost.

*—From a Book formerly in the possession of a hermit.*

### **Havard's Aegis**

Havard was Maferath's closest friend. They were children together in the same Avvar clan. They fought side-by-side in so many battles that Maferath dubbed him, "Havard the Aegis", better to have at his side than any shield.

Maferath brought Havard with him to meet with the Tevinters; it was unthinkable to stand before his enemies without his Aegis.

When he understood that Maferath was giving Andraste over to be executed, Havard, unwilling to draw swords against his friend and liege, placed himself between Andraste and the Tevinter soldiers. The Tevinters struck him down, and Maferath left him for dead.

But Aegis was not so easily destroyed. Havard lived and made his way, gravely wounded, to the gates of Minrathous to stop the execution. Too late. He found only the ashes of the prophet, left to the wind and rain. When his fingers touched the ash, his ears filled with song, and he saw a vision of Andraste dressed in cloth of starlight. She knelt at his side, saying, "Rise, Aegis of the Faith, the Maker shall never forget you so long as I remember."

His wounds healed instantly. And with new strength, Havard gathered up Andraste's remains and carried them safely back to the lands of the Alamarri.

### **Ancient Elven Armor**

Before the fall of Arlathan, even before Arlathan itself, the civilization of the elves stretched across all of Thedas like a great, indolent cat.

This armor was made for temple guards in a time when the Creators still spoke to the elves. The techniques of its forging, even the name of the metal it is forged from, have long since faded from memory.

### **Aodh**

Long ago, a soldier from Gwaren was returning home after twenty years at war. He had sold his sword for passage to Denerim and had to make his way through the Brecilian Forest with nothing to his name but a single crust of bread.

On his way, he met an old blind woodcutter sitting on a tree stump. "Here is someone worse off than myself," said the soldier, and he gave the old man his last scrap of bread. The old man blessed him, and gave the soldier his axe in return.

The soldier went on his way, and soon night fell. He made his bed in a tree branch and held the woodcutter's axe at his side to ward against beasts and bandits. When the moon was high, he was awakened by the sound of weeping. "Show yourself!" he shouted, for try as he might, the soldier could find no one nearby.

"Help me," spoke the tree in which he'd been sleeping, "A mage transformed me into this shape, and I will never be set free. If you had any pity in you, you would cut me down so that my spirit could go to the Maker."

So the soldier took up his axe and struck the tree. The cuts bled like wounds, and soon hot blood covered the axe and burned the soldier's hands. But he held tightly to the axe and felled the tree. The tree shattered when it hit the ground, and from the splinters rose a demon, who bowed to the soldier and vanished into the Fade.

The soldier was chilled to the bone, and could not sleep. In the morning, he found that the axe still burned like the blood of the sylvan, but despite its heat, he could not get warm again. They say he ended his days in Gwaren, cutting wood for his seven fireplaces, shivering and cursing the spirits.

### **Bard's Dancing Shoes**

The rules of the Grand Game are clear: Anything goes. If a noble cannot obtain the heights of prestige in the court by purchase, alliance, or deed, he can always obtain it by removing his rivals.

In this, bards have always been invaluable. Orlesians cannot do without music and dancing. Even when they know that half the musicians in their ballroom are spies in the employ of their enemies, they welcome the scoundrels with open arms. In fact, that makes music and musicians so much more popular, for it makes the Game more exciting.

## Blood Ring

There are clear signs that this ring was made in the Tevinter Imperium—it's covered in dragon motifs, for one thing. And it gives anyone who wears it a slightly uneasy feeling, for another. But beyond that, very little is known about it.

Warriors of House Ivo took this ring in the Blessed Age from the hand of a madman, a surfer mage who had wandered into the underground and attacked lyrium miners near Orzammar. From there, the ring changed hands many times, until its history had been lost and the dwarves no longer remembered how it had ever come into their lands.

## The Bow of the Golden Sun

There is no more famous ruler in history than Kordillus Drakon, first emperor of Orlais. Few, however, know the story of his empress.

Empress Area was the third of Lord Montlaures of Val Chevin's famously unmarried six daughters. When she met young Prince Kordilius, she was the captain of her father's archers and led the defense of Laures Castle. She was not the fairest of ladies, nor the most elegant or charming, but Area could shoot the wings off a bumblebee at one hundred paces. By all accounts, when the prince witnessed that particular feat, Drakon—who was not noted for his charm or elegance, and rather better known for his sword and shield—was instantly smitten.

On their wedding day, Drakon presented his bride with a golden bow crafted by the mages of Val Royeaux, so that they could ride into battle and spread the Light of the Maker side by side.

## Camene's Barbut

The Waking Sea Bannorn has been famous since time immemorial for its archers. Children there are given bows before they can walk, and parents have been known, on occasion, to disown their offspring for failure to hit bulls-eyes.

When Calenhad came to demand the Waking Sea's fealty, Bann Camene greeted her would-be king by shooting his horse out from under him half a league from Castle Eremon. Calenhad reached the gates on foot and found them barred, with dozens of archers watching him from the castle walls.

He waited outside the walls with his men until sunset, when Camene opened the gates and met him, armored to the teeth with her bow in hand. "You have proven you have sense and humility, Theirin. And no man can hope to lead the Bannorn without those gifts." She then knelt and swore her oath.

To this day, the Eremon family of the Waking Sea presents every newly crowned king or queen of Ferelden with two gifts: an arrow and a horse.

## Dark Moon

At Shartan's word, the sky Grew black with arrows. At Our Lady's, ten thousand swords Rang from their scabbards, A great hymn rose over Valarian Fields gladly proclaiming: Those who had been slaves were now free.

—*Shartan 10:1.*

They say that Shartan's followers stole whatever they could find to make weapons. They fought with knives of sharpened stone and glass, and with bows made from broken barrels or firewood. This bow was ox horn, made in secret over the course of months by a slave who worked in the slaughterhouses of Minrathous.

The slave's name has been lost to history, and the verses that spoke of his deeds, stricken from the chant, but the weapon endures.

### **Katriel's Grasp**

The Theirin family refused to die.

This was a problem for the Empire, for the stubborn Fereldans would not accept Orlesian rule so long as some vagabond in the woods could call himself their king.

So the Orlesian court sent their agents in Ferelden a gift: A bard by the name of Katriel, to assassinate the surviving Prince Maric.

She did not, of course, succeed, but that's another story.

### **The Life Drinker**

No one knows for certain where this amulet came from. All we have is a legend:

Long before the Golden City turned black, there lived in the Tevinter Imperium a frail old magician in the court of the archon. He was the least among the mages of the court, the lamp-lighter, whose task it was to set all the thousands of candles alight and snuff them again when the archon retired for the evening. He was counted as useless by all the most influential magisters.

But he was only biding his time.

One day, when all the magisters of the Imperium were assembled in the great hall of the archon, the lamp-lighter struck. He conjured a massive fire storm in the hall, trying to assassinate all who were assembled and seize power himself. The court was made up of the most powerful mages of the Imperium, and they worked quickly to destroy the would-be usurper, but found, to their astonishment, their magic was no match for the old mage. Every spell they cast was countered, and the magisters began to fall, one by one, until only the archon himself and the lamp-lighter were left, locked in a battle of magic and will.

The archon saw that with each spell he cast, the lamp-lighter seemed to wither and fade a little more. So he bombarded the mage with spell after spell, until at last nothing was left of the palace but rubble, nothing left of the court but corpses, and nothing left of the lamp-lighter but a golden pendant—this, the archon kept to remind himself that treachery could come from even the most innocuous sources.

### **The Magister's Shield**

On the very day that the final stone was set into place in the Grand Cathedral of Orlais, Archon Vespasian was assassinated. For three days, every magister lord of the Imperium lived behind a wall of armored guards. When his successor, Hadarius, was finally named archon, the first enchanter of the Circle of Minrathous presented him with a gift: a silvery unadorned chain made from pure lyrium. Enchantments had been worked into the links of the chain so that donning this necklace was like holding up a shield: Blows struck at the wearer glanced harmlessly away. Unfortunately, Hadarius found that the shield did not protect him against poison nearly so well.

### **Shadow of the Empire**

The Crows of Antiva may be the most famous and most expensive of Thedas's assassins, but they are not the most active. That dubious honor belongs to the Shadows of the Emperor, the personal cadre of killers employed by the throne of Orlais.

Almost exclusively, the Shadows work against other noble families in Val Royeaux. No one knows who they are, not even the sitting emperor, and some in the court dismiss them as only a myth. The assassins have slipped into aristocratic life working as palace servants, ladies-in-waiting, and, on one notorious occasion, the chamberlain himself.

This armor was made for use by the Shadows whenever the Grand Game should wander out of hand.

## **The Summer Sword**

In 8:84 Blessed, Lord Aurelien of Montsimmard, champion of the Grand Tourney of Ansbarg, commissioned a sword for his youngest son Luis, who aspired to the Chevaliers. Insisting that his boy have nothing but the best, Lord Aurelien sought out the most renowned master smith in the Orlesian Empire, Vercenne of Halamshiral, who was at that time nearly eighty, and begged the old man to make the blade. Vercenne refused. His sight was failing him and he had no wish to come out of retirement. But Aurelien offered an exorbitant sum of gold, and eventually overcame the artisan's resistance.

The old master labored for several months, folding steel, honing the edge to perfection. The resulting blade was as long as a man is tall, and sharp as the tongue of any noblewoman. Vercenne proclaimed it, in a fit of irony, the "Summer Sword," since he had crafted it in the winter of his lifetime.

Lord Aurelien brought Luis with him to receive the sword from the hand of the old master. When the boy saw the Summer Sword, he turned up his nose at his father's gift: Such great two-handed blades were no longer in fashion at court. He preferred an estoc. Aurelien was mortified; he insisted that Luis carry the blade and apologized to Vercenne, but to no avail. The sword smith cursed the boy, saying that for his pride, regardless of blade he carried, he would fail anyway.

Luis was eventually knighted, and joined the ranks of the Chevaliers. In 8:98 Blessed he was appointed command of the Chevaliers in Denerim, and hoped to make a name for himself. And so he did: he was the most detested chevalier in Ferelden, well-known for his acts of depravity. In 9:1 Dragon, he met Loghain Mac Tir in battle at Avinash. Luis lost his estoc early in the fighting, became separated from his men, and ended up facing down Loghain himself armed only with the Summer Sword—which he had never before drawn. Practice might have saved him where pride did not. Loghain made short work of the pompous chevalier and took the greatsword as a trophy.

## **Thorn of the Dead Gods**

In the moment that it struck, the blade of the Grey Warden who killed Toth, Archdemon of Fire, shattered into three pieces. After the Battle of Hunter Fell, the Wardens carried their fallen brother to Weissaupt for a hero's burial, but the broken pieces of his sword were left behind.

For years, the shards lay forgotten on the battlefield. Steel became etched with the corrupted blood of the dead god. They were eventually discovered by a Nevarran woman, searching among the bones for a sign of her lost son. She sold them to a blacksmith, not knowing what they truly were, for ten bits.

The smith, however, knew that he had purchased more than scrap metal, and fashioned the shards into three identical daggers: the Thorns of the Dead Gods. They left his hands and were scattered to the far corners of Thedas. But everywhere they went, the Thorns left misery and loss in their wake. The woman who unearthed them died soon after of plague. The smith fell into his forge. Each person who has held one of the Thorns, even briefly, has died an untimely death.

## **Thorval's Luck**

Ser Thorval of Rainesfere was the sixth son of a sixth son, a child of ill-fortune. It showed on his 13th birthday, when he narrowly avoided being run over by a cart, only to have a tree fall on him. It showed on his wedding day, when his bride ran off with a roving dwarven tinker.

But nowhere was Thorval's misfortune more obvious than on the battlefield. Although peerless among the knights of Rainesfere and undefeated in the tourneys of Redcliffe and West Hills, Ser Thorval was plagued by loss, for every blade he took into battle broke. Every shield cracked. He won himself honor and acclaim... and a tremendous blacksmithing bill as he sought out stronger blades and sturdier shields to replace his losses.

One day as he rode to a tournament in Denerim, Thorval's horse threw a shoe, pitching the knight head-first into a hollow tree stump. When he came to, he found his nose inches from the heavy steel head of an enormous war hammer. Since his sword, naturally, had shattered in the fall, Thorval took the hammer as a replacement.

It was highly unorthodox for a knight to use a hammer in a tournament, but Thorval won his matches easily. And the hammer even survived. From that day forth, he used no other weapon. When he died many years later, he left the hammer to his sixth son, Anselm, who promptly lost it.



## Yusaris: The Dragonslayer

"In the company of monsters he went,  
Down the empty wolf-roads after the dragon  
To the lands where the ice is like steel,

And the air grows thin as a beggar,  
And every rocky path is strewn with the bones  
Of the lonely dead. There Dane dwelled,  
And fifty swords were worn to rusted ruin  
Before at last they found the cave of Fenshal,  
Ancient keeper of the mountains, bane of wolves.  
Dane sought a way in which the dragon might be felled,

Fiend of fire and talon, its scales  
Brighter than any warrior's mail, teeth greater than men,  
And all around the slumbering wyrm were bones:  
Wolves, men, beasts beyond counting.  
The fume of death frightened even the wolf pack,  
And Dane, desperate, crept into the cavern  
To seek the monster's death alone.

There, shining among the dead like a star  
His hand found a sword. Yusaris:  
Forged by the dwarf smiths for an Alamarri lord long ago,  
Waiting age after age to be taken to battle once more.  
And this Dane freed from the earth and struck  
At the eye of the dragon, still sleeping,  
With a swift, terrible blow.

And Fenshal woke, wroth, only to die."

—*From Dane and the Werewolf.*

The legend of the blade Yusaris predates Andraste. The sword that Dane found in the dragon's treasure hoard, which he used to slay both Fenshal and the werewolf, was passed on to his son Hafter.

Dane may have been fiction, but Hafter was fact. In 1:40 Divine, he led the Alamarri tribes against darkspawn that flooded into the Ferelden valley from the dwarven lands. He not only drove back the horde, he also then defeated the combined forces of the Avvars and Chasind who hoped to take advantage of the chaos. His victories earned him such respect from the tribes, he was named the first teyrn.

After years of ruling the valley in peace, it is said that Hafter left Ferelden, sailing into the unknown east of the Amaranthine Ocean with the blade still in hand, never to be seen again.

## MAGIC AND RELIGION

### **Andruil: Goddess of the Hunt**

Hear me, sons and daughters of the People—  
I am Sister of the Moon, Mother of Hares,  
Lady of the Hunt: Andruil.

Remember my teachings,  
Remember the Vir Tanadhal:  
The Way of Three Trees  
That I have given you.

Vir Assan: the Way of the Arrow  
Be swift and silent;  
Strike true, do not waver  
And let not your prey suffer.  
That is my Way.

Vir Bor'assan: the Way of the Bow  
As the sapling bends, so must you.  
In yielding, find resilience;  
In pliancy, find strength.  
That is my Way.

Vir Adahlen: the Way of the Wood  
Receive the gifts of the hunt with mindfulness.  
Respect the sacrifice of my children  
Know that your passing shall nourish them in turn.  
That is my Way.

Remember the Ways of the Hunter  
And I shall be with you.

—*From The Charge of Andruil, Goddess of the Hunt.*

### **Dirthamen: Keeper of Secrets**

The twins Falon'Din and Dirthamen are the eldest children of Elgar'nán the All-Father and Mythal the Protector. The brothers were inseparable from the moment of their conception, known for their great love for each other. That is why we often speak of Falon'Din in one breath and Dirthamen the next, for they cannot bear to be apart, not even in our tales.

When the world was young, the gods often walked the earth, and Falon'Din and Dirthamen were no exception. Both were delighted by the many wonders of our earth. They played with the animals, whispered to the trees, and bathed in the lakes and streams. Their days were filled with bliss, and they did not know sorrow.

And then one day, while passing through the forest, Falon'Din and Dirthamen came across an old and sickly deer resting beneath a tree. "Why do you sit so still, little sister?" asked Falon'Din.

"Play with us," said Dirthamen.

"Alas," spoke the deer, "I cannot. I am old, and although I wish to go to my rest, my legs can no longer carry me."

Taking pity on the deer, Falon'Din gathered her up into his arms and carried her to her rest beyond the Veil. Dirthamen tried to follow them, but the shifting grey paths beyond the Veil would not let him. Separated for the first time from Falon'Din, Dirthamen wandered aimlessly till he came across two ravens.

"You are lost, and soon you will fade," the raven named Fear said to Dirthamen.

"Your brother has abandoned you. He no longer loves you," said the other, named Deceit.

"I am not lost, and Falon'Din has not abandoned me," replied Dirthamen. He subdued the ravens and bade them carry him to Falon'Din. This they did, for they had been defeated and were now bound to Dirthamen's service.

When Dirthamen found Falon'Din, he found also the deer, who once again was light on her feet, for her spirit was released from her weakened body. Both Falon'Din and Dirthamen rejoiced to see this. Falon'Din vowed that he would remain to carry all the dead to their place Beyond, just as he did the deer. And Dirthamen stayed with him, for the twins cannot bear to be apart.

—*From The Story of Falon'Din and Dirthamen, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

### **Elgar'nan: God of Vengeance**

Long ago, when time itself was young, the only things in existence were the sun and the land. The sun, curious about the land, bowed his head close to her body, and Elgar'nan was born in the place where they touched. The sun and the land loved Elgar'nan greatly, for he was beautiful and clever. As a gift to Elgar'nan, the land brought forth great birds and beasts of sky and forest, and all manner of wonderful green things. Elgar'nan loved his mother's gifts and praised them highly and walked amongst them often.

The sun, looking down upon the fruitful land, saw the joy that Elgar'nan took in her works and grew jealous. Out of spite, he shone his face full upon all the creatures the earth had created, and burned them all to ashes. The land cracked and split from bitterness and pain, and cried salt tears for the loss of all she had wrought. The pool of tears cried for the land became the ocean, and the cracks in her body the first rivers and streams.

Elgar'nan was furious at what his father had done and vowed vengeance. He lifted himself into the sky and wrestled the sun, determined to defeat him. They fought for an eternity, and eventually the sun grew weak, while Elgar'nan's rage was unabated. Eventually Elgar'nan threw the sun down from the sky and buried him in a deep abyss created by the land's sorrow. With the sun gone, the world was covered in shadow, and all that remained in the sky were the reminders of Elgar'nan's battle with his father—drops of the sun's lifeblood, which twinkled and shimmered in the darkness.

—*From The Tale of Elgar'nan and the Sun, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

### **Falon'Din: Friend of the Dead, the Guide**

"O Falon'Din  
Lethanavir—Friend to the Dead  
Guide my feet, calm my soul,  
Lead me to my rest."

In ancient times, the People were ageless and eternal, and instead of dying would enter uthenera—the long sleep—and walk the shifting paths beyond the Veil with Falon'Din and his brother Dirthamen. Those elders would learn the secrets of dreams, and some returned to the People with newfound knowledge.

But we quickened and became mortal. Those of the People who passed walked with Falon'Din into the Beyond and never returned. If they took counsel with Dirthamen on their passage, his wisdom was lost, for it went with them into the Beyond also, and never came to the People.

Then Fen'Harel caused the gods to be shut away from us, and those who passed no longer had Falon'Din to guide them. And so we learned to lay our loved ones to rest with an oaken staff, to keep them from faltering along the paths, and a cedar branch, to scatter the ravens named Fear and Deceit who were once servants of Dirthamen, now without a master.

*—As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves.*

### **Fen'Harel: The Dread Wolf**

There is precious little we know about Fen'Harel, for they say he did not care for our people. Elgar'nan and Mythal created the world as we know it, Andruil taught us the Ways of the Hunter, Sylaise and June gave us fire and crafting, but Fen'Harel kept to himself and plotted the betrayal of all the gods. And after the destruction of Arlathan, when the gods could no longer hear our prayers, it is said that Fen'Harel spent centuries in a far corner of the earth, giggling madly and hugging himself in glee.

The legend says that before the fall of Arlathan, the gods we know and revere fought an endless war with others of their kind. There is not a hahren among us who remembers these others: Only in dreams do we hear whispered the names of Geldauran and Daern'thal and Anaris, for they are the Forgotten Ones, the gods of terror and malice, spite and pestilence. In ancient times, only Fen'Harel could walk without fear among both our gods and the Forgotten Ones, for although he is kin to the gods of the People, the Forgotten Ones knew of his cunning ways, and saw him as one of their own.

And that is how Fen'Harel tricked them. Our gods saw him as a brother, and they trusted him when he said that they must keep to the heavens while he arranged a truce. And the Forgotten Ones trusted him also when he said he would arrange for the defeat of our gods, if only the Forgotten Ones would return to the abyss for a time. They trusted Fen'Harel, and they were all of them betrayed. And Fen'Harel sealed them away so they could never again walk among the People.

*—From The Tale of Fen'Harel's Triumph, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

### **Ghilan'nain: Mother of the Halla**

They say Ghilan'nain was one of the People, in the days before Arlathan, and the chosen of Andruil the Huntress. She was very beautiful—with hair of snowy white—and as graceful as a gazelle. She kept always to Andruil's Ways, and Andruil favored her above all others.

One day, while hunting in the forest, Ghilan'nain came across a hunter she did not know. At his feet lay a hawk, shot through the heart by an arrow. Ghilan'nain was filled with rage, for the hawk—along with the hare—is an animal much beloved of Andruil. Ghilan'nain demanded that the hunter make an offering to Andruil, in exchange for taking the life of one of her creatures. The hunter refused, and Ghilan'nain called upon the goddess to curse him, so that he could never again hunt and kill a living creature.

Ghilan'nain's curse took hold, and the hunter found that he was unable to hunt. His prey would dart out of sight and his arrows would fly astray. His friends and family began to mock him for his impotence, for what use is a hunter who cannot hunt? Ashamed, the hunter swore he would find Ghilan'nain and repay her for what she had done to him.

He found Ghilan'nain while she was out on a hunt with her sisters, and lured her away from them with lies and false words. He told Ghilan'nain that he had learned his lesson and begged her to come with him, so she could teach him to make a proper offering to Andruil. Moved by his plea, Ghilan'nain followed the hunter, and when they were away from all of her sisters, the hunter turned on Ghilan'nain. He blinded her first, and then bound her as one would bind a kill fresh from the hunt. But because he was cursed, the hunter could not kill her. Instead he left her for dead in the forest.

And Ghilan'nain prayed to the gods for help. She prayed to Elgar'nan for vengeance, to Mother Mythal to protect her, but above all she prayed to Andruil. Andruil sent her hares to Ghilan'nain and they chewed through the ropes that bound her, but Ghilan'nain was still wounded and blind, and could not find her way home. So Andruil turned her into a beautiful white deer—the first halla. And Ghilan'nain found her way back to her sisters, and led them to the hunter, who was brought to justice.

And since that day, the halla have guided the People, and have never led us astray, for they listen to the voice of Ghilan'nain.

—From *"The Tale of Ghilan'nain,"* as told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves.

## **June: God of the Craft**

We dedicate all our crafts to June, for it is he who taught the People to bend the branches of trees to make our bows, and to fashion coverings of furs and ironbark. Without June, would we have the aravel, or the harnesses for our halla?

When the People were young, we wandered the forests without purpose. We drank from streams and ate the berries and nuts that we could find. We did not hunt, for we had no bows. We wore nothing, for we had no knowledge of spinning or needlecraft. We shivered in the cold nights, and went hungry though the winters, when all the world was covered in ice and snow.

Then Sylaise the Hearthkeeper came, and gave us fire and taught us how to feed it with wood. June taught us to fashion bows and arrows and knives, so that we could hunt. We learned to cook the flesh of the creatures we hunted over Sylaise's fire, and we learned to clothe ourselves in their furs and skins. And the People were no longer cold and hungry.

—As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

## **Mythal: the Great Protector**

Elgar'nan had defeated his father, the sun, and all was covered in darkness. Pleased with himself, Elgar'nan sought to console his mother, the earth, by replacing all that the sun had destroyed. But the earth knew that without the sun, nothing could grow. She whispered to Elgar'nan this truth, and pleaded with him to release his father, but Elgar'nan's pride was great, and his vengeance was terrible, and he refused.

It was at this moment that Mythal walked out of the sea of the earth's tears and onto the land. She placed her hand on Elgar'nan's brow, and at her touch he grew calm and knew that his anger had led him astray. Humbled, Elgar'nan went to the place where the sun was buried and spoke to him. Elgar'nan said he would release the sun if the sun promised to be gentle and to return to the earth each night. The sun, feeling remorse at what he had done, agreed.

And so the sun rose again in the sky, and shone his golden light upon the earth. Elgar'nan and Mythal, with the help of the earth and the sun, brought back to life all the wondrous things that the sun had destroyed, and they grew and thrived. And that night, when the sun had gone to sleep, Mythal gathered the glowing earth around his bed, and formed it into a sphere to be placed in the sky, a pale reflection of the sun's true glory.

—From *"The Tale of Mythal's Touch,"* as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

### **Sylaise: the Hearthkeeper**

Sylaise the Hearthkeeper is seen as the sister of Andruil the Huntress. While Andruil loved to run with the creatures of the wild, Sylaise preferred to stay by her home-tree, occupying herself with gentle arts and song.

It is Sylaise who gave us fire and taught us how to use it. It is Sylaise who showed us how to heal with herbs and with magic, and how to ease the passage of infants into this world. And again, it is Sylaise who showed us how to spin the fibers of plants into thread and rope.

We owe much to Sylaise, and that is why we sing to her when we kindle the fires and when we put them out. That is why we sprinkle our aravels with Sylaise's fragrant tree-moss, and ask that she protect them and all within.

—As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

### **The Aeonar**

When the Imperium occupied the area that is present-day Ferelden, they had two sites dedicated to magical experimentation at the extreme ends of the Imperial Highway. The southern one was the fortress of Ostagar, which looked out over the Korcari Wilds. The northern one was Aeonar, although the exact location is now a secret known only to a handful of Templars.

Whatever it was the Tevinter were trying to discover at Aeonar, their work was never completed. The fortress was overrun by disciples of Andraste upon hearing the news of her death. According to legend, it was a massacre—eerily silent, for the invaders caught the mages while all but one of them were in the Fade.

The site was left structurally sound but spiritually damaged. Possibly because of this, the Chantry chose to put it to use as a prison. Accused maleficarum and apostates are held in the confines of Aeonar. Those who have a powerful connection to the Fade, and particularly to demons, will inevitably attract something across the Veil, making the guilty somewhat easier to tell from the innocent.

—From *Of Fires, Circles, and Templars: A History of Magic in the Chantry*, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.

## **Andraste: Bride of the Maker**

There was once a tiny fishing village on the Waking Sea that was set upon by the Tevinter Imperium, which enslaved the villagers to be sold in the markets of Minrathous, leaving behind only the old and the infirm. One of the captives was the child Andraste.

She was raised in slavery in a foreign land. She escaped, then made the long and treacherous journey back to her homeland alone. She rose from nothing to be the wife of an Alamarri warlord.

Each day she sang to the gods, asking them to help her people who remained slaves in Tevinter. The false gods of the mountains and the winds did not answer her, but the true god did.

The Maker spoke. He showed her all the works of His hands: the Fade, the world, and all the creatures therein. He showed her how men had forgotten Him, lavishing devotion upon mute idols and demons, and how He had left them to their fate. But her voice had reached Him, and so captivated Him that He offered her a place at His side, that she might rule all of creation.

But Andraste would not forsake her people.

She begged the Maker to return, to save His children from the cruelty of the Imperium. Reluctantly, the Maker agreed to give man another chance.

Andraste went back to her husband, Maferath, and told him all that the Maker had revealed to her. Together, they rallied the Alamarri and marched forth against the mage-lords of the Imperium, and the Maker was with them.

The Maker's sword was creation itself: fire and flood, famine and earthquake. Everywhere they went, Andraste sang to the people of the Maker, and they heard her. The ranks of Andraste's followers grew until they were a vast tide washing over the Imperium. And when Maferath saw that the people loved Andraste and not him, a worm grew within his heart, gnawing upon it.

At last, the armies of Andraste and Maferath stood before the very gates of Minrathous, but Andraste was not with them.

For Maferath had schemed in secret to hand Andraste over to the Tevinter. For this, the Archon would give Maferath all the lands to the south of the Waking Sea.

And so, before all the armies of the Alamarri and of Tevinter, Andraste was tied to a stake and burned while her earthly husband turned his armies aside and did nothing, for his heart had been devoured. But as he watched the pyre, the Archon softened. He took pity on Andraste, and drew his sword, and granted her the mercy of a quick death.

The Maker wept for His Beloved, cursed Maferath, cursed mankind for their betrayal, and turned once again from creation, taking only Andraste with him. And Our Lady sits still at his side, where she still urges Him to take pity on His children.

—From The Sermons of Justinia II

## **The Right of Annulment**

In the 83rd year of the Glory Age, one of the mages of the Nevarran Circle was found practicing forbidden magic. The templars executed him swiftly, but this brewed discontent among the Nevarran Circle. The mages made several magical attacks against the templars, vengeance for the executed mage, but the knight-commander was unable to track down which were responsible.

Three months later, the mages summoned a demon and turned it loose against their templar watchers. Demons, however, are not easily controlled. After killing the first wave of templars who tried to contain it, the demon took possession of one of its summoners. The resulting abomination slaughtered templars and mages both before escaping into the countryside.

The grand cleric sent a legion of templars to hunt the fugitive. They killed the abomination a year later, but by that time it had slain 70 people.

Divine Galatea, responding to the catastrophe in Navarra and hoping to prevent further incidents, granted all the grand clerics of the Chantry the power to purge a Circle entirely if they rule it irredeemable. This Right of Annulment has been performed 17 times in the last 700 years.

—*From Of Fires, Circles, and Templars: A History of Magic in the Chantry, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Apostates**

It is not uncommon for the neophyte to mistake apostates and maleficarum as one and the same. Indeed, the Chantry has gone to great lengths over the centuries to establish that this is so. The truth, however, is that while an apostate is often a maleficar, he need not be so. A maleficar is a mage who employs forbidden knowledge such as blood magic and the summoning of demons, whereas an apostate is merely any mage who does not fall under the auspices of the Circle of Magi (and therefore the Chantry). They are hunted by the templars, and quite often they will turn to forbidden knowledge in order to survive, but it would be a lie to say that all apostates begin that way.

Historically, apostates become such in one of two ways: They are either mages who have escaped from the Circle or mages who were never part of it to begin with. This latter category includes what we tend to refer to as "hedge mages"—those with magical ability out in the hinterlands who follow a different magical tradition than our own. Some of these hedge mages are not even aware of their nature. Undeveloped, their abilities can express themselves in a variety of ways, which the hedge mage might attribute to faith, or will, or to another being entirely (depending on his nature). Some of these traditions are passed down from generation to generation, as with the so-called "witches" of the Chasind wilders or the "shamans" of the Avvar barbarians.

No matter how a mage has become apostate, the Chantry treats them alike: Templars begin a systematic hunt to bring the apostate to justice. In almost all cases, "justice" is execution. If there is some overriding reason the mage should live, the Rite of Tranquility is employed instead. Whether we of the Circle of Magi believe this system fair is irrelevant: It is what it is.

—*From Patterns Within Form, by Halden, First Enchanter of Starkhaven, 8:80 Blessed.*

## **The Black City**

No traveler to the Fade can fail to spot the Black City. It is one of the few constants of that ever-changing place. No matter where one might be, the city is visible. (Always far off, for it seems that the only rule of geography in the Fade is that all points are equidistant from the Black City.)

The Chant teaches that the Black City was once the seat of the Maker, from whence He ruled the Fade, left empty when men turned away from Him. Dreamers do not go there, nor do spirits. Even the most powerful demons seem to avoid the place.

It was golden and beautiful once, so the story goes, until a group of powerful magister-lords from the Tevinter Imperium devised a means of breaking in. When they did so, their presence defiled the city, turning it black. (Which was, perhaps, the least of their worries.)



### **The Chant of Light: The Blight**

No matter their power, their triumphs,  
The mage-lords of Tevinter were men  
And doomed to die.  
Then a voice whispered within their hearts,  
Shall you surrender your power  
To time like the beasts of the fields?  
You are the Lords of the earth!  
Go forth to claim the empty throne  
Of Heaven and be gods.

In secret they worked  
Magic upon magic  
All their power and all their vanity  
They turned against the Veil  
Until at last, it gave way.

Above them, a river of Light,  
Before them the throne of Heaven, waiting,  
Beneath their feet  
The footprints of the Maker,  
And all around them echoed a vast  
Silence.

But when they took a single step  
Toward the empty throne  
A great voice cried out  
Shaking the very foundations  
Of Heaven and earth:

And So is the Golden City blackened  
With each step you take in my Hall.  
Marvel at perfection, for it is fleeting.  
You have brought Sin to Heaven  
And doom upon all the world.

Violently were they cast down,  
For no mortal may walk bodily  
In the realm of dreams,  
Bearing the mark of their Crime:  
Bodies so maimed  
And distorted that none should see them  
And know them for men.

Deep into the earth they fled,  
Away from the Light.  
In Darkness eternal they searched  
For those who had goaded them on,  
Until at last they found their prize,  
Their god, their betrayer:  
The sleeping dragon Dumat. Their taint  
Twisted even the false-god, and the whisperer  
Awoke at last, in pain and horror, and led  
Them to wreak havoc upon all the nations of the world:  
The first Blight.

—*From Threnodies 8.*

### **The Commandments of the Maker**

These truths the Maker has revealed to me:  
As there is but one world,  
One life, one death, there is  
But one god, and He is our Maker.  
They are sinners, who have given their love  
To false gods.

Magic exists to serve man, and never to rule over him.  
Foul and corrupt are they  
Who have taken His gift  
And turned it against His children.  
They shall be named Maleficar, accursed ones.  
They shall find no rest in this world  
Or beyond.

All men are the Work of our Maker's Hands,  
From the lowest slaves  
To the highest kings.  
Those who bring harm  
Without provocation to the least of His children  
Are hated and accursed by the Maker.

Those who bear false witness  
And work to deceive others, know this:  
There is but one Truth.  
All things are known to our Maker  
And He shall judge their lies.

All things in this world are finite.  
What one man gains, another has lost.  
Those who steal from their brothers and sisters  
Do harm to their livelihood and to their peace of mind.  
Our Maker sees this with a heavy heart.

—*Transfigurations 1:1-5*

## **The Maker**

There was no word  
For heaven or for earth, for sea or sky.  
All that existed was silence.  
Then the Voice of the Maker rang out,  
The first Word,  
And His Word became all that might be:  
Dream and idea, hope and fear,  
Endless possibilities.  
And from it made his firstborn.  
And he said to them:  
In My image I forge you,  
To you I give dominion  
Over all that exists.  
By your will  
May all things be done.

Then in the center of heaven  
He called forth  
A city with towers of gold,  
streets with music for cobblestones,  
And banners which flew without wind.  
There, He dwelled, waiting  
To see the wonders  
His children would create.

The children of the Maker gathered  
Before his golden throne  
And sang hymns of praise unending.  
But their songs  
Were the songs of the cobblestones.  
They shone with the golden light  
Reflected from the Maker's throne.  
They held forth the banners  
That flew on their own.

And the Voice of the Maker shook the Fade  
Saying: In My image I have wrought  
My firstborn. You have been given dominion  
Over all that exists. By your will  
All things are done.  
Yet you do nothing.  
The realm I have given you  
Is formless, ever-changing.

And He knew he had wrought amiss.  
So the Maker turned from his firstborn  
And took from the Fade  
A measure of its living flesh  
And placed it apart from the Spirits, and spoke to it, saying:  
Here, I decree  
Opposition in all things:  
For earth, sky  
For winter, summer  
For darkness, Light.  
By My Will alone is Balance sundered  
And the world given new life.

And no longer was it formless, ever-changing,  
But held fast, immutable,  
With Words for heaven and for earth, sea and sky.  
At last did the Maker  
From the living world  
Make men. Immutable, as the substance of the earth,  
With souls made of dream and idea, hope and fear,  
Endless possibilities.

Then the Maker said:  
To you, my second-born, I grant this gift:  
In your heart shall burn  
An unquenchable flame  
All-consuming, and never satisfied.  
From the Fade I crafted you,  
And to the Fade you shall return  
Each night in dreams  
That you may always remember me.

And then the Maker sealed the gates  
Of the Golden City  
And there, He dwelled, waiting  
To see the wonders  
His children would create.

—*Threnodies 5:1-8*

## **The Chant of Light: Redemption**

Many are those who wander in sin,  
Despairing that they are lost forever,  
But the one who repents, who has faith  
Unshaken by the darkness of the world,  
And boasts not, nor gloats  
Over the misfortunes of the weak, but takes delight  
In the Maker's law and creations, she shall know  
The peace of the Maker's benediction.  
The Light shall lead her safely  
Through the paths of this world, and into the next.  
For she who trusts in the Maker, fire is her water.  
As the moth sees light and goes toward flame,  
She should see fire and go towards Light.  
The Veil holds no uncertainty for her,  
And she will know no fear of death, for the Maker  
Shall be her beacon and her shield, her foundation and her sword.

—*From Transfigurations 10.*

## **The Imperial Chantry**

There are those who would tell you that the Chantry is the same everywhere as it is here, that the Divine in Val Royeaux reigns supreme in the eyes of the Maker and that this fact is unquestioned throughout Thedas.

Do not believe it.

The Maker's second commandment, "Magic must serve man, not rule over him," never held the same meaning within the ancient Tevinter Imperium as it did elsewhere. The Chantry there interpreted the rule as meaning that mages should never control the minds of other men, and that otherwise their magic should benefit the rulers of men as much as possible. When the clerics of Tevinter altered the Chant of Light to reflect this interpretation of the commandment, the Divine in Val Royeaux ordered the clerics to revert to the original Chant. They refused, claiming corruption within Val Royeaux, an argument that grew until, in 3:87 Towers, the Chantry in Tevinter elected its own "legitimate and uncorrupted" Divine Valhail—who was not only male, but also happened to be one of the most prominent members of the Tevinter Circle of the Magi. This "Black Divine" was reviled outside Tevinter, his existence an offense to the Chantry in Val Royeaux.

After four Exalted Marches to dislodge these "rebels," all that the Chantry in Val Royeaux accomplished was to cement the separation. While most aspects of the Imperial Chantry's teachings are the same, prohibitions against magic have been weakened, and male priests have become more prevalent. The Circle of the Magi today rules Tevinter directly, ever since the Archon Nomaran was elected in 7:34 Storm directly from the ranks of the enchanters, to great applause from the public. He dispensed with the old rules forbidding mages from taking part in politics, and within a century, the true rulers within the various imperial houses—the mages—took their places openly within the government. The Imperial Divine is now always drawn from the ranks of the first enchanters and operates as Divine and Grand Enchanter both.

This is utter heresy to any member of the Chantry outside of Tevinter, a return to the days of the magisters, which brought the Blights down upon us. But it exists, and even though we have left the Tevinter Imperium to the mercies of the dread qunari, still they have endured. Further confrontation between the Black Divine and our so-called "White Divine" is inevitable.

—*From Edicts of the Black Divine, by Father David of Qarinus, 8:11 Blessed*

## **Chantry Hierarchy**

The Divine is the titular head of the Chantry, although since the schism split the Imperial Chantry into its own faction there are now in fact two Divines at any one time. One Divine, informally called the White Divine, is a woman housed in the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux. The other, known as the Black Divine, is a man housed in the Argent Spire in Minrathous.

Neither Divine recognizes the existence of the other, and the informal names are considered sacrilegious. No matter the gender, a Divine is addressed as "Most Holy" or "Your Perfection."

Beneath the rank of Divine is the grand cleric. Each grand cleric presides over numerous chantries and represents the highest religious authority for their region. They travel to Val Royeaux when the College of Clerics convenes, but otherwise remain where they are assigned. All grand clerics are addressed as "Your Grace."

Beneath the grand cleric is the mother (or, in the Imperial Chantry, the father). If a mother is in charge of a particular chantry, "revered" is appended to her title. These are the priests responsible for administering to the spiritual well-being of their flock. A mother or revered mother is addressed as "Your Reverence."

Brothers and sisters form the rank and file of the Chantry and consist of three main groups: affirmed, initiates, and clerics. Affirmed are the lay-brethren of the Chantry, those regular folk who have turned to the Chantry for succor. Often they are people who have led a difficult or irreligious life and have chosen to go into seclusion, or even orphans and similar unfortunates who were raised into the Chantry life. The Affirmed take care of the Chantry and are in turn afforded a life of quiet contemplation, no questions asked.

Only those folk who take vows become initiates. These are men and women in training, whether in academic knowledge or the martial skills of a warrior. All initiates receive an academic education, although only those who seek to become templars learn how to fight in addition.

Clerics are the true academics of the Chantry, those men and women who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of knowledge. They are often found in Chantry archives, sages presiding over libraries of books and arcane knowledge. The most senior of these clerics, placed in charge of such archives, are given the title "elder," although such a rank is still beneath that of mother. All other brothers and sisters are addressed simply by noting their title before their name, such as "Brother Genitivi."

—*From a guide for ambassadors from Rivain.*

## **Templars**

Often portrayed as stoic and grim, the Order of Templars was created as the martial arm of the Chantry. Armed with the ability to dispel and resist magic in addition to their formidable combat talents, the templars are uniquely qualified to act as both a foil for apostates—mages who refuse to submit to the authority of the Circle—and a first line of defense against the dark powers of blood mages and abominations.

While mages often resent the templars as symbols of the Chantry's control over magic, the people of Thedas see them as saviors and holy warriors, champions of all that is good, armed with piety enough to protect the world from the ravages of foul magic. In reality, the Chantry's militant arm looks first for skilled warriors with unshakable faith in the Maker, with a flawless moral center as a secondary concern. Templars must carry out their duty with an emotional distance, and the Order of Templars prefers soldiers with religious fervor and absolute loyalty over paragons of virtue who might question orders when it comes time to make difficult choices.

The templars' power derives from the substance lyrium, a mineral believed to be the raw element of creation. While mages use lyrium in their arcane spells and rituals, templars ingest the primordial mineral to enhance their abilities to resist and dispel magic. Lyrium use is regulated by the Chantry, but some templars suffer from lyrium addiction, the effects of which include paranoia, obsession, and dementia. Templars knowingly submit themselves to this "treatment" in the service of the Order and the Maker.

It is this sense of ruthless piety that most frightens mages when they draw the templars' attention: When the templars are sent to eliminate a possible blood mage, there is no reasoning with them, and if the templars are prepared, the mage's magic is all but useless. Driven by their faith, the templars are one of the most feared and respected forces in Thedas.

—*From Patterns Within Form by Halden, First Enchanter of Starkhaven, 8:80 Blessed.*

## **The Founding of the Chantry**

Kordillus Drakon, king of the city-state of Orlais, was a man of uncommon ambition. In the year -15 Ancient, the young king began construction of a great temple dedicated to the Maker, and declared that by its completion he would not only have united the warring city-states of the south, he would have brought Andrastian belief to the world.

In -3 Ancient, the temple was completed. There, in its heart, Drakon knelt before the eternal flame of Andraste and was crowned ruler of the Empire of Orlais. His first act as Emperor: To declare the Chantry as the established Andrastian religion of the Empire.

It took three years and several hundred votes before Olessa of Montsimnard was elected to lead the new Chantry. Upon her coronation as Divine, she took the name Justinia, in honor of the disciple who recorded Andraste's songs. In that moment, the ancient era ended and the Divine Age began.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## **The Fraternity of Enchanters**

Another aspect of Circle life is the fraternity. When a mage becomes an enchanter, he may ally himself with a fraternity. These are cliques that cross Circle boundaries, mages of common interests and goals who band together to ensure that their voice is heard within the College of Magi in Cumberland. The largest fraternities currently are:

- the Loyalists, who advocate loyalty and obedience to the Chantry.
- the Aequitarians, who advocate temperance and follow a distinct code of conduct which they believe all mages should hold themselves to.
- the Libertarians, a growing fraternity, publicly maintaining greater power for the Circles but secretly advocating a complete split from the Chantry—a dangerous opinion, naturally.
- the Isolationists, a small group that advocates withdrawing to remote territories in order to avoid conflicts with the general populace.

- the Lucrosians, who maintain that the Circle must do what is profitable first and foremost. They prioritize the accumulation of wealth, with the gaining of political influence a close second.

So far, an alliance between the Loyalists and Aequitarians has prevented the Libertarians from gaining much headway, but there are signs that the Aequitarians may throw their support in with the Libertarians. If that happens, many mages predict it will come to civil war among the Circles.

—*From The Circle of the Magi: A History, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## **Hierarchy of the Circle**

It is no simple matter, safeguarding ordinary men from mages, and mages from themselves. Each Circle tower must have some measure of self-government, for it is ever the Maker's will that men be given the power to take responsibility for our own actions: To sin and fail, as well as to achieve the highest grace and glory on our own strength.

You, who will be tasked with the protection of the Circle, must be aware of its workings. The first enchanter is the heart of any tower. He will determine the course his Circle will take, he will choose which apprentices may be tested and made full mages, and you will work most closely with him.

Assisting the first enchanter will be the senior enchanters, a small council of the most trusted and experienced magi in the tower. From this group, the next first enchanter is always chosen. Beneath the council are the enchanters. These are the teachers and mentors of the tower, and you must get to know them in order to keep your finger on the pulse of the Circle, for the enchanters will always know what is happening among the children.

All those who have passed their Harrowing but have not taken apprentices are mages. This is where most trouble in a Circle lies, in the idleness and inexperience of youth. The untested apprentices are the most numerous denizens of any tower, but they more often pose threats to themselves, due to their lack of training, than to anyone else.

—*Knight-Commander Serain of the Chantry templars, in a letter to his successor.*

## **History of the Circle**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that nothing is more successful at inspiring a person to mischief as being told not to do something. Unfortunately, the Chantry of the Divine Age had some trouble with obvious truths. Although it did not outlaw magic—quite the contrary, as the Chantry relied upon magic to kindle the eternal flame which burns in every brazier in every chantry—it relegated mages to lighting candles and lamps. Perhaps occasional dusting of rafters and eaves.

I will give my readers a moment to contemplate how well such a role satisfied the mages of the time.

It surprised absolutely no one when the mages of Val Royeaux, in protest, snuffed the sacred flames of the cathedral and barricaded themselves inside the choir loft. No one, that is, but Divine Ambrosia II, who was outraged and attempted to order an Exalted March upon her own cathedral. Even her most devout Templars discouraged that idea. For 21 days, the fires remained unlit while negotiations were conducted, legend tells us, by shouting back and forth from the loft.

The mages went cheerily into exile in a remote fortress outside of the capital, where they would be kept under the watchful eye of the Templars and a council of their own elder magi. Outside of normal society, and outside of the Chantry, the mages would form their own closed society, the Circle, separated for the first time in human history.



—*From Of Fires, Circles, and Templars: A History of Magic in the Chantry, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## **The Fade**

The study of the Fade is as old as humankind. For so long as men have dreamed, we have walked its twisting paths, sometimes catching a glimpse of the city at its heart. Always as close as our own thoughts, but impossibly separated from our world.

The Tevinter Imperium once spent vast fortunes of gold, lyrium, and human slaves in an effort to map the terrain of the Fade, an ultimately futile endeavor. Although portions of it belong to powerful spirits, all of the Fade is in constant flux. The Imperium succeeded in finding the disparate and ever-shifting realms of a dozen demon lords, as well as cataloging a few hundred types of spirits, before they were forced to abandon the project.

The relationship of dreamers to the Fade is complex. Even when entering the Fade through the use of lyrium, mortals are not able to control or affect it. The spirits who dwell there, however, can, and as the Chantry teaches us, the great flaw of the spirits is that they have neither imagination nor ambition. They create what they see through their sleeping visitors, building elaborate copies of our cities, people, and events, which, like the reflections in a mirror, ultimately lack context or life of their own. Even the most powerful demons merely plagiarize the worst thoughts and fears of mortals, and build their realms with no other ambition than to taste life.

—*From Tranquility and the Role of the Fade in Human Culture, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## **The Harrowing**

Among apprentices of the Circle, nothing is regarded with more fear than the Harrowing. Little is known about this rite of passage, and that alone would be cause for dread. But it is well understood that only those apprentices who pass this trial are ever seen again. They return as full members of the Circle of Magi. Of those who fail, nothing is known. Perhaps they are sent away in disgrace. Perhaps they are killed on the spot. I heard one patently ridiculous rumor among the Circle at Rivain, which claimed that failed apprentices were transformed into pigs, fattened up, and served at dinner to the senior enchanters. But I could find no evidence that the Rivaini Circle ate any particular quantity of pork.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **Lyrium**

More than half the wealth of Orzammar comes from a single, extremely rare substance: Lyrium. The Chantry believes it to be the "Waters of the Fade" mentioned in the Canticle of Threnodies, the very stuff of creation itself, from whence the Maker fashioned the world. Only a handful of Mining caste families hazard extracting the ore, finding veins in the Stone quite literally by ear. For in its raw form, lyrium sings, and the discerning can hear the sound even through solid rock.

Even though dwarves have a natural resistance, raw lyrium is dangerous for all but the most experienced of the Mining Caste to handle. Even for dwarves, exposure to the unprocessed mineral can cause deafness or memory loss. For humans and elves, direct contact with lyrium ore produces nausea, blistering of the skin, and dementia. Mages cannot even approach unprocessed lyrium. Doing so is invariably fatal.

Despite its dangers, lyrium is the single most valuable mineral currently known. In the Tevinter Imperium, it has been known to command a higher price than diamond. The dwarves sell very little of the processed mineral to the surface, giving the greater portion of what they mine to their own smiths, who use it in the forging of all truly superior dwarven weapons and armor. What processed lyrium is sold on the surface goes only to the Chantry, who strictly control the supply. From the Chantry, it is dispensed both to the templars, who make use of it in tracking and fighting maleficarum, and to the Circle.

In the hands of the Circle, lyrium reaches its fullest potential. Their Formari craftsmen transform it into an array of useful items from the practical, such as magically hardened stone for construction, to the legendary silver armor of King Calenhad.

When mixed into liquid and ingested, lyrium allows mages to enter the Fade when fully aware, unlike all others who reach it only when dreaming. Such potions can also be used to aid in the casting of especially taxing spells, for a short time granting a mage far greater power than he normally wields.

Lyrium has its costs, however. Prolonged use becomes addictive, the cravings unbearable. Over time, templars grow disoriented, incapable of distinguishing memory from present, or dream from waking. They frequently become paranoid, as their worst memories and nightmares haunt their waking hours. Mages have additionally been known to suffer physical mutation: The magister lords of the Tevinter Imperium were widely reputed to have been so affected by their years of lyrium use that they could not be recognized by their own kin, nor even as creatures that had once been human.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **Maleficarum**

It has been asked, "What are maleficarum? How shall we know them?" I have been as troubled by this question as you. You have come to me for the wisdom of the Maker, but none have seen the Maker's heart save Beloved Andraste. And so I have done as all mortals must, and looked to the words of His prophet for answers. And there, I found respite from a troubled mind.

For she has said to us, "Magic exists to serve man, and never to rule over him." Therefore, I say to you, they who work magic which dominates the minds and hearts of others, they have transgressed the Makers law.

Also, Our Lady said to us, "Those who bring harm without provocation to the least of His children are hated and accursed by the Maker." And so it is made clear to me, as it should be to us all: That magic which fuels itself by harming others, by the letting of blood, is hated by the Maker.

Those mages who honor the Maker and keep His laws we welcome as our brothers and sisters. Those who reject the laws of the Maker and the words of His prophet are apostate. They shall be cast out, and given no place among us.

—*From The Sermons of Justinia I.*

## **Mana and the Use of Magic**

Mana is that which defines a mage. It is potential that dwells within a person but does not always manifest itself. All men are connected to the Fade; we go there to dream. But only those with this potential may draw upon its power.

Mana is, then, a measurement of one's ability to draw power from the Fade, and it is this power that is expended in magic.

As in all other things, it has limits. Just as a man has the strength to lift only so much weight and no more, a mage cannot work more magic at one time than his mana allows. If he wishes to work magic that would be beyond his strength, a mage must bolster his mana with lyrium. Without lyrium, it is possible for the reckless to expend their own life-force in the working of magic, and occasionally, ambitious apprentices injure or even kill themselves by over-exertion.

—From The Lectures of First Enchanter Wenselus

## **Demonic Possession**

Why do demons seek to possess the living?

History claims they are malevolent spirits, the first children of the Maker, angry at their creator for turning from them and jealous of those creations he considered superior. They stare across the Veil at the living and do not understand what they see, yet they know they crave it. They desire life, they pull the living across the Veil when they sleep and prey on their psyche with nightmares. Whenever they can, they cross the Veil into our world to possess it outright.

We know that any demon will seek to possess a mage, and upon doing so will create an abomination. Most of the world does not know, however, that the strength of an abomination depends entirely on the power of the demon that possesses the mage. This is true, in fact, of all possessed creatures. One demon is not the same as any other.

Demons can, for instance, be classified. Enchanter Brahm's categorization of demons into that portion of the psyche they primarily prey upon has held since the Tower Age.

According to Brahm, the weakest and most common of demons are those of rage. They are the least intelligent and most prone to violent outbursts against the living. They expend their energies quickly, the most powerful of them exhibiting great strength and occasionally the ability to generate fire.

Next are the demons of hunger. In a living host they become cannibals and vampires, and within the dead they feed upon the living. Theirs are the powers of draining, both of life force and of mana.

Next are the demons of sloth, the first on Brahm's scale that are capable of true intelligence. In its true form, this demon is known as a Shade, a thing which is nearly indistinct and invisible, for such is sloth's nature. It hides and stalks, unaware, and when confronted, it sows fatigue and apathy.

Demons of desire are amongst the most powerful, and are the ones most likely to seek out the living and actively trick them into a deal. These demons will exploit anything that can be coveted—wealth, power, lust—and they will always end up getting far more than they give. A desire demon's province is that of illusions and mind control.

Strongest of all demons are those of pride. These are the most feared creatures to loose upon the world: Masters of magic and in possession of vast intellect, they are the true schemers. It is they who seek most strongly to possess mages, and will bring other demons across the Veil in numbers to achieve their own ends—although what that might be has never been discovered. A greater pride demon, brought across the Veil, would threaten the entire world.

—From The Maker's First Children, by Bader, Senior Enchanter of Ostwick, 8:12 Blessed.

## **The Cardinal Rules of Magic**

You must not be under the misimpression that magic is all-powerful. There are limits, and not even the greatest mages may overcome them.

No one, for instance, has found any means of traveling—either over great distances or small ones—beyond putting one foot in front of the other. The immutable nature of the physical world prevents this. So no, you may not simply pop over to Minrathous to borrow a cup of sugar, nor may you magic the essay you "forgot" in the apprentice dormitory to your desk. You will simply have to be prepared.

Similarly, even when you send your mind into the Fade, your body remains behind. Only once has this barrier been overcome, and reputedly the spell required two-thirds of the lyrium in the Tevinter Imperium as well as the lifeblood of several hundred slaves. The results were utterly disastrous.

Finally, life is finite. A truly great healer may bring someone back from the very precipice of death, when breath and heartbeat have ceased but the spirit still clings to life. But once the spirit has fled the body, it cannot be recalled. That is no failing of your skills or power, it is simple reality.

—*From The Lectures of First Enchanter Wenselus.*

## **Blood Magic: The Forbidden School**

Foul and corrupt are you  
Who have taken My gift  
And turned it against My children.  
—*Transfigurations 18:10.*

The ancient Tevinters did not originally consider blood magic a school of its own. Rather, they saw it as a means to achieve greater power in any school of magic. The name, of course, refers to the fact that magic of this type uses life, specifically in the form of blood, instead of mana. It was common practice, at one time, for a magister to keep a number of slaves on hand so that, should he undertake the working of a spell that was physically beyond his abilities, he could use the blood of his slaves to bolster the casting.

Over time, however, the Imperium discovered types of spells that could only be worked by blood. Although lyrium will allow a mage to send his conscious mind into the Fade, blood would allow him to find the sleeping minds of others, view their dreams, and even influence or dominate their thoughts. Just as treacherous, blood magic allows the Veil to be opened completely so that demons may physically pass through it into our world.

The rise of the Chant of Light and the subsequent fall of the old Imperium has led to blood magic being all but stamped out—as it should be, for it poses nearly as great a danger to those who would practice it as to the world at large.

—*From The Four Schools: A Treatise, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## **The Four Schools of Magic: Creation**

Opposition in all things:  
For earth, sky  
For winter, summer  
For darkness, Light.  
By My will alone is balance sundered  
And the world given new life.  
—*Threnodies 5:5.*

The School of Creation, sometimes called the School of Nature, is the second of the Schools of Matter, the balancing force and complement of Entropy. Creation magic manipulates natural forces, transforming what exists and bringing new things into being.

Creation requires considerable finesse, more than any other school, and is therefore rarely mastered. Those mages who have made a serious study of creation are the highest in demand, useful in times of peace as well as war.

—*From The Four Schools: A Treatise, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

### **The Four Schools of Magic: Entropy**

To you, my second-born, I grant this gift:  
In your heart shall burn  
An unquenchable flame  
All-consuming, and never satisfied.  
—*Threnodies 5:7.*

The first of the two Schools of Matter, Entropy is the opposing force of Creation; for this reason it is often called the School of Negation. Nothing lives without death. Time inevitably brings an end to all things in the material world, and yet in this ending is the seed of a beginning. A river may flood its banks, causing havoc, but bring new life to its floodplain. The fire that burns a forest ushers in new growth. And so it is with entropic magic that we manipulate the forces of erosion, decay, and destruction to create anew.

—*From The Four Schools: A Treatise, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

### **The Four Schools of Magic: Primal**

Those who oppose thee  
Shall know the wrath of heaven.  
Field and forest shall burn,  
The seas shall rise and devour them,  
The wind shall tear their nations  
From the face of the earth,  
Lightning shall rain down from the sky,  
They shall cry out to their false gods,  
And find silence.  
—*Andraste 7:19.*

Sometimes called the School of Power, the Primal School is the second of the Schools of Energy, balanced by Spirit, and concerns the most visible and tangible forces of nature itself.

This is the magic of war: Fire, ice, and lightning. Devastation. This is what the vast majority imagines when they hear the word "magic."

—*From The Four Schools: A Treatise, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## The Four Schools of Magic: Spirit

And the voice of the Maker shook the Fade  
Saying: In My image I have wrought  
My firstborn. You have been given dominion  
Over all that exists. By your will  
All things are done.  
Yet you do nothing.  
The realm I have given you  
Is formless, ever-changing.  
—*Threnodies 5:4.*

The first of the two Schools of Energy, Spirit is opposed by the Primal School. It is the school of mystery, the ephemeral school. This is the study of the invisible energies which surround us at all times, yet are outside of nature. It is from the Fade itself that this magic draws its power. Students of this school cover everything from direct manipulation of mana and spell energies to the study and summoning of spirits themselves.

By its nature an esoteric school, as most others know virtually nothing about the Fade, studies of spirit magic are often misunderstood by the general populace, or even confused for blood magic—an unfortunate fate for a most useful branch of study.

—*From The Four Schools: A Treatise, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons

It is challenging enough for the casual observer to tell the difference between the Fade and the creatures that live within it, let alone between one type of spirit and another. In truth, there is little that distinguishes them, even for the most astute mages. Since spirits are not physical entities and are therefore not restricted to recognizable forms (or even having a form at all), one can never tell for certain what is alive and what is merely part of the scenery. (It is therefore advisable for the inexperienced researcher to greet all objects he encounters.)

Typically, we misuse the term "spirit" to refer only to the benign, or at least less malevolent, creatures of the Fade, but in truth, all the denizens of the realm beyond the Veil are spirits. As the Chant of Light notes, everything within the Fade is a mimicry of our world. (A poor imitation, for the spirits do not remotely understand what they are copying. It is no surprise that much of the Fade appears like a manuscript translated from Tevinter into Orlesian and back again by drunken initiates.)

In general, spirits are not complex. Or, rather, they are not complex as we understand such things. Each one seizes upon a single facet of human experience: Rage, hunger, compassion, hope, etc. This one idea becomes their identity. We classify as demons those spirits who identify themselves with darker human emotions and ideas.

The most common and weakest form of demon one encounters in the Fade is the rage demon. They are much like perpetually boiling kettles, for they exist only to vent hatred, but rarely have an object to hate. Somewhat above these are the hunger demons, who do little but eat or attempt to eat everything they encounter, including other demons (this is rarely successful). Then there are the sloth demons. These are the first intelligent creatures one typically finds in the Fade. They are dangerous only on those rare occasions that they can be induced to get up and do harm. Desire demons are more clever, and far more powerful, using all forms of bribery to induce mortals into their realms: Wealth, love, vengeance, whatever lies closest to your heart. The most powerful demons yet encountered are the pride demons, perhaps because they, among all their kind, most resemble men.

—*From Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons, by Enchanter Mirdromel.*

## **The Tranquil**

*If the Warden is a mage...*

Although apprentices do not know the nature of the Harrowing, all of them understand its consequences: They either pass and become full mages, or they are never seen again. Those who fear to undertake this rite of passage, or those who are deemed weak or unstable, are given the Rite of Tranquility instead.

The actual procedure, like the Harrowing, is secret, but the results are just as well known. The rite severs connection to the Fade. The Tranquil, therefore, do not dream. This removes the greatest danger that threatens a weak or unprepared mage, the potential to attract demons across the Veil. But this is the least of Tranquility's effects. For the absence of dreams brings with it the end of all magical ability, as well as all emotion.

The Tranquil, ironically, resemble sleepwalkers, never entirely awake nor asleep. They are still part of our Circle, however, and some might say they are the most critical part. They have incredible powers of concentration, for it is simply impossible to distract a Tranquil mage, and this makes them capable of becoming craftsmen of such skill that they rival even the adeptness of the dwarves. The Formari, the branch of the Circle devoted to item enchantment, is made up exclusively of Tranquil, and is the source of all the wealth that sustains our towers.

—*From On Tranquility and the Role of the Fade in Human Society, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

*If the Warden is not a mage...*

The Tranquil are the least understood but most visible members of the Circle. Every city of respectable size boasts a Circle of Magi shop, and every one of these shops is run by a Tranquil proprietor.

The name is a misnomer, for they are not tranquil at all; rather, they are like inanimate objects that speak. If a table wished to sell you an enchanted penknife, it could pass as one of these people. Their eyes are expressionless, their voices monotone. Incomparable craftsmen they might be, but they are hardly the sort of mages to put ordinary folk at ease.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **The Sacred Ashes of Andraste**

Only one person witnessed Maferath's betrayal: Havard the Aegis. A childhood friend of Maferath, he accompanied his chief to the meeting with the Tevinters, not realizing what was planned. When he understood that Maferath was giving Andraste over to be executed, Havard, unwilling to draw swords against his friend and liege, placed himself between Andraste and the Tevinter soldiers. The Tevinters struck him down, and Maferath left him for dead.

Gravely wounded, Havard made his way to the gates of Minrathous to stop the execution. When he reached it, the terrible deed was already done, the armies on the plains long since dispersed. Havard, cursing his weakness, gathered the earthly remains of Andraste that had been left to the wind and rain, and wept. When his fingers touched the pile of ash, his ears filled with song, and he saw before him a vision of Andraste, dressed in cloth made of starlight. She knelt at his side, saying, "The Maker shall never forget you so long as I remember."

The song faded, and the vision with it. And Havard was alone. But his wounds were healed. With new strength, Havard took up the ashes of Our Lady, and bore them back to the lands of the Alamarri.

—*From Thedas: Myths and Legends, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **The Veil**

I detest this notion that the Veil is some manner of invisible "curtain" that separates the world of the living from the world of the spirits (whether it be called the Fade or the Beyond is a matter of racial politics I refuse to indulge in at the moment). There is no "this side" and "that side" when it comes to the Veil. One cannot think of it as a physical thing or a barrier or even a "shimmering wall of holy light" (thank you very much for that image, Your Perfection).

Think of the Veil, instead, as opening one's eyes.

Before you opened them, you saw our world as you see it now: static, solid, unchanging. Now that they are open, you see our world as the spirits see it: chaotic, ever-changing, a realm where the imagined and the remembered have as much substance as that which is real—more, in fact. A spirit sees everything as defined by will and memory, and this is why they are so very lost when they cross the Veil. In our world, imagination has no substance. Objects exist independently of how we remember them or what emotions we associate with them. Mages alone possess the power to change the world with their minds, and perhaps this forms the nature of a demon's attraction to them—who can say?

Regardless, the act of passing through the Veil is much more about changing one's perceptions than a physical transition. The Veil is an idea, it is the act of transition itself, and it is only the fact that both living beings and spirits find the transition difficult that gives the Veil any credence as a physical barrier at all.

—*From A Dissertation on the Fade as a Physical Manifestation, by Mareno, Senior Enchanter of the Minrathous Circle of Magi, 6:55 Steel*

## **CULTURE AND HISTORY**

### **Aravels**

*If The Warden is Dalish...*



We are the Dalish: keepers of the lost lore, walkers of the lonely path. We are the last elvhen. Never again shall we submit. —The Oath of the Dales

Someone once told me that humans flee when they see the sails of our aravels flying above the tops of trees. I say, good, let them flee. The humans took everything from us—our homeland, our freedom, our immortality. What's a little fear compared to all the horrors inflicted upon us? I recite the Oath of the Dales to myself each day when I sleep and when I wake: "Never again shall we submit." Never again.

The keeper says that one day the Dalish will find a home that we can call our own. But why? Why should we tie ourselves to stone constructions like the humans and the dwarves? What is wrong with the life we have now? We owe nothing to anyone, we have no master but ourselves, and we go where the halla and the gods take us. There is nothing more wonderful than sitting on an aravel as it flies through the forest, pulled by our halla. We are truly free, for the first time in our people's history. Why should we change this?

—From the journal of Taniel, clan hunter.

*If The Warden is not Dalish...*

The Dalish, who band together in small groups of blood relatives, travel in ornately carved wagons known as aravel, drawn by large white stags called halla. The aravel are a unique sight, beautiful in their swooping curvature, and adorned with broad hoods and bright silken cloths that flap in the wind, often displaying the noble banners that once flew over that family's house. Most humans refer to the aravel as "landships," for in a strong wind it can often appear as if the elves travel in long boats with sails high overhead to announce their arrival (or warn others away). The halla are unique to the elves, and any but elven handlers consider them ornery and almost impossible to train. To the Dalish, they are noble beasts, superior in breeding to the horse. Certainly most humans would agree that the halla are as beautiful as the elves themselves; the fact that many imperial nobles maintain a bounty on halla horns that find their way into Tevinter is an affront the Dalish consider unforgivable.

Few among us can claim to have seen the Dalish landships up close. Any human who sees them on the horizon does well to head the other way. Few Dalish clans take kindly to humans intruding on their camps, and more than one tale tells of trouble-making humans who found themselves mercilessly filled with Dalish arrows.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi.

## **The Dales**

*If the Warden is Dalish...*

You will hear tales of the woman Andraste. The shemlen name her prophet, bride of their Maker. But we knew her as a war leader, one who, like us, had been a slave and dreamed of liberation. We joined her rebellion against the Imperium, and our heroes died beside her, unmourned, in Tevinter bonfires.

But we stayed with our so-called allies until the war ended. Our reward: A land in southern Orlais called the Dales. So we began the Long Walk to our new home.

Halamshiral, "the end of the journey," was our capital, built out of the reach of the humans. We could once again forget the incessant passage of time. Our people began the slow process of recovering the culture and traditions we had lost to slavery.

But it was not to last. The Chantry first sent missionaries into the Dales, and then, when those were thrown out, templars. We were driven from Halamshiral, scattered. Some took refuge in the cities of the shemlen, living in squalor, tolerated only a little better than vermin.

We took a different path. We took to the wilderness, never stopping long enough to draw the notice of our shemlen neighbors. In our self-imposed exile, we kept what remained of elven knowledge and culture alive.

—"The End of the Long Walk," as told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

*If the Warden is not Dalish...*

Many forget that when Holy Andraste called out to the oppressed peoples to rise up, it was the elves who answered her first.

The humblest slaves of the Imperium became her vanguard, and when victory came, they were rewarded accordingly: They were given a land in what is now the south of Orlais, called the Dales.

A great exodus of elves undertook the journey to their new home, crossing ocean, desert, and mountain. Their city, the first elven city since the fabled Arlathan, was called Halamshiral. A new era had begun for the elves.

But the old era wasn't through with them. In their forest city, the elves turned again to worship their silent, ancient gods. They became increasingly isolationist, posting Emerald Knights who guarded their borders with jealousy, rebuking all efforts at trade or civilized discourse. Dark rumors spread in the lands that bordered the Dales, whispers of humans captured and sacrificed to elven gods.

And then came an attack by the elves on the defenseless village of Red Crossing. The Chantry replied with the Exalted March of the Dales, and the era of the elven kingdom came to an end. Halamshiral was utterly destroyed, the elves driven out, scattered, left to survive on goodwill alone.

—From *Ferelden: Folklore and History*, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.

## **The Long Walk**

When our people left Tevinter, we had nothing except the knowledge that for the first time in countless centuries, we were free.

It was Shartan's dream that one day we would have our own homeland, where we could live as we chose. After the long struggle that claimed the lives of many, even Shartan himself, we were granted the Dales. And though the Dales were to the south of the land of Orlais, and a long way off from Tevinter, it mattered little. We were going home. And so we walked.

We called our journey the Long Walk, for that was what it was. We walked with what little we had on our backs. Some walked without shoes, for they had none. Whole families, women with infants, the old and young alike—all of them made their way across the land on foot. And if one of our people could no longer walk, we carried him, or sometimes left him behind.

Many perished along the way. Some died of exhaustion, others simply gave up and fell by the wayside. A great number were set upon by human bandits, even though we had few possessions. Along the way, a growing number began to bemoan the decision to leave Tevinter. "At least in Tevinter," they said, "we had food, and water, and shelter. What do we have here? Nothing but the open sky and the prospect of the never-ending road ahead." Some turned back toward Tevinter. But most of us continued walking.

And the gods rewarded those of us who did not waver by bringing us to the Dales. Our people called the new city Halamshiral—"the end of the journey." And for a time, it was home.

—As told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

## **Uthenera**

To the ancient elves who existed during the time of Arlathan, uthenera was an act of reverence. Elves did not age. They were not immortal, but they did not suffer from deterioration of mind or body. They suffered only from a deterioration of the spirit.

It did not happen often, but the oldest of the elves were said to reach a point where they became weary of life. Memories became too much to bear, and rather than fade into complacency, they voluntarily stood aside to let newer generations guide their people.

Uthenera means "the long sleep," in which the elder would retire to a chamber that was one part bed and one part tomb. To great ceremony from all the extended family, the elder would succumb to a slumber from which they would not wake for centuries, and often never. In time, the body would deteriorate and the elder would die in truth. All the while, family would continue to visit the chamber to pay respect to one who made such a great sacrifice.

With the arrival of humans and the quickening of elven blood that ensued, the practice of uthenera began to fade. When Arlathan fell, it ceased forever.

—From *What Has Passed*, by Hassandriel, Lord of Halamshiral, 2:7 Glory

## **Vallaslin: Blood Writing**

*If the Warden is Dalish...*

When the children of our people came of age, they earn the privilege of wearing the vallaslin, the blood writing. It sets us apart from the shemlen, and from the elves who have thrown their lot in with them. It reminds us that we will never again surrender our traditions and beliefs.

The ritual deserves great reverence. The one who is to gain the vallaslin must prepare by meditating on the gods and the ways of our people, and by purifying the body and the skin. When the time comes, the keeper of the clan applies the blood writing. This is done in complete silence. Cries of pain are signs of weakness. If one cannot tolerate the pain of the blood writing, they are not ready to undertake the responsibilities of an adult. The keeper may stop the ritual if they decide that the one gaining the vallaslin is not ready. There is no shame in this, for all children are different, and our ancestors once took centuries to come of age.

—As told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves.

*If the Warden is not Dalish...*

After my encounter with the Dalish elves on the road to Nevarra, I studied every book on the elves I could find. I sought out legends and myths and history and tried to make sense of it all. But there is only so much one can learn from books. I knew that in order to truly understand the Dalish, I would have to seek them out—a dreadful idea, in hindsight. In my defense, I was young—and also inebriated when the idea popped into my head. Unfortunately, even after I had regained some measure of sobriety, the idea still held appeal. It proved remarkably resistant to my attempts to ignore it.

I gave in after months of that nagging thought at the back of my head and set out to learn about the Dalish first-hand. I tramped through the forests bordering Orlais for weeks before I finally found—or was found by—a Dalish hunter. I stumbled into one of his traps and suddenly was hanging from a tree with a rope about my ankles.

So there I was, defenseless, upside down with my robe over my head, my underclothes on display. Descriptions of my predicament might elicit laughter these days, but trust me when I say it was a situation I would not wish on anyone. Thankfully, my ridiculous appearance may have caused my captor to stay his hand—what threat is a silly human with his pants showing?

And so he sat, made a small fire, and began to skin the deer he had caught. I soon mustered the courage to speak. I tried to assure him that I was not there to harm him—but he laughed at this and replied that if I were there to harm him, I had failed terribly. Eventually we got to talking, and when I say talking, I mean that I asked him questions, and occasionally he would deign to answer.

He told me that while some Dalish actively seek out human travelers to rob or frighten, most of his people would rather be left alone. He seemed to believe that punishing the humans for past actions only led to more violence. I asked him about the intricate tattoos on his face; he told me they were called vallaslin—"blood writing." His were symbols of Andruil the Huntress, one of the most highly revered elven goddesses. He said the Dalish mark themselves to stand out from humans and from those of their kin who have chosen to live under human rule. He said the vallaslin remind his people that they must never again surrender their beliefs.

When he finished skinning the deer, he cut me down. By the time I had righted myself and conquered the dizziness of all the blood rushing out of my head, he was gone.

I do not recommend that my readers seek out the Dalish for themselves. I was very lucky to have met the man that I did, and to have walked away from our meeting unscathed. Perhaps the Maker watches over those who seek knowledge with an open heart; I certainly would like to think so.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi

## **The Anderfels**

The Anderfels are a land of shocking extremes. It is the most desolate place in all the world, for two Blights have left great expanses of the steppes so completely devoid of life that corpses cannot even decay there—no insect or grub will ever reach them.

It is a land filled with wonders like the Merdaine, with its gigantic white statue of Our Lady carved into its face, her hands outstretched and bearing an eternal flame, or Weisshaupt Fortress, with its walls of living rock towering over the desolate plains below.

The Anders, too, are a people of extremes: The most devout priests and the most deadly soldiers, the poorest nation in the world and the most feared.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar*, by *Brother Genitivi*

## **Antiva**

In the rest of the civilized world, it is common belief that Antiva has no king. I assure you, gentle readers, that this is untrue. The line of kings in Antiva has remained unbroken for two and a half thousand years—it is simply that nobody pays any attention to them whatsoever.

The nation is ruled in truth by a collection of merchant princes. They are not princes in the literal sense, but heads of banks, trading companies, and vineyards. Their power is conferred strictly by wealth.

But Antiva is not primarily renowned for its peculiar form of government, nor for its admittedly unparalleled wines. Antiva is known for the House of Crows. Since Antivans are well-known for being good at everything but fighting, it is more than a little ironic that Antiva possesses the most deadly assassins in the world. Their fame is such that Antiva keeps no standing army: No king is willing to order his troops to assault her borders, and no general is mad enough to lead such an invasion. The attack would likely succeed, but its leaders would not see the day.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Avvars**

Driven across the Frostbacks in ancient times, the Alamarri tribesmen split into three groups: one settled the Ferelden Valley, one was pushed into the Korcari Wilds, and the last returned to the mountains. Modern Fereldans bear little resemblance to their Alamarri ancestors, and the Chasind remember few of their traditions, but the Avvars have changed little throughout the ages.

Like the Chasind, the Avvars are not a united people. Each tribe fends for itself and is beholden only to its thane. They still follow their own gods: Korth the Mountain-Father, Hakkon Wintersbreath, The Lady of the Skies, as well as dozens of animal gods never named to outsiders.

Nothing lasts in the mountains. Wind and rain eventually eat away the strongest holds. Valleys that were arable one generation are locked in year-round ice the next. Game is constantly on the move. Even among themselves, the Avvar make no absolute promises: they wed by a tradition in which the groom struggles to untie a tightly knotted rope while the bride sings a hymn to one of the gods. However many knots he has undone by the time her song ends is the number of years she will spend with him. Lowlanders often forget that there is no such thing as a permanent alliance in the Frostbacks.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Bannorn**

The central Ferelden Valley has always been a paradox: No single bann holds more than a few dozen leagues of farmland, yet together they govern a greater territory than all the teyrns and arls combined. This collection of independent banns is known as the Bannorn, and it is the heart of Fereldan politics.

No person has ever sat upon the throne of Ferelden without first winning the approval of the Bannorn. Queen Fionne, who had the misfortune to take the throne in the eighteenth year of the Steel Age, wrote of the Bannorn, "There have been three wars this year fought over elopements. Five fought over wool. And one started by an apple tree. It isn't even winter yet. Who would believe that these same banns, now trying so hard to kill one another, just last year united to give me the crown?"

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Brecilian Forest**

There are places in the Brecilian Forest where the Veil is so thin the difference between awake and dreaming is next to nothing. In one such place, a wood-shaper was born under such unfortunate stars that his mother named him Abelas, which means "sorrow." And he lived up to his name. He could keep no apprentices, and lost his stock of bows in mishap after mishap, until finally he had nothing. The rest of the clan began to fear that his ill luck would harm them, too, and whispered among themselves of casting him out.

Abelas heard them and resolved to change his luck, and so went into the forest alone to seek a suitable tree from which to make bows.

At last he spied a young rowan growing beside a stream. He drew his axe, and the tree cried out in fear, begging to be spared. But Abelas said, "If I do not take your life, mine will surely end." With two strokes he felled the tree. From the tree, he made the finest three bows he had ever crafted. Pleased, Abelas returned to camp and gave his bows to the hunters at once.

By nightfall, however, the camp was in an uproar. The hunters had returned with braces of hares which, when cut open, revealed only worms and sawdust. The elder said it was a sign that the hunters had robbed some spirit of its host, for it is well known that spirits do not go about the waking world on their own, but inhabit another creature's body. The elder worked a charm to banish the spirit back to the Fade, and the clan went to sleep hungry.

The next day, the hunters brought back a doe, and again the beast bled sawdust. Now the clan began to fear the spirit would starve them, and wondered what they had done to deserve it. Abelas came forward then and told of the rowan tree. The Elder considered for a long time before declaring that they must replace what Abelas had taken from the spirit. So he sent the hunters to dig up a rowan sapling, and bring it, living, to the camp.

There the elder ordered the sapling planted, and appealed to the spirit for forgiveness.

There was a terrible sound then, as if the whole forest were crying out in protest. Darkness fell upon the camp, though it was just past midday. And when the darkness passed, a rowan grove, every tree bearing the frozen face of a terrified elf, stood where the camp had been. From then on, it was forbidden in every clan to cut living trees in the Brecilian Forest. The spirits know nothing of forgiveness.

—*"The Rowan Grove: A Dalish Tale,"* from *Ferelden: Folklore and History*, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **Thedas Calendar**

For most good folk, the details of our calendar have little purpose. It is useful only for telling them when the Summerday festival will be held, when the snows are expected to begin, and when the harvest must be complete. The naming of the years are a matter for historians and taxmen, and few if pressed could even tell you the reason that our current Age is named after dragons.

It is 9:30 Dragon Age, the thirtieth year of the ninth Age since the crowning of the Chantry's first Divine.

Each Age is exactly 100 years, with the next Age's name chosen in the 99th year. The scholars in Val Royeaux advise the Chantry of portents seen in that 99th year, and Chantry authorities pore over the research for months before the Divine announces the name of the imminent Age. The name is said to be an omen of what is to come, of what the people of Thedas will face for the next hundred years.

The current Age was not meant to be the Dragon Age. Throughout the last months of the Blessed Age, the Chantry was preparing to declare the Sun Age, named for the symbol of the Orlesian Empire, which at that time sprawled over much of the south of Thedas and controlled both Ferelden and what is now Nevarra. It was to be a celebration of Orlesian imperial glory.

But as the rebellion in Ferelden reached a head and the Battle of River Dane was about to begin, a peculiar event occurred: a rampage, the rising of a dreaded high dragon. Dragons had been thought practically extinct since the days of the Nevarran dragon hunts, and they say that to see this great beast rise from the Frostbacks was both majestic and terrifying. As the rampage began and the high dragon decimated the countryside in its search for food, the elderly Divine Faustine II abruptly declared the Dragon Age.

Some say the Divine was declaring support for Orlais in the battle against Ferelden, since the dragon is an element of the Dufayel family heraldry of King Meghren, the so-called Usurper King of Ferelden. Be that as it may, the high dragon's rampage turned towards the Orlesian side of the Frostback Mountains, killing hundreds and sending thousands more fleeing to the northern coast. The Fereldan rebels won the Battle of River Dane, ultimately securing their independence.

Many thus think that the Dragon Age will come to represent a time of violent and dramatic change for all of Thedas. It remains to be seen.

—*From The Studious Theologian, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar, 9:25 Dragon.*

## **The Chasind**

The Chasind "wilders" have lived in the Korcari Wilds since the first wars with the Alamarri drove them southward a millennium ago. According to their own lore, they had always been a forest-dwelling people that adapted quickly to their new home. Game and fish are plentiful in the wetlands, and the Chasind thrived.

For a time, they and the hill-dwelling Avvars were true threats to the northern lowlands. The Tevinter Imperium had arrived and was hard-pressed to keep back the waves of invasions from the south and the west. The fortress of Ostagar was built specifically to watch for Chasind hordes venturing north of the tree line. It was not until the legendary warrior Hafter soundly defeated the Chasind in the first half of the Divine Age that the question of their ability to contest the lowlands was settled permanently.

Today, the Chasind are considered largely peaceful, though their ways are still primitive compared to our own. In the Korcari Wilds they live in strange-looking huts built on stilts or even built into the great treetops. They paint their faces and are split into small tribes ruled by shamans like those amongst the Avvars. There are many tales of these shamans having learned their magic from the "Witches of the Wilds," witches that inspire as much terror as they do awe and gratitude even if there is no definitive proof they exist. In particular, the tale of Flemeth, the greatest witch of the wilds, is celebrated amongst all tribes.

While there is no way to know how many there are in the Wilds today, few travelers that pass through the forests tell of Chasind eking out an existence even in the frozen wastelands of the far south. One can assume that should the Chasind ever organize themselves once more, we might have reason to fear them here in Ferelden. We ignore them at our peril.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## **The City Elves**

*If the Warden is a City Elf...*

The humans tell tales of Andraste, and to them, she was a prophet. To our people, however, she was an inspiration. Her rebellion against Tevinter gave our people a window through which to see the sun, and we reached toward it with all our strength. The rebellion was brief but successful; even after the death of the prophetess, we fought on for independence as the human Imperium began to crumble. In the end, we won freedom and the southern land known as the Dales, and we began the Long Walk to our new homeland.

There, in the Dales, our people revived the lost lore as best we could. We called the first city Halamshiral, "end of the journey," and founded a new nation, isolated as elves were meant to be, this time patrolled by an order of Emerald Knights charged with watching the borders for trouble from humans.

But you already know that something went wrong. A small elven raiding party attacked the nearby human village of Red Crossing, an act of anger that prompted the Chantry to retaliate and, with their superior numbers, conquer the Dales.

We were not enslaved as we had been before, but our worship of the ancient gods was now forbidden. We were allowed to live among the humans only as second-class citizens who worshipped their Maker, forgetting once more the scraps of lore we had maintained through the centuries.

—*"The Rise and Fall of the Dales," as told by Sarethia, hahren of the Highever alienage*

*If the Warden is a Dalish Elf...*

It is hard to tell our children about those of our people who have decided to live in the shemlen's cities. They ask, "Why would anyone want to be treated like that?" And sometimes I do not know what to say. I do not understand it myself. They were freed, but they have returned to live in the service of their former masters. They are housed like animals in walled sections of the shemlen's cities. They do the meanest of tasks and are rewarded with nothing. Why? I do not know..

We tell the children that the elvhen are strong, that we are a proud people, but they hear of these city elves who choose to toil under the humans' heavy hand. How do we teach them pride when they know there are others who would allow themselves to be trampled into the dust? So we tell them that these city elves are to be pitied, that they have given up on their people, given up their heritage. We tell them that some people are so used to being controlled that, when freed, they know not what to do with themselves. They are weak and afraid—afraid of the unfamiliar, afraid of our life of wandering. Above all, they are afraid even to hope that one day we may have a home of our own.

—*Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves.*

*If the Warden is not a City or Dalish elf...*

When the holy Exalted March of the Dales resulted in the dissolution of the elven kingdom, leaving a great many elves homeless once again, the Divine Renata I declared that all lands loyal to the Chantry must give the elves refuge within their own walls. Considering the atrocities committed by the elves at Red Crossing, this was a great testament to the Chantry's charity. There was one condition, however—the elves were to lay aside their pagan gods and live under the rule of the Chantry.

Some of the elves refused our goodwill. They banded together to form the wandering Dalish elves, keeping their old elven ways—and their hatred of humans—alive. To this day, Dalish elves still terrorize those of us who stray too close to their camps. Most of the elves, however, saw that it was wisest to live under the protection of humans.



And so we took the elves into our cities and tried to integrate them. We invited them into our own homes and gave them jobs as servants and farmhands. Here, in Denerim, the elves even have their own quarter, governed by an elven keeper. Most have proven to be productive members of society. Still, a small segment of the elven community remains dissatisfied. These troublemakers and malcontents roam the streets causing mayhem, rebelling against authority and making a general nuisance of themselves.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Alienage Culture**

There have always been alienages. They have been around for as long as elves and shems have lived in the same lands. Ours isn't even the worst: They say that Val Royeaux has ten thousand elves living in a space no bigger than Denerim's market. Their walls are supposedly so high that daylight doesn't reach the vhenadahl until midday.

But don't be so anxious to start tearing down the walls and picking fights with the guards. They keep out more than they keep in. We don't have to live here, you know. Sometimes a family gets a good break, and they buy a house in the docks, or the outskirts of town. If they're lucky, they come back to the alienage after the looters have burned their house down. The unlucky ones just go to the paupers' field.

Here, we're among family. We look out for each other. Here, we do what we can to remember the old ways. The flat-ears who have gone out there, they're stuck. They'll never be human, and they've gone and thrown away being elven, too. So where does that leave them? Nowhere.

—*Sarethia, hahren of the Highever alienage*

## **Arlathan: Part One**

Before the ages were named or numbered, our people were glorious and eternal and never-changing. Like the great oak tree, they were constant in their traditions, strong in their roots, and ever reaching for the sky.

They felt no need to rush when life was endless. They worshiped their gods for months at a time. Decisions came after decades of debate, and an introduction could last for years. From time to time, our ancestors would drift into centuries-long slumber, but this was not death, for we know they wandered the Fade in dreams.

In those ages, our people called all the land Elvhenan, which in the old Elven language means "place of our people." And at the center of the world stood the great city of Arlathan, a place of knowledge and debate, where the best of the ancient elves would go to trade knowledge, greet old friends, and settle disputes that had gone on for millennia.

But while our ancestors were caught up in the forever cycle of ages, drifting through life at what we today would consider an intolerable pace, the world outside the lush forests and ancient trees was changing.

The humans first arrived from Par Vollen to the north. Called shemlen, or "quicklings," by the ancients, the humans were pitiful creatures whose lives blinked by in an instant. When they first met the elves, the humans were brash and warlike, quick to anger and quicker to fight, with no patience for the unhurried pace of elven diplomacy.

But the humans brought worse things than war with them. Our ancestors proved susceptible to human diseases, and for the first time in history, elves died of natural causes. What's more, those elves who spent time bartering and negotiating with humans found themselves aging, tainted by the humans' brash and impatient lives. Many believed that the ancient gods had judged them unworthy of their long lives and cast them down among the quicklings. Our ancestors came to look upon the humans as parasites, which I understand is similar to the way the humans see our people in the cities. The ancient elves immediately moved to close Elvhenan off from the humans, for fear that this quickening effect would crumble the civilization.

—The Fall of Arlathan, as told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

## **Arlathan: Part Two**

You ask what happened to Arlathan? Sadly, we do not know. Even those of us who keep the ancient lore have no record of what truly happened. What we have are accounts of the days before the fall, and a fable of the whims of the gods.

The human world was changing even as the elves slept. Clans and tribes gave way to a powerful empire called Tevinter, which—and for what reason we do not know—moved to conquer Elvhenan. When they breached the great city of Arlathan, our people, fearful of disease and loss of immortality, chose to flee rather than fight. With magic, demons, and even dragons at their behest, the Tevinter Imperium marched easily through Arlathan, destroying homes and galleries and amphitheaters that had stood for ages. Our people were corralled as slaves, and human contact quickened their veins until every captured elf turned mortal. The elves called to their ancient gods, but there was no answer.

As to why the gods didn't answer, our people left only a legend. They say that Fen'Harel, the Dread Wolf and Lord of Tricksters, approached the ancient gods of good and evil and proposed a truce. The gods of good would remove themselves to heaven, and the lords of evil would exile themselves to the abyss, neither group ever again to enter the other's lands. But the gods did not know that Fen'Harel had planned to betray them, and by the time they realized the Dread Wolf's treachery, they were sealed in their respective realms, never again to interact with the mortal world. It is a fable, to be sure, but those elves who travel the Beyond claim that Fen'Harel still roams the world of dreams, keeping watch over the gods lest they escape from their prisons.

Whatever the case, Arlathan had fallen to the very humans our people had once considered mere pests. It is said that the Tevinter magisters used their great destructive power to force the very ground to swallow Arlathan whole, destroying eons of collected knowledge, culture, and art. The whole of elven lore left only to memory.

—The Fall of Arlathan, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves

## **The Dalish Elves**

*If the Warden is a Dalish Elf...*

In time, the human empires will crumble. We have seen it happen countless times. Until then, we wait, we keep to the wild border lands, we raise halla and build aravels and present a moving target to the humans around us. We try to keep hold of the old ways, to relearn what was forgotten.

We call to the ancient gods, although they do not answer and have not heard us since before the fall of Arlathan, so that one day they might remember us: Elgar'nan the Eldest of the Sun and He Who Overthrew His Father, Mythal the Protector, Fen'Harel the Dread Wolf, Andruil the Huntress, Falon'Din the Friend of the Dead, Dirthamen the Keeper of Secrets, Ghilan'nain the Mother of Halla, June the Master of Crafts, and Sylaise the Hearthkeeper.

We gather every ten years for the Arlathvhen, to retell the ancient stories and keep them alive. For when the human kingdoms are gone, we must be ready to teach the others what it means to be elves.

—*Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

*If the Warden is not a Dalish Elf...*

I took the road north from Val Royeaux toward Nevarra with a merchant caravan. A scant two days past the Orlesian border, we were beset by bandits. They struck without warning from the cover of the trees, hammering our wagons with arrows, killing most of the caravan guards instantly. The few who survived the arrow storm drew their blades and charged into the trees after our attackers. We heard screams muffled by the forest, and then nothing more of those men.

After a long silence, the bandits appeared. Elves covered in tattoos and dressed in hides, they looted all the supplies and valuables they could carry from the merchants and disappeared back into the trees.

These, I was informed later, were the Dalish, the wild elves who lurk in the wilderness on the fringes of settled lands, preying upon travelers and isolated farmers. These wild elves have reverted to the worship of their false gods and are rumored to practice their own form of magic, rejecting all human society.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Denerim**

When anyone in Ferelden speaks of "going to the city," they inevitably mean Denerim. There is no other place in the kingdom which rivals it: Not in size, population, wealth, or importance. It is the seat of the Theirin family, the capital of Ferelden, the largest seaport, and, by ancient tradition, the meeting place of the Landsmeet.

As well, Denerim was the birthplace of Andraste. One of them, anyway, as several other sites claim to have been the prophet's early home, including Jader, in Orlais. The Chantry takes no stance on which site's claim is valid, but it is well known that Andraste was Fereldan by birth. When visiting the pilgrimage site in Denerim, it is inadvisable to mention Jader at all.

The city rests at the foot of the Dragon's Peak, a solitary mountain scarred by ancient lava flows. During Andraste's lifetime, it reputedly filled the sky with a great column of black ash and sent burning rock raining down as far away as the Free Marches, but it is now considered extinct. Some believe it merely sleeps, and will again darken the sky with ash and fire when the last Fereldan king dies, but this is highly unlikely.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Dragon Cults**

Let us suggest, for the moment, that a high dragon is simply an animal. A cunning animal, to be sure, but in possession of no true self-awareness or sentience. There has not, after all, been a single recorded case of a dragon attempting to communicate or performing any act that could not likewise be attributed to a clever beast.

How, then, does one explain the existence of so-called "dragon cults" throughout history?

One dragon cult might be explainable, especially in light of the reverence of the Old Gods in the ancient Tevinter Imperium. In the wake of the first Blight, many desperate imperial citizens turned to the worship of real dragons to replace the Old Gods who had failed them. A dragon, after all, was a god-figure that they could see: It was there, as real as the archdemon itself, and, as evidence makes clear, did offer a degree of protection to its cultists.

Other dragon cults could be explained in light of the first. Some cult members might have survived and spread the word. The worship of the Old Gods was as widespread as the Imperium itself—certainly such secrets could have made their way into many hands. But there have been reports of dragon cults even in places where the Imperium never touched, among folks who had never heard of the Old Gods or had any reason to. How does one explain them?

Members of a dragon cult live in the same lair as a high dragon, nurturing and protecting its defenseless young. In exchange, the high dragon seem to permit those cultists to kill a small number of those young in order to feast on draconic blood. That blood is said to have a number of strange long-term effects, including bestowing greater strength and endurance, as well as an increased desire to kill. It may breed insanity as well. Nevarran dragon-hunters have said these cultists are incredibly powerful opponents. The changes in the cultists are a form of blood magic, surely, but how did the symbiotic relationship between the cult and the high dragon form in the first place? How did the cultists know to drink the dragon's blood? How did the high dragon convince them to care for its young, or know that they would?

Is there more to draconic intelligence than we have heretofore guessed at? No member of a dragon cult has ever been taken alive, and what accounts exist from the days of the Nevarran hunters record only mad rants and impossible tales of godhood. With dragons only recently reappearing and still incredibly rare, we may never know the truth, but the question remains.

—*From Flame and Scale, by Brother Florian, Chantry scholar, 9:28 Dragon.*

## **History of Ferelden: Chapter 1**

Ferelden, as we think of it now, did not exist before the Exalted Age. Instead, the valley was divided up into dozens of old Alamarri clans. They warred constantly with one another over land, honor, the allegiance of the freeholders, and, on one notable occasion, the name given to a favorite mabari.

And then, in the 33rd year of the Exalted Age, Calenhad Theirin became teyrn of Denerim, and everything changed.

Most of what we know about the founding of our nation comes from old songs that the bards passed down through the Ages. The songs are filled with wild exaggerations and outright lies, but this hardly differs from the scholarly papers of some of my contemporaries. There is no agreement among poets or scholars on how he did it, but Calenhad gained the support of the Circle of Magi, and they crafted for him a suit of silvery white armor that, by all accounts, repelled both arrow and blade. Calenhad led his army across the valley and captured Redcliffe—one of only three men who ever successfully laid siege to that fortress—and presented himself to the banns of the Landsmeet as their king.

The poets tell us that every lord knelt before Calenhad without question. The fact that he attended the Landsmeet surrounded by Ash Warriors and loyal mages of the Circle is generally omitted from the ballads, however.

From Calenhad came the line of Theirin kings and queens who reigned, uninterrupted, until the 44th year of the Blessed Age, when the Orlesian invasion came. The rightful king was forced to flee Denerim, and for 70 years a puppet sat upon the throne.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## History of Ferelden: Chapter 2

The occupation was a dark blot on Ferelden's history. Our people, who from time immemorial valued their freedom over all else, were forced to bow to Orlesian rule. The Empire declared our elves property and sold them like cattle. Chevaliers routinely plundered freeholds of coin, food, and even women and children, and excused it as "taxation." And for 70 years no Landsmeets were held, for the Imperial throne had declared our ancient laws a form of treason.

King Brandel was one of those who escaped. He tried to organize the other fugitive lords to retake their land, but Brandel was neither clever nor persuasive, and the nobles preferred to take their chances alone. Ferelden might still be little more than a territory of the Empire were it not for the fact that his daughter had all the charisma that her royal father lacked. The Rebel Queen's rule began with a midnight attack on the imperial armory at Lothering. It was swift and successful, and with their pilfered arms the rebels began a campaign against the Orlesians in earnest.

But the turning point of the war came when a young freeholder joined the queen's army. The lad, Loghain Mac Tir, possessed a remarkable talent for strategy, and quickly became the favorite advisor of young Prince Maric. The queen finally died at the hands of Orlesian sympathizers anxious to curry favor with their painted masters, and Maric took her place as the leader of the rebellion. Loghain became Maric's right hand. Maric and Loghain led the rebels in a new campaign against their Orlesian oppressors, culminating in the battle of River Dane, where the last Chevaliers in Denerim were crushed. With the capital once more in the hands of Fereldans, the battle to free our people was finally over. But the battle to rebuild what had been lost had only just begun.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## Culture of Ferelden

The Fereldans are a puzzle. As a people, they are one bad day away from reverting to barbarism. They repelled invasions from Tevinter during the height of the Imperium with nothing but dogs and their own obstinate disposition. They are the coarse, wilful, dirty, disorganized people who somehow gave rise to our prophet, ushered in an era of enlightenment, and toppled the greatest empire in history.

There are few things you can assume safely in dealing with these people: First, they value loyalty above all things, beyond wealth, beyond power, beyond reason. Second, although they have nothing in their entire country which you are likely to think at all remarkable, they are extremely proud of their accomplishments. Third, if you insult their dogs, they are likely to declare war. And finally, the surest sign that you have underestimated the Fereldans is that you think you have come to understand them.

—*Empress Celene I of Orlais, in a letter to her newly appointed ambassador to Denerim*

## Dogs in Ferelden

I am frequently asked, during my travels in other lands, to explain the dogs omnipresent in Ferelden. Inevitably, I tell my foreign questioners that there are no more dogs in my homeland than in their own. In every civilized corner of Thedas, an astute observer will notice dogs employed in hunting game, keeping barns and storehouses free of vermin, herding livestock, guarding homes, and even used as beasts of burden in the mountains. It is simply that Fereldans show appreciation for the work that our dogs do. And perhaps the reason for that is tangled up in mythology.

Hafter, the first man to be named teyrn, the hero who united our Alamarri ancestors to drive back the darkspawn of the second Blight, was reputed to be the son of a werewolf. Now, perhaps this was meant to be some comment on his temperament, or simply a way of making a great man even larger than life. But more than half the noble families of Ferelden claim to be descendants of Hafter, and consequently, many of our people believe they have some distant kinship with wolves. It is only good manners to be polite to one's kin.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Geography of Ferelden**

The kingdom of Ferelden is the southernmost civilized nation in Thedas—although some scholars dispute that claim to civilization. It is perhaps the most physically isolated of all the kingdoms of Thedas: To the east is the Amaranthine Ocean, to the north the Waking Sea, and to the south the Korcari Wilds, which in the summer months are a vast peat bog, and in the winter become a treacherous labyrinth of iced-over waterways. The Frostback Mountains guard the western border, and only a narrow plain between the mountains and the sea allows travel between Ferelden and Orlais.

Most of the land in the central portion of the kingdom, called the Bannorn, is open plains. These are crossed by the remnants of an ancient Tevinter highway that once connected Val Royeaux with Ostagar, on the edge of the Korcari Wilds. The western part of Ferelden is dominated by Lake Calenhad, a huge caldera filled by the runoff of glaciers from nearby mountains. Lake Calenhad is home to the famed fortress of Redcliffe, as well as the Circle Tower, which houses Ferelden's Circle of Magi.

In the east is the vast Brecilian Forest, which the superstitious locals profess to be haunted, and from which rises the Dragon's Peak, a solitary mountain that guards the capital city of Denerim.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Free Marches**

The Free Marches are not a kingdom, nor even a nation in the most basic sense. People from that region dislike even being lumped together as "Marchers." Rather, they are a collection of independent city-states united only when it suits them; in this respect, they resemble the Bannorn before the arrival of King Calenhad. Because of this, the Free Marches have no capital, and what passes for a central government exists only sporadically, a sort of Landsmeet that convenes only during times of crisis.

I arrived in time for the Grand Tourney while it was on in Tantervale—a remarkable sight indeed. I saw Avvar hillsmen test their mettle against Orlesian Chevaliers, riders from the Anderfels buying Nevarran cavalry horses, Antivan craftsmen selling their wares to Tevinter mages. All of Thedas was on display.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Politics of Ferelden**

To our neighbors, Ferelden seems utterly chaotic. Unlike other monarchies, power does not descend from our throne. Rather, it rises from the support of the freeholders.

Each freehold chooses the bann or arl to whom it pays allegiance. Typically, this choice is based on proximity of the freehold to the lord's castle, as it's worthless to pay for the upkeep of soldiers who will arrive at your land too late to defend it. For the most part, each generation of freeholders casts its lot with the same bann as their fathers did, but things can and do change. No formal oaths are sworn, and it is not unheard of, especially in the prickly central Bannorn, for banns to court freeholders away from their neighbors—a practice which inevitably begets feuds that last for ages.

Teyrns arose from amongst the banns, warleaders who, in antiquity, had grown powerful enough to move other banns to swear fealty to them. There were many teyrns in the days before King Calenhad, but he succeeded in whittling them down to only two: Gwaren in the south, Highever in the north. These teyrns still hold the oaths of banns and arls who they may call upon in the event of war or disaster, and similarly, the teyrns still hold responsibility for defending those sworn to them.

The arls were established by the teyrns, given command of strategic fortresses that could not be overseen by the teyrns themselves. Unlike the teyrns, the arls have no banns sworn to them, and are simply somewhat more prestigious banns.

The king is, in essence, the most powerful of the teyrns. Although Denerim was originally the teyrnir of the king, it has since been reduced to an arling, as the king's domain is now all of Ferelden. But even the king's power must come from the banns.

Nowhere is this more evident than during the Landsmeet, an annual council for which all the nobles of Ferelden gather, held for almost three thousand years except odd interruptions during Blights and invasions. The sight of a king asking for—and working to win—the support of "lesser" men is a source of constant wonder to foreign ambassadors.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Frostback Mountains**

Even mountains had a heart, once. When the world was young, Korth the Mountain-Father kept his throne at the peak of Belenas, the mountain that lies at the center of the world, from which he could see all the corners of earth and sky. And he saw strong men become weak, brave men grow cowardly, and wise men turn foolish for love.

Korth devised a plan that he might never be betrayed by his own heart, by taking it out and hiding it where no soul would ever dare search for it. He sealed it inside a golden cask, buried it in the earth, and raised around it the fiercest mountains the world had ever seen, the Frostbacks, to guard it.

But without his heart, the Mountain-Father grew cruel. His chest was filled with bitter mountain winds that shrieked and howled like lost souls. Food lost its flavor, music had no sweetness, and he lost all joy in deeds of valor. He sent avalanches and earthquakes to torment the tribes of men. Gods and men rose against him, calling him a tyrant, but with no heart, Korth could not be slain. Soon there were no heroes left, either among men or gods, who would dare challenge Korth.

The Lady of the Skies sent the best of her children—the swiftest, the cleverest, and strongest fliers—to scour the mountains for the missing heart, and for a year and a day they searched. But sparrow and raven, vulture and eagle, swift and albatross returned to her with nothing.

Then the ptarmigan spoke up, and offered to find the god-chief's heart. The other birds laughed, for the ptarmigan is a tiny bird, too humble to soar, which spends half its time hopping along the ground. The Lady would not give the little creature her blessing, for the mountains were too fierce even for eagles, but the ptarmigan set out anyway.

The little bird traveled deep into the Frostbacks. When she could not fly, she crawled. She hugged the ground and weathered the worst mountain winds, and so made her lonely way to the valley where the heart beat. With all the god's terrible deeds, the heart was far too heavy for the tiny bird to carry, so she rolled it, little by little, out of the valley and down a cliff, and when the golden cask struck the earth, it shattered. The heart was full almost to bursting, and the pain of it roused the mountain god to come see what had happened.

When Korth neared his heart, it leapt back into his chest and he was whole again. Then Hakkon Wintersbreath bound Korth's chest with three bands of iron and three bands of ice, so it could never again escape. And all the remaining gods named the ptarmigan honored above even the loftiest eagles.

—*"The Ptarmigan: An Avvar Tale," from Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## Gwaren

The human settlement of Gwaren is built directly on top of a dwarven outpost by the same name. Prior to the First Blight, in a time when Ferelden was not yet a nation and was still carved up into barbarian tribes, the outpost served as a source of salt and a means by which the dwarves could reach the sea-lanes of the Amaranthine Ocean. Unwilling to come to the surface, the dwarves made an agreement with the local teyrn to build a port and relied on the humans to ferry goods between the ships and the underground outpost. This made Gwaren a prosperous place and extraordinarily wealthy for a time.

When, in the Divine Age, the dwarven kingdoms fell to the darkspawn and the Deep Roads were closed off, so too did the dwarves disappear from Gwaren. The human settlement, the envy of surrounding barbarian tribes, was assaulted and sacked, its wealth stolen.

The town remained, however, and despite its remote location continued to find value as a source of fish and timber. As the first settlement liberated by King Maric and Loghain during the Fereldan Rebellion, Gwaren was eventually granted to Loghain when he became teyrn in 9:11 Dragon.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## Highever

Castle Highever has stood since the Divine Age, when it was not an independent bannorn, but merely an outpost of the growing Bannorn of Amaranthine, in the days before Amaranthine became an arling itself. The outpost of Highever was originally held by the Elstan family, cousins of the Howes. In the Age of Towers, however, Bann Conobar Elstan was murdered by his wife, Flemeth, thus ending the bloodline. Conobar's captain of the guard, Sarim Cousland, took the lands and title.

The Couslands declared their independence from Amaranthine, starting a war that lasted 30 years. When the dust settled, Highever was on its own, and in possession of half the land that had once been southwestern Amaranthine.

Highever became a teyrnir during the Black Age, when Haelia Cousland gathered the lords together under her banner to drive the werewolves out of their lands, earning herself the title of teyrna almost as an afterthought.

Today, Highever is one of only two remaining teyrnirs, making the Cousland family second in rank only to the king.

*If the Warden is Human Noble:* The Cousland family, however, was all but wiped out in an unexpected attack by Arl Howe of Amaranthine, and the fate of the teyrnir is now in question.



*If the Warden is not Human Noble:* Arl Howe of Amaranthine was named the new Teyrn of Highever under somewhat questionable circumstances, and the fate of the Cousland family is now uncertain.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Lake Calenhad**

The waters of Lake Calenhad are steeped in legends. The Avvar people say that it was once the site of Belenas, the mountain which stood at the center of the world, from which Korth the Mountain Father surveyed the earth and sky. But it was destroyed in the battle between Korth and the serpent Nathramar, leaving only a vast crater behind. When the Lady of the Skies saw that Belenas was gone, she wept, and her tears filled the crater, making the lake.

The Tevinters believed that the waters of Lake Calenhad were blessed by Razikale, god of mysteries, and that those who drank from them were granted special insights. This was why they built the great tower on an island in the middle of the lake, hoping the powers of the lake would aid their magical research.

But most of us know the legend of King Calenhad, which gives the place its name. It is said that Calenhad Theirin spent a year and a day in the Tower of the Magi. Each day, he drew a single cup full of water from the lake and carried it to the Formari at the top of the tower. By magic, each cup of water was forged into a single ring of the mail armor the Circle gave to Calenhad. In that armor, made from the lifeblood of the land itself, no blade could strike him, no arrow pierce him, so long as he stood on Fereldan soil.

—*From Thedas: Myths and Legends, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Lothering**

In ancient times, Lothering was little more than a trading post that served the fortress of Ostagar to the south. Nowadays, it is larger, serving Redcliffe and the community of merchants and surface dwarves near Orzammar. Its location on the North Road gives it strategic value, so control of Lothering has historically been a matter of contention between the Southern Bannorn and the South Reach Arling. King Calenhad himself stepped in and awarded the town to South Reach in the Exalted Age, which has largely ended the feud, or at least the appearance of it.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **King Maric Theirin**

It is difficult to separate the man from the myth. The last survivor of the bloodline of King Calenhad, the silver knight, Maric drove the Orlesian forces from Ferelden's borders, reclaimed the throne, and freed our people from foreign tyranny. All true, and all larger than life.

He was born in hiding near Cathal's Crossing to the Rebel Queen Moira and grew up in the rebel camps, an outlaw in his own country. When the rebel queen died, Maric inherited her homeless nobles, malcontents, and displaced freeholders, and with the aid of his friend Loghain Mac Tir, built them into an army.

After the pivotal battle of River Dane, Maric took the throne. He married Rowan, daughter of Rendorn Guerrin, arl of Redcliffe, and began the long, slow process of rebuilding everything Orlais had demolished during 70 years of occupation.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Nevarra**

The fourth time I attempted to cross the border into Nevarra from Orlais and was turned back by Chevaliers, I decided to take the more roundabout path: a ship back to Ferelden, and then another to Nevarra. The outcome was more than worth the trouble.

The whole country is filled with artistry, from the statues of heroes that litter the streets in even the meanest villages to the glittering golden College of Magi in Cumberland. Perhaps nowhere is more astonishing than the vast necropolis outside Nevarra City. Unlike most other followers of Andraste, the Nevarrans do not burn their dead. Instead, they carefully preserve the bodies and seal them in elaborate tombs. Some of the wealthiest Nevarrans begin construction of their own tombs while quite young, and these become incredible palaces, complete with gardens, bathhouses, and ballrooms, utterly silent, kept only for the dead.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Noble Families of Ferelden**

The occupation left empty castles in its wake. Whole families were butchered in the initial invasion, and all those who couldn't or wouldn't bend knee to the Emperor's puppet king were declared traitors and hunted. Many bloodlines ended on Chevaliers' blades at dusty crossroads, in forest clearings, or in freeholds.

And then there were the turncoats.

To curry favor with their new masters, some nobles took up arms against their brothers. They betrayed and murdered the Rebel Queen, an act that created even more vacant titles and lands, once King Maric exacted justice.

That Ferelden did not fall apart after the Orlesians left is a testament to the strength of King Maric. The old families still held grudges against those who had sided with the emperor, and those new families that had been granted titles were viewed as interlopers. The Landsmeets that followed Maric's coronation were tense, to say the least.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Old Gods**

Dumat, the Dragon of Silence.  
Zazikel, the Dragon of Chaos.  
Toth, the Dragon of Fire.  
Andoral, the Dragon of Slaves.  
Urthemiel, the Dragon of Beauty.  
Razikale, the Dragon of Mystery.  
Lusacan, the Dragon of Night.

There were seven Old Gods, great winged dragons that were said to rule over the ancient world. The Chantry maintains that they are responsible for the original sin, that they turned humanity away from its true creator through deceit. Humanity's faith faltered, and thus the Maker turned away from the world—but not before trapping the Old Gods in eternal prisons beneath the earth as punishment.

Scholars assume that the Old Gods must indeed have been real at one point, but most agree that they were likely actual dragons—ancient high dragons of a magnitude not known today, and impressive enough to frighten ancient peoples into worshipping them. Some even claim that these dragons slumber as a form of hibernation, not as a result of the Maker's wrath.

Regardless of the truth, legend maintains that even from their underground prisons, the Old Gods were able to whisper into the minds of men. The Archon Thalsian, first of the Magisters, who claimed to have contacted the Old God Dumat, used the blood magic Dumat taught to him to attain incredible power in Tevinter and declare himself the ruler of an Empire. In return, he established the first temples worshipping the Old Gods, and the dragons became equated everywhere with imperial power.

To date, four of the Old Gods are said to have risen as corrupted archdemons: Dumat, the first and most powerful, was slain at the Battle of Silent Fields. Zazikel fell at the Battle of Starkhaven, Toth died at the Battle of Hunter Fell, and Andoral was felled by Garahel, the legendary Grey Warden, at the Battle of Ayesleigh. The archdemons have been identified only after years of argument among scholars, and to this day it is unclear whether the archdemons were truly Old Gods and not simply dragons. All that is known is that the darkspawn hunt for them deep underground. If they are truly the Old Gods, as many scholars believe, then we have only three Blights remaining. When all the Old Gods have risen and been slain, however, what will happen? Will the Blights end forever, and humanity earn forgiveness from the Maker at last? We shall see.

—*From The Old Gods Rise Again, by Sister Mary, Chantry scholar, 8:50 Blessed.*

## **The Orlesian Empire**

There are many lords and ladies in Val Royeaux.

And I mean this literally. Once, the system of noble titles in Orlais was labyrinthine: There were barons and baronnes and baronets and sur-barons and a horde of others, each with its own origins and its own nuances of comparison. The Orlesian aristocracy is ancient and much given to competition. All the nobility play the Grand Game, as it is known, whether they wish to or not. It is a game of reputation and patronage, where moves are made with rumors and scandal is the chief weapon. No gentle game, this. More blood has been drawn as a result of the Grand Game than any war the Orlesians have fought. Of this, I am assured by almost every gentleman here.

As far as titles went, everything changed with the coming of Emperor Drakon, who established the Orlesian Empire as it exists now, and who created the Chantry. There is no more venerated figure in Orlais; in Val Royeaux, the statue of Drakon stands as tall as the statue of Andraste. Drakon determined that the Grand Game was tearing Orlais apart, so he abolished all titles besides his own, and lord, and lady.

I am told, with some twittering amusement, that this action did not end the Grand Game as Drakon had intended. Now the lords and ladies collected unofficial titles rather than official ones, such as "the exalted patron of Tassus Klay" or "uncle to the champion of Tremmes." It is a headache to remember such titles, and one winces to think of the poor doormen at the balls who must rattle them off as each guest enters the room.

The aristocracy is different from Ferelden in other ways, as well. The Orlesians' right to rule stems directly from the Maker. There exists neither the concept of rule by merit nor the slightest notion of rebellion. If one is not noble, one aspires to be—or at the least aspires to be in the good graces of a noble, and is ever watching for a way to enter the patronage of those better placed in the Grand Game.

And then there are the masks. And the cosmetics: I have not seen so much paint since the kennels at Highever. But that is another story.

—*From Beyond the Frostbacks, by Bann Teoric of West Hill, 9:20 Dragon*

## The Casteless

The caste system in Orzammar includes many groups of privilege—the nobility and the warriors above all others, but to a lesser degree the merchants and the smiths and the miners. Tradition establishes a clear hierarchy. But as in any culture with an upper class, there is also a clear underclass. These unfortunates, the so-called "casteless," are believed to be descendants of criminals and other undesirables. They have been looked down upon since Orzammar's foundation. They have taken up residence in a place called "Dust Town," a crumbling ruin on the fringe of Orzammar's common areas.

Orzammar society considers these casteless lower than even the Servant Caste (indeed, the casteless are not allowed to become servants, as it is too honorable a position). They are seen as little better than animals, their faces branded at birth to mark them as the bastard children of the kingdom. Their home district, little more than a slum, is a haven for crime, organized and otherwise. Orzammar's guards seemingly cannot be bothered to patrol its streets. The best that most casteless dwarves can hope for is a life at the whim of a local crime lord, ended abruptly by violence or an overabundance of toxic lichen ale.

Even so, there is some hope for the casteless, a dangling rope that offers a way up into greater Orzammar society. Since a dwarf's caste is determined by the parent of the same sex, the male child of a nobleman is part of that noble's house and caste. Strangely, it is acceptable for casteless women to train in the arts of courtly romance to woo nobles and warriors; they are known as "noble hunters." Any male born from such a union is considered a joyous event, considering the low rate of dwarven fertility. The mother and entire family are then taken in by the father's house, although they retain their caste.

The dwarves we know on the surface are also considered casteless once they leave Orzammar, although this is only relevant to those who return—if they are allowed to return at all. Dwarves who leave for the surface (the "sun-touched," as they're often called behind their backs) lose their connection to the Stone and the favor of the ancestors, and thus are worthy of little more than pity, for upon dying they are said to be lost to the Stone forever. Put that way, it seems a sad existence indeed.

—*From Stone Halls of the Dwarves by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar*

## The Castes

Visitors to Orzammar should keep in mind that the hierarchies of dwarven society are much more complex than our own. It is easy to gravely insult a man simply by mistaking his position. Since this can lead to unnecessary loss of life and limbs, I will attempt to mitigate the danger for my fellow travelers.

The society of Orzammar is divided into nobles, warriors, smiths, artisans, miners, merchants, and servants. Now, you are undoubtedly saying to yourself, "We have all those divisions among our own people." This is a dangerous misconception. Certainly, we do have nobility, artisans, merchants, and these positions are largely inherited from our parents. However, the younger children of noblemen often choose to be artisans or soldiers. The sons of merchants may join the army, or become servants, or apprentice themselves to a craftsman. This is all freely chosen. Limited, perhaps, by the circumstances of birth, but still chosen.

What is a matter of choice for most human folk is dictated entirely by birth for dwarves. No one may become a smith who was not born to Smith Caste parents. A servant who marries a noblewoman will never be a noble himself, and although his daughters would be nobles, his sons would be servants, for daughters inherit the caste of their mother, while sons inherit the caste of their father.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Life in Orzammar**

The dwarves of Orzammar are quite unlike those found in most human cities. Although Orzammar derives its vast wealth from trade with human kingdoms, all dwarves who come to the surface to trade are stripped of their position in society. Dwarven merchants are so ubiquitous in human cities that many people labor under the impression that all dwarves are merchants, or that their whole race worships coin and trade. But these surface dwarves are atypical creatures, the ones willing to give up all ties to their kin and sacrifice their rank in order to conduct business.

Below ground, the dwarves are a people obsessed with honor—their own, and that of their family. Most nobles incorporate chainmail even into formal gowns, because slights and insults often turn deadly.

They are a people who revere excellence and strive to achieve it in all things. Even members of the Servant Caste have been elevated to Paragons, usually posthumously, in recognition of remarkable service.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Deep Roads**

There isn't a dwarf alive who remembers the Deep Roads as they once were. They were the network of tunnels that joined the thaigs together. To be honest, it isn't even right to give them such a simple term as "tunnels": They are works of art, with centuries of planning demonstrated in the geometry of their walls, with the statues of the Paragons that watch over travelers, with the flow of lava that keeps the Deep Roads lit and warm. The cloudgazers up on the surface talk of the Imperial Highway built by the magisters of old, a raised walkway that crossed thousands of miles, something that could only have been built by magic. Perhaps it is comparable to the Deep Roads, although we dwarves didn't need magic.

I suppose it doesn't matter any more. The darkspawn rule the Deep Roads now. When Orzammar sealed off the entrances to the Deep Roads, abandoning everything that lay out there, we handed over the kingdom-that-was to those black bastards forever. To think that there are genlocks crawling over Bownammar now, tearing down our statues and defiling our greatest works! Corruption covers everything we built out there. Every dwarf who goes out and comes back says that it gets worse with each passing year, the foulness spread a little further.

And the cloudgazers think the darkspawn are gone just because they aren't spilling out onto the surface? Huh. One day, when Orzammar is gone for good, they'll find out differently. Those darkspawn won't have anywhere else to go but up, and they'll do it. The surface folk will have themselves a Blight that will never end.

—*Transcript of a conversation with a member of the dwarven Mining Caste, 8:90 Blessed*

## The City of Orzammar

The dwarves are lauded for their craftsmanship, and the city of Orzammar is one of their finest works. Orzammar lies at the heart of the Frostback Mountains, deep underground. The city arcs outward from the royal palace, which is built around a natural lava vent, continually fountaining liquid rock, which both lights and heats the entire cavern.

The topmost tier of Orzammar is home to the noble caste, with their palaces fanning out in both directions from the court of the king, as well as the Shaperate, which serves as a repository for all dwarven knowledge.

The lower tier is the Commons, where the merchant caste holds sway and where the finest works of Orzammar's craftsman are for sale. In the center of the river of lava, connected to the Commons by a causeway, are the Proving Grounds, a sacred arena where the dwarves, by ancient tradition, settle their disputes.

On one side of the fiery river are the ruins of old dwarven palaces, fallen into disrepair, which the locals call Dust Town, now home to the city's casteless. On the other side of the river are the Deep Roads, which once joined the sprawling dwarven empire together, but now, after centuries of darkspawn incursions, are largely sealed off. Nearly all knowledge of this network of underground passages has been lost, even to its builders.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## Cut to Kal-Sharok

1155 of the Tevinter Imperium will be known as a year of painful decisions, but we cannot waver. The threat we face is the greatest we have known. If we are overrun, all trace of the ancestors' glory will be undone. Orzammar must stand, and it must stand alone. Hormak, Kal-Sharok, Gundaar: We have lost contact, and must assume they are lost to the horde. We must seal the weakest link in our defense, the Deep Roads that lead to our fallen brethren. I have ordered our finest demolitionists to place the charges. I ask that each of you think of those we have lost. They served as the warning that spurred us to action, and I know the Stone will embrace them. They are the foundation of our survival, and they will not be forgotten."

—*From a proclamation by High King Threestone*

200 years! Kal Sharok lives, you Stone-forsaken deep lords. There is no greater hatred than a brother at your throat!

—*Graffiti, author unknown*

## Legion of the Dead

"Yes, Stone's greetings friend  
You will fight ceaselessly in  
The Legion of the Dead."

—*Motto of the Legion of the Dead.*

The Legion accepts all.

So I was told by one of the Legionnaires himself, a dwarf who waited quietly at the entrance to the Deep Roads for the rest of his unit to assemble. They gathered slowly, each equipped with heavy armor and fine weapons, each painted with grim tattoos applied at their funerals the night previous.

For that is the nature of the Legion. They are all dead. Any dwarf may join the Legion, so long as he is willing to give up everything he has. The funeral rites are somber: a final goodbye is said to family and loved ones, any material goods are dispersed to heirs and last words are said, and then it is done. The new Legionnaire marches out into the Deep Roads, never to return. The Legion fights against the darkspawn to the last, striking one final blow against the monsters that have claimed so much of their homeland.

Many join the Legion to clear the slate. Criminals join to avoid punishment. The dishonored join so that their houses and families need not suffer on their behalf. The bankrupted join so their debts might be forgiven. A very few join for a last chance at glory, but the Legion takes them too.

This group hopes to reach the fabled fortress of Bownammar, once the Legion's home, associated with the greatest of their Paragons. Bownammar is a holy place, its loss the last great blow against the dwarven kingdoms, and its recapture would be a glorious signal to all of Orzammar. But capture it or no, all of these warriors will die in the Deep Roads. It is a sobering thought, and I now know why the dwarves say the Legion's charge is the battlefield's most frightening sight. They have nothing left to lose.

—*From Stone Halls of the Dwarves, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar*

### **House Aeducan, Shield of Orzammar**

The Assembly has never named a Paragon with so little disagreement as there was for Paragon Aeducan. No naysayers, only a single abstention. His worthiness was unquestionable, his favor with the Ancestors clear.

But family rumor says that the man himself was deeply troubled. Prone to fits of melancholy and self-doubt, never satisfied with his great achievement in protecting Orzammar, he died cursing that he had not managed to save the outlying thaigs.

Before he rose to Paragon, he was of little note. The Memories tell us that he never entered a single Proving, never sought to elevate his place among the Warrior Caste. He spent most of his years prior to the first Blight fighting skirmishes in the Deep Roads, keeping them free from surface bandits, content to live quietly with his wife and daughters.

When the Blight began, it caught Orzammar in the midst of a vicious inter-house war. Most of the Warrior Caste was caught up in the feuding, for as word of attacks poured in, each great house demanded that the army be sent to defend their thaig, and no house would agree to sacrifice their own holdings for the safety of any others. The Assembly was so utterly tied up with the infighting that the darkspawn spread, unchecked, to the gates of Orzammar herself.

In the chaos, Aeducan grudgingly took command of the armies. He enlisted the aid of the Mining Caste to collapse overrun passages, called upon the Smith Caste to supply them with arms, and bypassed the Assembly and the nobles entirely. With his leadership, Orzammar was saved from annihilation. For his insubordination, he was made Paragon.

Yet he always considered it a defeat.

—*From A History of Aeducan: Paragon, King, Peacemaker, by Scholar Gertek*

## The Paragons

As I studied among the dwarves, I became aware that their social system was as rigid as the stone that surrounded them. From the lowest servant to the king of Orzammar, each dwarf has a caste, a rigid social standing, which dictates what he may do and how he may do it. What fascinated me then was that the dwarves, stubborn and proud as they may be, have built in a way for even the lowliest dwarf to bypass the caste system and reach prominence. Any dwarf who has made an achievement of significance can be named Paragon, elevating that dwarf above all others.

To become a Paragon is to be recognized as, essentially, a living ancestor. Your words are considered ineffable, and the dwarves liken you unto a god. Your family, those you choose to ascend with you, become the founders of a new line of nobility. Indeed, every existing noble house among the dwarves traces its line back to a founding Paragon. It is a rare thing, however. In my visit, I learned that only one Paragon has been elected in generations: The smith Branka, exalted for her discovery of smokeless coal.

I met the Paragon Branka only once during my stay, and I consider it an odd occasion indeed. Surrounded by those of her house, this ill-tempered woman was draped in the finest clothing and jewelry, and was obviously revered even above the highest nobles—perhaps above even the king—yet she seemed to enjoy none of it. The burden of being a living legend is great, it appears.

Statues of the Paragons are found throughout Orzammar, though nowhere so prominently than in the Hall of Heroes through which one passes on entering from the surface. It is a breathtaking sight to behold, great works of stone all seeming to hold up the ceiling above. It is meant to impress upon visitors to Orzammar of all who have gone before, I think. It is also meant to remind dwarves going to the surface—and thus abandoning their brethren forever—of all they are leaving behind.

—*From Stone Halls of the Dwarves, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar*

## Orzammar Politics

As dangerous as it is to mistake a dwarf's caste, it is far more deadly to mistake his alliances among the noble houses of Orzammar. Everyone in the city is allied with someone, whether by blood or by word. The nobles do not engage directly in commerce themselves, as that is the domain of the Merchant Caste, but they do serve as patrons. They invest in shops or in artisans' work, and in turn reap a share of the profits as well as a measure of the credit. Merchants and warriors alike benefit from the service of a prestigious patron.

The relative power of each house is ever-changing. It is usually safe to assume that whichever noble house holds the throne is at the top of the heap, but below that, things grow into a tangled mess. Houses ally with one another by marriage. They earn rank and prestige when combatants loyal to them, or from their own bloodlines, win Provings. They earn it when artisans they patronize become sought-after or well regarded, or when the merchants they invest in become successful. The degrees of power that these achievements confer is so murky, even to the dwarves, that it isn't unusual for nobles to challenge each another to Provings over whose smith forges better belt buckles, or whose servants have the best manners. Nor is it out of the ordinary to find two merchants arguing over whose noble patron has won the most acclaim, for the rank of the patron is the rank of the client.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Assembly, where the deshyrs, representatives of each noble house, meet. Although the king technically rules Orzammar, kings are elected by the Assembly, and so each king must work constantly to maintain the support of the deshyrs. Kings who prove unpopular find their heirs deemed unacceptable to inherit the throne. Power then passes to another house.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*



## The Proving

Valos atredum. In the 23rd year of the reign of King Ragnan Aeducan, an old man of the Servant Caste was accused of stealing a sapphire ring from his employer, Lord Dace. The servant was stripped of his position, he and his family thrown to the streets, and soon after, the servant died.

The son of the disgraced servant challenged Lord Dace to a Proving, declaring that his father had been the victim of a cruel injustice and the ancestors would bear him witness. Lord Dace had no choice but to accept.

On the sacred stone of the Proving Ground, the nobleman faced the servant boy. Lord Dace carried a sword crafted for his own hand and was clad in his great-grandfather's armor. The servant boy had neither armor nor weapon. When the battle began, the boy fought like a whole pack of angry deepstalkers, flinging himself upon the startled lord, wrenching the sword from his hand, and prying at his armor with bare fingers. The boy knocked Lord Dace to the ground and beat him until the lord begged for mercy.

The boy and his family were reinstated to their place in the Dace household, and the virtue of the boy's father was not questioned again. The ancestors had spoken, and no one would question their word.

—*As told by Shaper Vortag*

## Dwarven Faith

*If The Warden is a dwarf...*

We are the Children of the Stone. She supports us, shelters us, offers us the most priceless gifts of the earth. The worthy return to her embrace in death, becoming Ancestors. The unworthy are cast out, unable to rest, that their failings may not weaken the Stone.

So it has been since the earliest memories. We live by the Stone, guided by the Ancestors, who speak with the voice of the Provings, and whose memories the Shaperate keeps forever in lyrium.

We do not accept the empty promises of heaven as the wild elves do, or vie for the favor of absent gods. Instead, we follow in the footsteps of our Paragons—the greatest of our ancestors, warriors, craftsmen, leaders, the greatest examples of lives spent in service to our fellow dwarves. Our Paragons joined with the Stone in life, and now stand watch at our gate, ushering in those surfacers privileged to visit our city. We know there is no greater honor to hope for, no better reward for an exceptional life.

—*As told by Shaper Czibor*

*If The Warden is not a dwarf...*

The Chant of Light is almost never heard in the halls of Orzammar. This is hardly surprising, for, unlike the elves, who were literally abandoned by their gods, or the Tevinters, who worshipped dragons, the dwarves have no gods at all.

Even the concept of worship is foreign in Orzammar. Instead, the dwarves seem to venerate "the Stone," a name they give to the earth itself. This seems practical for a people living underground, if perhaps a bit unimaginative.

For guidance in spiritual matters, they turn to their ancestors. These ancestors, who are said to have returned to the Stone, communicate their wishes to the living via brutal trials-by-combat called Provings. The ancestors' collective wisdom is maintained by the Shaperate, which can apparently store records in lyrium itself.

Set above the ancestors, above even kings, are the Paragons—dwarves who have achieved such greatness that they are elevated almost to godhood. These are the great figures holding up the hallway that leads from the surface, the first glimpse of Orzammar that outsiders see.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Stalata Negat**

9:13 Dragon—The Blight is building, though it is years from being named by the surface. But the Memories know the signs. The Legion has lost Bownammar, though in truth, it was lost to the living long ago. The spawn are moving freely and have numbers even the Memories haven't seen. They will surge, release. We will fortify and follow. That is the way, and will always be so. Until we fall, and the surface wonders what has changed.

—*From chapter 49 of Stalata Negat: The Stone Unheld: A Commentary on the Roll of Years, by Shaper Erden.*

7:0 Storm—The wars continue in the depths and the border thaigs are lost. Orzammar fortifies and holds, but the lost ground is not regained and remains dead space, where darkspawn multiply. It was a surge, but the surface was not breached, there was no great archdemon behind them. No Blight was declared, no rallying cry was given. The Wardens slumbered.

After centuries of constant skirmishes, a trend becomes clear. The first line of defense, unacknowledged for centuries, weakens.

—*From chapter 40 of Stalata Negat: The Stone Unheld: A Commentary on the Roll of Years, by Shaper Erden.*

5:12 Exalted—The surface declares the fourth Blight, a number that means nothing to the Stone. In the depths, the events are inverted, our Blight spanning the interim years. Seven generations of shifting lines and darkness. Our Ancestors are the reason the surface kingdoms don't know a darkspawn by sight, why even their eldest have never heard an accounting first-hand. They believe the Blights are defeated by a gathering of allies with singular focus. Eventually, they will be lost by attrition in the depths.

The spawn surges and releases. We fortify and follow, although doubts are raised.

—*From chapter 27 of Stalata Negat: The Stone Unheld: A Commentary on the Roll of Years, by Shaper Erden.*

3:10 Towers—They name it a Blight, the third by their reckoning. It was just "the fight" to our ancestors, continued even though it shifts setting. The hordes that press their border surge and release, spilling across the surface. They fortify and follow. It was not their way to let the enemy rest.

3:25 Towers—The surface kingdoms declare victory. The horde is crushed, the push halted, and celebrations begin as humans thank the skies and their Maker. Beneath their gaze and their feet, the darkspawn retreat to the steps of our thaigs. New front lines are drawn across old. They settle in to breed, the Memories say, as happened twice before, and likely in the darkness before that.

—*From chapters 14 and 17 of Stalata Negat: The Stone Unheld: A Commentary on the Roll of Years, by Shaper Erden.*

## Orzammar History: Chapter One

The Memories tell us that our kingdom once reached far beneath the mountains, and that the thaigs were almost beyond counting. Kal-Sharok was the capital then, home to all the noble houses, and Orzammar was simply the home of the Miner and Smith castes.

It was with the Tevinter Imperium that things changed. Paragon Garal moved the seat of power to Orzammar to more closely oversee the trade that began with the surface. It seemed that our people were entering a new age of prosperity.

The Memories hold no explanations for the coming of the darkspawn, only questions. At first, they were rumors, noises in the Deep Roads, a lost traveler here and there. The Warrior Caste sent men to patrol the road, and thought the matter settled. We did not know that while we searched for them, they were engaged in a search of their own.

Sleeping deep in the Stone itself was the archdemon. They found him, and awakened him, and the Blight began.

The darkspawn poured out of the Deep Roads like smoke, then, and the Warrior Caste struggled to hold them back. Countless thaigs were lost in that first Blight. But, as ever, in the worst moments of our need, a Paragon arose. Paragon Aeducan led the defenses of Orzammar, and the dark horde was beaten back.

The cost of victory, however, was great. Much of the Deep Roads were sealed to hold back the darkspawn, cutting off thaigs and even whole cities forever.

—*"Orzammar as a Kingdom," as told by Shaper Czibor*

## Orzammar History: Chapter Two

We were losing the war against the darkspawn. Slowly. A few men at a time, but losing all the same. The Warrior Caste was dwindling with each generation as more able-bodied men perished in their prime without fathering sons. With each generation, more of the Deep Roads had to be sealed, more thaigs lost forever. The kings of Orzammar watched, and wondered how long it would be until nothing remained of our people but the Memories.

And then Paragon Caridin arose from the Smith Caste with a new weapon: Golems. Giant soldiers of living stone and metal, each one was an army. With the Paragon's golems, we began to retake the lands we had lost. For a while, there was hope that victory, final victory, was coming.

But at the height of the war, Paragon Caridin disappeared, and with him, the means to make golems. Several forays were made into the Deep Roads to search for the Paragon, but nothing was ever found. Over time, the golems we had were damaged beyond repair, and we began our slide, once again, toward extinction.

—*"Orzammar as a Kingdom," as told by Shaper Czibor*

## Ostagar

Representing the furthest point of encroachment by the ancient Tevinter Imperium into the barbarian lands of the southeast, the fortress of Ostagar was once one of the most important defensive holdings south of the Waking Sea. It stood at the edge of the Korcari Wilds watching for any signs of invasion by the barbarians known today as the Chasind wilders. Straddling a narrow pass in the hills, the fortress needed to be by-passed to reach the fertile lowlands to the north and proved to be exceedingly difficult for the wilders to attack because of its naturally defensible position.

Like most imperial holdings in the south, Ostagar was abandoned after Tevinter's collapse during the first Blight. It was successfully sacked by the Chasind wilders and then, as the Chasind threat dwindled following the creation of the modern Ferelden nation, fell to ruin completely.

It has remained unmanned for four centuries, though most of the walls still stand—as does the tall Tower of Ishal, named after the great archon that ordered its construction. Ostagar remains a testament to the magical power of the Imperium that created it.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Par Vollen: The Occupied North**

In the 30th year of the Steel Age, the first qunari ships were sighted off the coast of Par Vollen in the far north, marking the beginning of a new age of warfare.

History calls this the First Qunari War, but it was mostly a one-sided bloodbath, with the Qunari advancing far into the mainland. Qunari warriors in glittering steel armor carved through armies with ease. Their cannons, the likes of which our ancestors had never seen, reduced city walls to rubble in a matter of seconds.

Stories of qunari occupation vary greatly. It is said they dismantled families and sent captives to "learning camps" for indoctrination into their religion. Those who refused to cooperate disappeared to mines or construction camps.

For every tale of suffering, however, there is another of enlightenment deriving from something called the "Qun." This is either a philosophical code or a written text that governs all aspects of qunari life, perhaps both. One converted Seheran reported pity for those who refused to embrace the Qun, as if the conquerors had led him to a sort of self-discovery. "For all my life, I followed the Maker wherever his path led me," he wrote, "but in the Qun I have found the means to travel my own path."

It has been said that the most complete way to wipe out a people is not with blades but with books. Thankfully, a world that had repelled four Blights would not easily bow to a foreign aggressor. And so the Exalted Marches began.

The greatest advantage of the Chantry-led forces was the Circle of Magi. For all their technology, the qunari appeared to harbor great hatred for magic. Faced with cannons, the Chantry responded with lightning and balls of fire.

The qunari armies lacked the sheer numbers of humanity. So many were slain at Marnas Pell, on both sides, that the Veil is said to be permanently sundered, the ruins still plagued by restless corpses. But each year, the Chantry pushed further and further into the qunari lines, although local converts to the Qun proved difficult to return to Andraste's teachings.

By the end of the Storm Age, the qunari were truly pushed back. Rivain was the only human land that retained the qunari religion after being freed, and its rulers attempted to barter a peace. Most human lands signed the Llomerryn Accord, excepting the Tevinter Imperium. It is a shaky peace that has lasted to this day.

—*From The Exalted Marches: An Examination of Chantry Warfare, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Qunari**

Anyone who travels far enough to the north will eventually encounter the qunari: White-haired, bronze-skinned giants, a head again taller than a man, with frighteningly calm demeanors and a sort of sparkling fire behind their eyes.

For quite a long time, people believed that all qunari were male, or that their men and women were simply indistinguishable. It was not until the Blessed Age that diplomats from Rivain were allowed, however briefly, to visit Par Vollen, and there they discovered that qunari females do exist in abundance, and are quite easily recognized. The Rivaini say that qunari have a certain kindness to them, or at least a conspicuous lack of cruelty, although I did not observe the creatures closely enough to evaluate their character.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **Redcliffe**

King Calenhad Theirin once famously declared, "The fate of Redcliffe is the fate of all Ferelden." Certainly, the castle is the first and last defense for the sole land route into Ferelden, and the country has never fallen to any force that did not first capture Redcliffe.

The castle, which despite being three times captured is popularly described as "unassailable," also guards one of the largest and most prosperous towns in Ferelden. Redcliffe village is well situated near the mountain pass to Orzammar and the Orlesian border, and so serves as a center of foreign trade. For these reasons, Redcliffe is accounted an arling despite the smallness of the domain.

The inhabitants of Redcliffe village are primarily fishermen or merchants who ship dwarven goods through the pass from Orlais to Denerim. When the entire village smells of smoked fish on certain late autumn mornings, the merchants in their finery do their utmost to pretend otherwise.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **Rivain**

Nowhere in my travels, not in the heart of the Imperium nor the streets of Orzammar, have I felt so much an outsider as in Rivain.

The Chant of Light never truly reached the ears of these people. The years they spent under the thumb of the qunari left most of the country zealous followers of the Qun. But resistance to the Chant goes deeper than the Qunari War. The Rivaini refuse to be parted from their seers, wise women who are in fact hedge mages, communicating with spirits and actually allowing themselves to become possessed. The Chantry prohibition against such magical practices violates millennia of local tradition.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Tevinter Imperium**

The Imperium is little more than a dilapidated old slattern, crouching in the far north of Thedas, drunkenly cursing at passersby to recall her faded beauty.

One can see that Minrathous was once the center of the world. The vestiges of her power and artistry yet stand. But they are buried in the layers of filth that the Imperium's decadence has accumulated over the ages. The magocracy live in elegant stone towers, literally elevated above the stench of the slaves and peasants below. The outskirts of Minrathous are awash in a sea of refugees turned destitute by the never-ending war between the Imperium and the qunari.

And yet the Imperium survives. Whether with sword or magic, Tevinter remains a force to be reckoned with. Minrathous has been besieged by men, by qunari, by Andraste herself, and never fallen.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **Legend of the Juggernaut**

The arm of the Imperium is long.

Once it reached even this forest, in a time when the barbarian tribes of the Clayne still ruled the land. The Tevinter magisters fought to take it from them—inch by inch, if need be, using terrible magic. The Magister Harach brought an army to this forest, led by Alaric, his friend and general. For Alaric, Harach fashioned a suit of the finest armor, infused it with lyrium and his own blood magic, and named it "Juggernaut" after the unstoppable giant golems guarding the gates of Minrathous. Thus armed did Alaric win many victories against the Clayne.

When defeat came, it came from within. Alaric's own lieutenants rose up against him, jealous of the favor he had curried with the magisters and eager to take the Juggernaut armor from him. Alaric was slain, and as each successor gained the armor, the other lieutenants turned against him in stead. The Tevinter outpost fell to vicious infighting. In a fury, Magister Harach voyaged to the outpost and slew the last three lieutenants.

The Clayne, however, were already approaching the outpost in force. The barbarian chieftain of the Clayne desired the fabled armor himself, and even with all his power, Harach could not hope to stand against them all. Instead, Harach used the last of his own life force to cast a spell of blood magic that bound demons to the bodies of the three dead lieutenants as well as Harach's own lifeless corpse. These bound revenants hid the pieces of the Juggernaut armor, and although the barbarians sacked the outpost, the chieftain found neither the armor nor the revenants.

The Juggernaut armor's legend lives on, and more than one brave soul has ventured into the depths of the Brecilian Forest in search, never to return.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## **Geography of Thedas**

Thedas is bounded to the east by the Amaranthine Ocean, to the west by Tirashan Forest and the Hunterhorn Mountains, to the south by the snowy wastes that lie beyond the Orkney Mountains, and to the north by Donark Forest.

The word "Thedas" is Tevinter in origin, originally used to refer to lands that bordered the Imperium. As the Imperium lost its stranglehold on conquered nations, more and more lands became Thedas, until finally people applied the name to the entire continent.

The northern part of Thedas is divided amongst the Anderfels, the Tevinter Imperium, Antiva, and Rivain, with the islands held by the qunari just off the coast. Central Thedas consists of the Free Marches, Nevarra, and Orlais, with Ferelden to the south.

What lies beyond the snowy wastes is a mystery. The freezing temperatures and barren land have kept even the most intrepid cartographers at bay. Similarly, the western reaches of the Anderfels have never been fully explored, even by the Anders themselves. We do not know if the dry steppes are shadowed by mountains, or if they extend all the way to a nameless sea.

There must be other lands, continents or islands, perhaps across the Amaranthine or north of Par Vollen, for the qunari arrived in Thedas from somewhere, but beyond that deduction, we know nothing.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

### **Vhenadahl: The Tree of the People**

Mostly the old ways are gone. Each generation forgets a little more of the old tongue, a little more of the traditions. And the few things we keep become simple habits, the meaning long since faded.

So it is with the vhenadahl, the tree of the people. Every alienage has one, I'm told. Or they used to. When I was a little girl, my mother told me the tree was a symbol of Arlathan, but not even she knew more. Keeping the vhenadahl is just a habit, now. Many cities have let theirs wither and die, then chopped them up for firewood. No great loss.

—*Sarethia, hahren of the Highever Alienage.*

### **The Grey Wardens**

The first Blight had already raged for 90 years. The world was in chaos. A god had risen, twisted and corrupted. The remaining gods of Tevinter were silent, withdrawn. What writing we have recovered from those times is filled with despair, for everyone believed, from the greatest archons to the lowliest slaves, that the world was coming to an end.

At Weisshaupt fortress in the desolate Anderfels, a meeting transpired. Soldiers of the Imperium, seasoned veterans who had known nothing their entire lifetimes except hopeless war, came together. When they left Weisshaupt, they had renounced their oaths to the Imperium. They were soldiers no longer: They were the Grey Wardens.

The Wardens began an aggressive campaign against the Blight, striking back against the darkspawn, reclaiming lands given up for lost. The Blight was far from over, but their victories brought notice, and soon they received aid from every nation in Thedas.

They grew in number as well as reputation. Finally, in the year 992 of the Tevinter Imperium, upon the Silent Plains, they met the archdemon Dumat in battle. A third of all the armies of northern Thedas were lost to the fighting, but Dumat fell and the darkspawn fled back underground.

Even that was not the end.

The Imperium once revered seven gods: Dumat, Zazikel, Toth, Andoral, Razikale, Lusacan, and Urthemiel. Four have risen as archdemons. The Grey Wardens have kept watch through the ages, well aware that peace is fleeting, and that their war continues until the last of the dragon-gods is gone.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

### **The Korcari Wilds**

It is said that in the midst of the Black Age, when werewolves stalked the lands of Ferelden in numbers that kept every farmholder indoors and a hound on every doorstep, a powerful arl of the Alamarri peoples stood and declared that he would put an end to the threat. His arling stood on the border of the dark forest on the southern border of the Ferelden Valley, and he claimed that the werewolves used the forest to launch their midnight assaults on humanity.

For 20 years, this arl led an army of warriors and hounds deep into the forest. In his hunt for the werewolves, he slew not only every wolf he came upon, but also every member of the Chasind wilder folk. Any one of them, he said, could harbor a demon inside and thus be a werewolf in disguise. For 20 years, the forest rang with screams, and the rivers ran red.

The tales say that an old Chasind woman found her sons all dead at the arl's blades. She pulled one of those very blades from one son's heart and plunged it into her own chest, cursing the arl's name as she did so. Where her blood touched the ground, a mist began to rise. It spread and spread until it was everywhere in the forest. The arl's army became lost, and it is said that they died there. Others say they wander still. The ruins of his arling stand to this day, filled with the ghosts of women waiting eternally for their husbands to return.

The forest of the legend is, of course, the Korcari Wilds. There are as many legends about the great southern forest as there are shadows, or so the saying goes. The Chasind wilder folk have made their home there since mankind first came to these lands, and the wildlands spread as far into the south as anyone has ventured. Beyond the mists are vast tracts of snow, white-capped mountains, and entire fields of ice. It is a land too cold for mankind to survive, yet the Chasind eke out an existence even there, and they tell of horrors beyond the Wilds that the lowland folk could not begin to comprehend.

To most, Ferelden simply ends with the Korcari Wilds: There is nothing beyond. The Wilds is a land of great trees, wet marshes and dangerous monsters. What more need be said?

—*From Land of the Wilders, by Mother Ailis, Chantry scholar, 9:18 Dragon.*

## Darkspawn

*If the Warden is a dwarf...*

The surfacers claim that the first darkspawn fell from heaven. They spin tales of magic and sin. But the Children of the Stone know better. The darkspawn rose up out of the earth. For it was in the Deep Roads they first appeared. Creatures in our own likeness, armed and armored, but with no more intelligence than tezpadam, bestial and savage.

At first they were few, easily hunted and slain by our warriors. But in the recesses of the Deep Roads, they grew in numbers and in courage. Our distant thaigs came under attack, and now it was the army, not a few warriors, being sent to deal with the creatures. Victories still came easily, though, and we thought the threat would soon be over.

We were wrong.

—*As told by Shaper Czibor.*

*If the Warden is not a dwarf...*

Those who had sought to claim  
Heaven by violence destroyed it. What was  
Golden and pure turned black.  
Those who had once been mage-lords,  
The brightest of their age,  
Were no longer men, but monsters.  
—*Threnodies 12:1.*

Sin was the midwife that ushered the darkspawn into this world. The magisters fell from the Golden City, and their fate encompassed all our world's. For they were not alone.



No one knows where the darkspawn come from. A dark mockery of men, in the darkest places they thrive, growing in numbers as a plague of locusts will. In raids, they will often take captives, dragging their victims alive into the Deep Roads, but most evidence suggests that these are eaten. Like spiders, it seems darkspawn prefer their food still breathing. Perhaps they are simply spawned by the darkness. Certainly, we know that evil has no trouble perpetuating itself.

The last Blight was in the Age of Towers, striking once again at the heart of Tevinter, spreading south into Orlais and east into the Free Marches. The plagues spread as far as Ferelden, but the withering and twisting of the land stopped well beyond our borders. Here, darkspawn have never been more than the stuff of legends. In the northern lands, however, particularly Tevinter and the Anderfels, they say darkspawn haunt the hinterlands, preying on outlying farmers and isolated villages, a constant threat.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## **The Blights**

My dear Anika,

I would not worry about the Assembly: Let the nobles sit together and argue over whose house owns the grandest thaig. It keeps them from panicking, which they would surely do otherwise, and prevents them from making a greater nuisance of themselves. War is the business of warriors.

I would say that the enemy's strategy seems to be changing, but they never appeared to have a strategy before, beyond destroying everything in their path. For weeks, their numbers appeared to be dwindling. There was talk that perhaps we were getting close to wiping them out. We could not have been more wrong. For today we came upon the body of their main force. I cannot give words to it, Anika. I have never before seen so much death in one place. There were darkspawn beyond counting, and at the heart of the throng a great beast, as tall as the palace of Orzammar, with breath of fire. A Paragon of darkspawn, perhaps, for they seemed to pay it deference.

They were leaving. Marching toward the mine shafts which lead to the surface. But I knew when I beheld them that once they have devoured what lies above us, they will be back.

—*From The Letters of Paragon Aeducan.*

# **CHARACTERS**

## **Alistair**

"You know, one good thing about the Blight is how it brings people together."

Alistair was a novice templar when Duncan recruited him into the Grey Wardens—or rescued him, as Alistair would say.

His mother was a serving girl, who died when Alistair was very young. He was raised by Eamon Guerrin, arl of Redcliffe, for a time.

The arl's wife, Isolde, suspected the reason her husband took an interest in the welfare of a servant's child was that Alistair was Eamon's son. She insisted that the boy be sent away to the Chantry.

Isolde's suspicions were unfounded, however. Alistair was not Eamon's son, but King Maric's. Eamon sheltered the boy to hide his existence from Queen Rowan, Eamon's sister.

Alistair is fascinated by magic, even as his life is defined by fighting its darker manifestations. He has a fondness for strange runestones and figural studies of arcane creatures.

*If Alistair is made king:* With a great deal of assistance, Alistair was recognized by the Landsmeet as Maric's son and granted his father's throne.

*If Loghain is saved and Alistair is not king:* Unable to accept the decision to spare Loghain's life, Alistair left—and has not been seen since.

*If Anora is made queen and Alistair is executed:* To prevent further civil war, he was executed at the Landsmeet on the orders of Queen Anora, ending the Theirin line.

*If Alistair kills the Archdemon:* In the battle against the archdemon in Denerim, Alistair gave his life to save his friends and end the Blight.

## Queen Anora

"We have been given the gift of freedom by our forbearers. Let us not squander it."

The only child of the war hero Loghain Mac Tir, Anora has never been one to stay quietly in the background. It is common knowledge that in the five years Anora and Cailan held the throne together, she was the one wielding the power. She is held in much higher esteem than her husband by the people of Ferelden, nobility and commoners alike, and commands the respect even of foreign nations, having once inspired Empress Celene of Orlais to declare, "Anora of Ferelden is a solitary rose among brambles."

She sent her maid, Erlina, to Arl Eamon's estate to ask for The Warden's help in escaping from Arl Howe, but as they fled Howe's estate, Anora in disguise, they were ambushed by Ser Cauthrien, there to arrest Howe's murderer.

*If The Warden tells Cauthrien they were trying to rescue Anora:* When The Warden tried to protest the charge on the grounds of defending Anora, the queen declared that she was being kidnapped and called to Cauthrien for help.

*If The Warden surrenders to Cauthrien:* The Warden surrendered to permit Anora's escape.

*If The Warden fights Cauthrien:* A fight ensued, and Anora fled in the confusion.

She made her way to Eamon's Denerim estate and there offered her aid in defeating her father at the Landsmeet.

*If Anora betrays The Warden:* However, when the hour came, she publicly supported her father, decrying the Wardens as slanderers and regicides.

*If Anora supports The Warden:* With her help, Loghain's support was eroded.

*If Anora's support is not enough to sway the Landsmeet:* Her efforts, however, were not enough to erode Loghain's support.

*If The Warden wins the support of the Landsmeet:* The banns fell in line behind Eamon and The Warden. Loghain, however, would not accept defeat easily. He filled the room with troops and attempted a coup. Fighting erupted, breaking the long tradition of the Landsmeet, which was ultimately settled with a duel.

*If The Warden fails to win the support of the Landsmeet:* The banns fell in line behind Loghain, and he called for the Wardens' execution. Fighting erupted, breaking the long tradition of the Landsmeet, which was ultimately settled with a duel.

*If Alistair becomes sole monarch:* In the end, Anora was deposed, and Alistair was given the throne.

*If Anora becomes sole monarch...*

*If Alistair remains a Grey Warden:* In the end, Anora was granted the throne, freeing Alistair from the burden of a responsibility he never wanted anyway.

*If Alistair is to be executed:* In the end, Anora was granted the throne and Alistair was taken away to be executed.

*If both Loghain and Alistair live:* In the end, Anora was granted the throne, and Alistair walked out of the Landsmeet Chamber never to be seen again.

*If Anora is to rule with The Warden...*

*If Alistair is to be executed:* In the end, Anora kept her throne, with The Warden now her king-consort, and Alistair was taken away to be executed.

*If Alistair leaves:* In the end, Anora kept her throne, with The Warden now her king-consort, and Alistair walked out of the Landsmeet Chamber never to be seen again.

*If Alistair stays (Loghain dies):* In the end, Anora kept her throne, with The Warden now her king-consort.

*If Anora is to rule with Alistair...*

*If The Warden kills Loghain:* In the end, Anora and Alistair agreed to marry and rule jointly, though Alistair postponed taking the throne until the Blight was ended.

*If Loghain lives:* In the end, Anora and Alistair agreed to marry and rule jointly, with Alistair giving up his place among the Grey Wardens to take the throne.

## **Bhelen Aeducan**

*If the Warden is not a dwarf noble...*

"This is a time for action, not cultured debate."

Third of King Endrin's children, Bhelen has always been considered the last and least of his family. Not the heir, nor the favorite, and not as accomplished as either sibling, Bhelen's most notable trait was his ability to stay out of trouble.

*If the Warden is a dwarf noble...*

"Time is something you may not have much left of."

Third of King Endrin's children, Bhelen has always been considered the last and least of his family. Trian was the undisputed heir apparent from the moment of his birth, and the Warden was not only the most accomplished, but also their father's clear favorite. Bhelen's most notable trait was his ability to stay out of trouble.

*If the Warden killed Trian:* He tricked the Warden into slaying their brother Trian, eliminating both his rivals for the throne in one stroke.

*If the Warden was framed:* He murdered Trian and framed the Warden, eliminating both his rivals in one stroke.

*Irrespective of the Warden's origin...*

*If Bhelen is made king:* His efforts paid off: He was named king of Orzammar by the Assembly.

*If Harrowmont is made king:* His efforts were for nothing, though. The Assembly named Pyral Harrowmont king of Orzammar, and the coup he tried to stage in revenge was cut down almost before it began.

### **King Cailan Theirin**

"I'd hoped for a war like in the tales! A king riding with the fabled Grey Wardens against a tainted god!"

Son of the legendary King Maric Theirin, Cailan was the first Fereldan king born into a land free from foreign rule in two generations. Since his father's death, he's held the throne alongside his queen, Anora.

He fell in battle alongside Duncan at Ostagar.

### **Ser Cauthrien**

"Some of us know what honor and loyalty are."

Cauthrien came to Loghain's service the hard way—she belonged to a poor family and was out doing work on the farm when she saw a man on horseback being attacked by several bandits. She rushed to his assistance, and found out belatedly that the man she "saved" was none other than the great hero Loghain. Though she was hardly more than a child, he took her in, offering her a position with his soldiers, and she climbed through the ranks through sheer determination. Becoming the commander of Maric's Shield, Loghain's elite soldiers, was the proudest moment of her life.

*If Cauthrien dies at end of Rescue the Queen quest:* She was slain while trying to arrest The Warden for the murder of Arl Howe.

*If Cauthrien dies later:* She was slain while trying to stop The Warden from entering the Landsmeet.

### **Connor Guerrin**

"I feel like I'm sleeping, but I guess I'm not."

While most of the banns and arls of Ferelden cart their children with them to the Landsmeet in the interest of eventually marrying them off, Connor has spent his entire life at Redcliffe. And it's hardly surprising: the child possessed the gift of magic. By law, he should have been taken to the Circle of Magi at the first sign, abdicating his claim to Redcliffe. Instead, the boy was kept out of public view and his magic hushed up... with disastrous results.

All mages are beacons that attract the attention of Fade spirits. Because of this, they are trained and tested by the Circle to ensure that they can withstand attacks from malevolent Fade creatures that seek entry into the waking world. Untrained Connor drew the attention of a powerful demon that tore the Veil asunder.

*If Connor is killed:* To stop the demon's rampage, Connor was slain.

*If Isolde sacrifices herself in Jowan's ritual:* He was freed from the demon's power at a terrible price: the cost of his mother's life. Connor himself will be sent to the Circle where he will no longer endanger innocent people.

*If both Connor and Isolde live:* With aid from the Circle, he was freed from the demon's power. Connor will be sent to the Circle Tower where he will no longer pose a danger to the innocent.

## Dog

"The mabari is clever enough to speak, and wise enough to know not to."

—Fereldan proverb.

*If The Warden is a human noble:* The Warden's warhound has a pedigree older than Highever, and a penchant for driving cooks to distraction.

*If The Warden is not a human noble:* The Warden found this mabari in the camp at Ostagar. His master was killed in the Wilds, and Dog fell ill from biting the darkspawn in battle. Dog seems to have chosen The Warden as his new master now, seeking The Warden out after the battle at Ostagar and warning of an impending darkspawn attack.

## Duncan

"Men and women from every race, warriors and mages, barbarians and kings... the Grey Wardens sacrificed everything to stem the tide of darkness... and prevailed."

Like many others, Duncan gave up his family name when he joined the ranks of the Wardens: a symbolic gesture of cutting ties. He might say this was a convenience in his case, however. His mother was from the Anderfels, his father from Tevinter, his childhood was spent in the Free Marches and Orlais. His people were everywhere and his homeland was nowhere.

He was given the almost impossible task of leading the Wardens in Ferelden—a kingdom that had thrown the order out two hundred years earlier. Facing local suspicion and hostility, he set about finding recruits.

He was killed in battle against overwhelming numbers of darkspawn at Ostagar, alongside King Cailan.

## Arl Eamon Guerrin

"Nobility does not exist without obligation. We owe all we have, even our lives, to our land and our people."

As the maternal uncle of King Cailan, Arl Eamon is one of the king's most trusted advisors. Redcliffe, while not a large or especially wealthy part of Ferelden, is a critical strategic location: The fortress guards the western pass that leads to Orlais, as well as the major trade route with Orzammar. A well-respected man, though not the most charismatic, King Cailan once said of him, "My Uncle Eamon is a man everyone thinks well of—when they remember to think of him at all."

He fell ill with a mysterious condition that even magic could not treat.

It was no common ailment. Eamon was poisoned by a blood mage, Jowan, who claimed to be working for Teyrn Loghain. The arl's life was saved only by the most extraordinary measures: finding the Urn of Sacred Ashes, the remains of Andraste herself.

His health restored, Eamon called a Landsmeet with the goal of wresting power from Loghain and placing Alistair on the throne.

With the question of the succession settled, Eamon returned to Redcliffe to prepare the castle's defenses for the encroaching Blight.

## King Endrin Aeducan

"Denial of the traditions of our people does not qualify as a political technicality."

Endrin of House Aeducan traces his ancestry back to the Paragon Aeducan, the greatest warrior of Orzammar's history, who beat back the darkspawn hordes in the First Blight. The second son of King Ansgar Aeducan, he became heir after his elder brother died in a Proving.

The most respected king in four generations, he restored contact with Kal-Sharok, the only other remaining city of the once-vast Dwarven Empire, which had been lost during the first Blight.

## **Flemeth**

"You are required to do nothing, least of all believe."

Ages ago, legend says Bann Conobar took to wife a beautiful young woman who harbored a secret talent for magic: Flemeth of Highever. And for a time they lived happily, until the arrival of a young poet, Osen, who captured the lady's heart with his verse.

They turned to the Chasind tribes for help and hid from Conobar's wrath in the Wilds, until word came to them that Conobar lay dying: His last wish was to see Flemeth's face one final time.

The lovers returned, but it was a trap. Conobar killed Osen, and imprisoned Flemeth in the highest tower of the castle. In grief and rage, Flemeth worked a spell to summon a spirit into this world to wreak vengeance upon her husband. Vengeance, she received, but not as she planned. The spirit took possession of her, turning Flemeth into an abomination. A twisted, maddened creature, she slaughtered Conobar and all his men, and fled back into the Wilds.

For a hundred years, Flemeth plotted, stealing men from the Chasind to sire monstrous daughters: Horrific things that could kill a man with fear. These Korcari witches led an army of Chasind from the Wilds to strike at the Alamarri tribes. They were defeated by the hero Cormac, and all the witches burned, so they say, but even now the Wilders whisper that Flemeth lives on in the marsh, and she and her daughters steal those men who come too near.

Morrigan's mother saved the last Grey Wardens from death at the top of the Tower of Ishal, but just who, or what, Flemeth truly is, is a mystery.

*If the Warden kills Flemeth:* She was slain at Morrigan's behest. At least apparently...

## **Brother Ferdinand Genitivi**

"As it is the duty of all true sons of the Chantry to make the Chant heard from every corner of the world, I made it my mission to **find** as many corners of the world as possible. The Maker can hardly expect us to do one without the other."

—*Excerpt from In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

Brother Genitivi is one of the Chantry's most well-known scholars, primarily on the basis of the stories he has published (which many of his contemporaries dismiss as fanciful) of his travels across the length and breadth of Thedas.

His travels, and rather too-curious nature, led him to a study of folklore, which gave him the notion that he could track down that most-debated of all artifacts: the Urn of Sacred Ashes. He announced that he had found what appeared to be the trail of the Urn, left in the legends of the regions through which it had passed from Minrathous on its way into hiding.

*If Genitivi dies:* He never returned from his venture into the mountains, and no one knows if he found the Ashes or not.

*If Genitivi lives:* And he appears to have been right. The final resting place of Andraste lay at the summit of a remote mountain.

*If Genitivi lives, but the Urn is desecrated:* He returned to Denerim with wild tales about dragons and heretics, which nobody believed. It will no doubt make for another interesting travel book, however.

*If Genitivi returns to Denerim and the Urn is intact:* He returned to Denerim a little worse for wear, and was granted funds and manpower to mount an expedition to study the temple in which the Urn is kept.

## **Knight-Commander Greagoir**

*If The Warden is a mage:* "Your magic is a gift, but it's also a curse. The Circle of Magi has trained you, and we templars of the Chantry stand vigil to ensure that training is adequate."

*If The Warden is not a mage:* "It is the innocent folk of Ferelden who matter. I would lay down my life, and the life of any mage, to protect them."

Grim and taciturn, Greagoir has been knight-commander of the templar forces stationed at the Circle Tower for so many years that hardly anyone except the first enchanter recalls that he is not simply part of the tower itself.

*If the mages are destroyed during the Broken Circle quest:* With the destruction of the Circle, it's hard to imagine where Greagoir will go next.

*If Greagoir dies:* He was killed following Uldred's uprising.

## **Lord Pyral Harrowmont**

"No one is born with rights to the throne. The sitting king may recommend a successor, but the Assembly ultimately decides who will rule."

House Harrowmont is one of the oldest noble houses, as old as Orzammar itself. Endrin's most trusted advisor, Harrowmont is well-known for being an able administrator, and the author of many compromises in the ever-warring Assembly.

*If Harrowmont becomes king:* His promise to King Endrin to keep Bhelen off the throne was upheld by the intervention of one Paragon and the Grey Warden. Harrowmont was named king by the Assembly, ending the internal strife in Orzammar.

*If Bhelen becomes king:* His opposition of Prince Bhelen's bid for the throne ended badly. The Assembly named the prince king of Orzammar, and Bhelen's first act was to call for Harrowmont's execution.

## **Arl Rendon Howe**

*To Bryce Cousland, if the Warden is a human noble:* "It will be good to ride into battle once more, won't it, old friend?"

*If the Warden is not a human noble:* "It appears it will be civil war after all, despite the darkspawn. Pity."

The arling of Amaranthine winds along the sinuous northeastern coast of Ferelden. The Waking Sea is known for its temper, and the storms that sweep in from the warmer northern waters are sudden and brutal. These are the lands of Rendon Howe.

He was born during the occupation, and like many of the nobles at the time, joined Prince Maric's rebels. He fought alongside young Bryce Cousland, future teyrn of Highever, and Leonas Bryland, future arl of South Reach, at the bloody battle of White River. It was the most catastrophic defeat of the entire occupation, from which only fifty rebel soldiers escaped alive.

Although he was decorated for valor by King Maric, Howe's abrasive manners have earned him almost universal dislike among his peers.

*If the Warden is a human noble, added at end of origin story:* When Bryce sent his men to support the king at Ostagar, Howe took it as an opportunity to attack Highever, slaughtering the people there and claiming the lands and title as his own.

*On Howe's death:* Howe died at the hands of the Warden in Denerim.

## **First Enchanter Irving**

*If The Warden is a mage:* "If you want to survive, you must learn the rules and realize that sometimes, sacrifices are necessary."

*If The Warden is not a mage:* "The Circle will go on, and we will learn from this tragedy, and be strengthened by it."

There is no higher office in a Circle Tower than that of first enchanter. The one who holds this title must not only be an able administrator, but also a mentor, leader, and surrogate parent to all the mages of the tower.

Irving has proven himself to be all these things with an added dose of cunning. Most apprentices know that little goes on in the tower that Irving does not know. He can soothe templars angered by some childish magical prank at the same time that he lauds the pranksters, and everyone walks away satisfied.

*If Irving survives the Broken Circle quest:* Although much of the Circle was destroyed by Uldred's abominations, Irving survived and plans to rebuild what he can.

*If Irving does not survive the Broken Circle quest:* He died when the tower became overrun by demons. The fate of Ferelden's Circle is now in question.

## **Arlessa Isolde**

"For the one who delivers the Sacred Ashes of Our Lady will have the esteem of Redcliffe, and all the riches it is in my power to grant."

The arling of Redcliffe was a source of constant trouble for Emperor Reville during the occupation; it was rumored that since each new report sent the emperor into a fit of violent rage, his court had taken to poisoning messengers before they could deliver their accounts. Isolde's family was the tenth to be given the difficult task of governing Redcliffe, and since most of the previous arls had either been murdered by their banns or beheaded by the emperor, they did not approach the job with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Isolde met Eamon, not realizing he was the rightful heir to her father's domain, and quickly became smitten with him for being part of the resistance—never mind that it was her family he was resisting. Perhaps a bit too romantic for her own good, she insisted upon staying behind with Eamon when the rest of her family was driven out.



When her only son began to show signs of possessing magic, Isolde tried to cover it up, knowing that he would be taken from her by the Circle if found out. She hired an apostate mage to tutor him in secret, little knowing that her tutor was being paid to poison her husband. Eamon fell ill, and Connor, desperate, tried to use magic to save his father—magic that attracted the attention of a demon.

*If Isolde sacrifices herself in Jowan's ritual:* She gave her life to free Connor from demonic influence.

*If Isolde kills Connor:* Unable to free him, Isolde took Connor's life to stop the demon.

*If The Warden kills Connor:* Unable to stop the demon, Connor was slain by the Warden.

*If both Isolde and Connor survive:* The Circle of Magi were finally called in, almost too late, and Connor was freed from the demon's power, though the damage to Redcliffe was severe.

## **Leliana**

"In the cloister, away from the fuss and the flurry of the cities, I found peace. And in that stillness, I could hear the Maker."

*If Leliana is successfully romanced:* "Here, with you... knowing the freedom of the road and the uncertainty of tomorrow... I feel alive again."

A lay sister of the Chantry who can beat the stuffing out of trained mercenaries would be notable enough, but one who also claims to have been sent to fight the darkspawn by the Maker Himself is... unusual to say the least.

*If Leliana's initial offer of help is accepted:* She joined Alistair and The Warden in Lothering, insisting that she would prove useful.

*If The Warden refused her initial offer of aid:* She asked to join the Grey Wardens in their endeavors... sort of, but was turned away.

*When joining at Lothering exit after initial refusal:* Her persistence, however, paid off. She made them relent and allow her to join in their travels.

There's more to Leliana than had even been apparent at Lothering, however. She spent much of her life as a bard in Orlais: a minstrel, assassin, and spy employed by the nobles of Val Royeaux in their elaborate games of intrigue.

Her decision to join the Chantry was not merely the product of her disenchantment with the life of a bard; Leliana was framed by her bard-master, and fled to escape execution as a traitor.

Leliana takes care to honor the Lothering cloister that took her in, and keeps symbols of Andraste's blessings close to her heart.

*If Leliana leaves:* She eventually was driven away, and has not been seen since.

*If The Warden defiles the Urn of Sacred Ashes whilst Leliana is present:* When The Warden corrupted and destroyed the Sacred Ashes of Andraste, Leliana drew her weapon and was killed alongside the guardian.

## **Loghain Mac Tir**

"It takes more than legends to win a battle."

"Understand this: I will brook no threat to this nation... from you or anyone."

*If he is killed at the Landsmeet:* "War is cruel. Every soul who fought alongside Maric knows this. And in it, there are no such things as innocents, only the living and the dead, and the degrees of guilt both bear."

*If permitted to join the Grey Wardens at the Landsmeet:* "I passed your test. Fate has a twisted sense of humor, it seems."

Loghain was born a farmer during a time when his country was under foreign occupation. When he was still a boy, he joined the resistance, where his considerable tactical genius quickly became apparent. He became close friends with Prince Maric, the last true heir to the Fereldan throne, and together they led the rebels to drive out the forces of the Orlesian Empire. Maric raised his friend to the nobility, and Loghain is now more of a symbol than a man: He represents the Fereldan ideals of hard work and independence.

During the battle at Ostagar, he fled the field, leaving King Cailan and the Grey Wardens to die.

He then returned to Denerim and declared himself the regent to his daughter, Queen Anora, demanding that Ferelden follow him against the darkspawn—upsetting a great many of the banns.

His actions sparked a civil war. Loghain's supporters found themselves fighting their neighbors who blamed Loghain for the death of the king, as well as those who simply wished to take advantage of the power vacuum.

*If he is killed at the Landsmeet:* He was defeated in single combat at the Landsmeet and summarily executed.

*If permitted to join the Grey Wardens at the Landsmeet...*

He was defeated in single combat at the Landsmeet, and sentenced to undertake the Joining ritual. He survived, and rejoined the fight for Ferelden as a Grey Warden.

Loghain has defined himself by the borders he seeks to maintain and expand. He is ever the tactician, and likes poring over maps both ancient and modern.

*If he kills the archdemon:* He struck the killing blow against the archdemon, sacrificing himself to end the Blight and save his country.

## **Morrigan**

"Witch of the Wilds? Such idle fancies, those legends. Have you no minds of your own?"

Of herself, Morrigan says little. She does not deny being a witch of the Wilds, but beyond that, everything about her is in question.

Her mother claims to be Flemeth. If that's true, the Morrigan might well be a very powerful witch, for the tales of the daughters of Flemeth tell of twisted, monstrous women who can kill a man with fear. She was made to accompany the surviving Grey Wardens: The payment, Flemeth said, for saving their lives at the Tower of Ishal.

*If she is told to leave:* Whatever Flemeth's purpose was, however, will probably never be known.

Morrigan's critical eye is not reserved solely for others. Knowing or not, she has a simple fondness for jewelry and is very particular about her appearance.

On the eve of battle with the archdemon, she made an offer to the Wardens: Sire a child with her, and she could use it to capture the archdemon's soul at the moment of death, saving the Warden who struck the killing blow.

*If her offer is refused:* When this bargain was turned down, Morrigan disappeared.

*After final battle, if her offer was accepted:* After the battle, Morrigan disappeared.

## Oghren

"I'm not saying I should be your first pick for a dance partner at the inaugural ball, but in the Deep Roads, I'm your man."

Oghren of House Kondrat was once a promising member of the Warrior Caste. His house was not especially high-ranked, but many of its members, Oghren included, had won notable victories in the Provings and were considered to be rising in prestige. When a Smith Caste family with plenty of money but no political connections offered their daughter in marriage, his family accepted the match. And then everything changed.

His wife, Branka, was named a Paragon for her achievements. All of House Kondrat joined her newly-made noble House Branka... and vanished with her into the Deep Roads.

As time passed and it became more and more clear that Oghren had been abandoned, he became the butt of jokes throughout Orzammar. He took to drink, which didn't especially help. Drunk and humiliated, he challenged another warrior to a Proving over an insult and killed him. The match was meant to be fought to first-blood. As a punishment, he was stripped of his house and barred from bearing arms: The only fate worse for a warrior than exile.

The Grey Warden mounted a search for Branka and found her—and the Anvil of the Void for which she led her house to their deaths.

Afterwards, having apparently nothing better to do, Oghren offered his services to the Grey Warden and left Orzammar to help end the Blight.

Oghren enjoys challenging his palate with alcohols of ever increasing rarity, potency, and outright lethality. This has afforded him no benefit whatsoever.

*If The Warden kills Oghren:* He was killed in a dispute with The Warden.

*If he leaves the Warden after joining:* He left some time later for parts unknown.

## Sten

"Either you have an enviable memory, or a pitiable life, to know nothing of regret."

The northern islands are remote: lush jungles that harbor cities rumored to be the most extraordinary ever built. These are the lands of the qunari—lands that no foreign eyes ever see. Only the stories of the three Exalted Marches waged against the giants have reached the south... until the arrival of Sten.

The stoic giant in the cage was surely the strangest thing the people of Lothering had ever seen, until the Blight struck.

*If Sten is not rescued from his cage:* He remained in his cage to await death, and most likely found it.

He was sent with a small group of Qunari soldiers to investigate the Blight and report back. Outside Lothering, they were ambushed by darkspawn. They fought off the attack, but only Sten survived. Farmers found him dying and took him in, but when he awoke, alone and unarmed, he panicked, killing the entire family. Realizing he had sacrificed his honor, Sten waited for the villagers to come, and surrendered, expecting death.

His sword and his honor restored, Sten chose to continue with The Warden and take the battle to the archdemon.

Sten has an eye for paintings, an appreciation that might seem out of character, but is actually an extension of qunari discipline. He respects an artist for careful composition, a skill that is as much about where the brushstroke stops as where it begins.

*If he leaves:* He left, intending to seek out the archdemon alone.

## **Bann Teagan Guerrin**

"The Bannorn will not bow to you simply because you demand it!"

Younger brother to Arl Eamon of Redcliffe, and uncle to King Cailan, Teagan holds the bannorn of Rainesfere, a tiny province of Redcliffe's squeezed between the Frostback Mountains and Lake Calenhad. Bann Teagan avoids the Denerim court except to go hunting with his nephew, and rarely makes himself heard at the Landsmeet, preferring to leave politics to his brother.

## **Valendrian**

"Remember that our strength lies in commitment to tradition and to each other."

Every alienage has a hahren, an elder. It falls to the hahren to arrange marriages for those without family, to negotiate with the guards when there's trouble, and to act as a sort of mayor and surrogate uncle to the people of the alienage.

The title, like so many things, is a holdover from the time of Arlathan, for hahrens are not necessarily the oldest person in their community, or even all that old. Tradition gives the role to the oldest soul, the wisest, cleverest, and the most level-headed. Valendrian has been hahren of the Denerim Alienage since he was in his thirties.

*After "Unrest in the Alienage" if The Warden is a city elf:* He was taken across the sea by Tevinter slavers. His whereabouts are now unknown.

*After "Unrest in the Alienage" if The Warden is not a city elf:* He was nearly shipped to Tevinter by slavers, but was returned to the Alienage by The Warden.

## **Wynne**

"I will not lie motionless in a bed, with coverlets up to my chin, waiting for death to claim me."

"It's perfectly all right to think about the many indignities you plan to inflict on your enemies, but to talk about it... well, that would be unladylike."

Wynne's talent became apparent early on, particularly her skill at healing magic. She was well-liked by all her mentors, and was recognized as an exceptionally gifted student. Even the templars who watched her could not deny that she represented the best the Circle had to offer. She was an intelligent young woman who possessed a quiet confidence and maturity beyond her years.

She spent many years mentoring apprentices within the Circle, and her peers thought so highly of her that she was asked to be First Enchanter Irving's successor, but she refused, saying that she had no desire to work in the upper echelons. When word reached the tower of King Cailan's call to arms, Wynne volunteered to go to Ostagar.

*If Wynne is alive at end of "Broken Circle":* She escaped the battle with her life, and stayed to search for survivors and tend the wounded. When she returned home, she found that Uldred had gone on ahead of her, spreading the lie that the Wardens had betrayed Cailan and urging the Circle to support Loghain. Wynne immediately spoke with Irving and told him the truth. Irving then confronted Uldred about his falsehoods—prompting Uldred to use terrible measures to take over the tower.

*If The Warden kills Wynne during "Broken Circle":* While trying to save what was left of the Circle, Wynne was cut down by The Warden.

After dealing with Uldred and his abominations, Wynne joined The Warden in the quest to end the Blight.

For Wynne, the printed word is a window to true understanding. A scholar by heart, she feels that what a people commit to the page is sacred by definition.

*If she is in the party and The Warden defiles the Sacred Ashes:* She was killed fighting alongside the guardian when Andraste's Ashes were corrupted and destroyed.

## **Keeper Zathrian**

"Even with all our magic and skill, we only delay the inevitable."

*If The Warden is a Dalish elf...*

In Arlathvhen, it is common for all the hahren to hold a private council while their respective clans are still settling in. These meetings inevitably last well into the next day and end with furious shouting, such that many say that the true reason the clans all go their separate ways is that no two hahren can stand each other.

Zathrian is nothing at all like Keeper Marethari, but this is to be expected. He is older, more severe, and his clan is facing a much more terrible enemy than the usual shemlen that plague other clans.

*If The Warden is not a Dalish elf...*

It is said the elves lived in Ferelden long before any others set foot there, and though most of their knowledge has been lost, it falls to the keeper of each clan to preserve what they have.

Zathrian is an old, severe elf with little love for outsiders, but his clan is facing a more trying enemy than most.

Long ago, in retribution for an attack against his clan, he unleashed a terrible curse: He summoned a spirit into this world, and set it upon the humans who had wronged him. The spirit did not simply slaughter Zathrian's enemies; it transformed them into monstrous beasts.

In time, however, the werewolves he had created regained their minds, and they sought out the one responsible for their suffering, turning the curse upon Zathrian's own people.

*If The Warden killed the elves:* He was killed along with the rest of his clan.

*If The Warden killed the werewolves:* The Warden slew the werewolves, including Witherfang, ending the conflict.

*If Zathrian's curse was ended:* At the urging of the Lady of the Forest, The Warden persuaded Zathrian to give up his own life, returning the werewolves to their human forms and saving the elves who had been inflicted with the curse.

## Zevran Arainai

"The Crows send their regards."

"I intend to see this through to the end with you. After all... someone must take responsibility for preventing your untimely death."

Between the Tevinter Imperium, Rivain, and the Free Marches sits the nation of Antiva. Although it possesses few resources of its own, Antiva's location makes it a center for trade in the north, and the capital, Antiva City, is the wealthiest in the world. Antiva has virtually no army—the monarchy is too weak to support one. Most Antivans would be hard-pressed even to name the current king—as the true power lies in the hands of a dozen merchant princes, each with a personal army, and each locked in a constant struggle for power against all the others.

Anyone would think, then, that Antiva would be a ripe target for invasion by one of her neighbors, but even the qunari leave Antiva alone for one very good reason: the House of Crows.

The most efficient, most feared, and most expensive guild of assassins in the world calls Antiva their home, and their reputation alone defends the borders.

Zevran was the Crow contracted by Loghain to assassinate Alistair and the Warden. One failed attempt later, however, he found himself at the mercy of his would-be victims.

*If Zevran is not recruited and killed:* He was killed, which likely has ruined the Crows' otherwise perfect record of successes.

*If Zevran is not recruited and released:* They showed somewhat dubious mercy by letting him go, and what's become of him is anyone's guess.

*If he is recruited:* They showed him unexpected mercy, and in return he swore to aid the Wardens on their quest to end the Blight.

*If he subsequently leaves:* They parted ways, however, and Zevran has not been seen since.

*If he is subsequently killed (other than when Taliesin attacks):* Things don't always work out as expected, however, and Zevran was killed in a disagreement with The Warden.

*If he sides with Taliesin in the attack after the Landsmeet is called:* The word of a Crow, however, is little more than noise. Crows ambushed The Warden, and Zevran joined them. He was killed alongside his Antivan brothers.

Zevran shows an affinity for the finer things in life — hardly surprising for an Antivan Crow—but his appreciation can be more poetic than he lets on. A simple bar of refined silver or gold, uncomplicated by a craftsman's hammer, is elegantly valuable.

## Witherfang

Witherfang is, according to the Keeper Zathrian, a wolf. He is no ordinary wolf, however. He is a wolf possessed by a powerful spirit and the source of the werewolf curse that plagues the Brecilian Forest. While Witherfang is hundreds of years old and very powerful in his own right, the only way to end his curse is to cut out his heart and bring it to Zathrian.

It appears that Witherfang has two sides, as nature does. One is the wolf, savage and male... but the other is the Lady of the Forest, gentle and female. Witherfang is both beast and beauty, terrible and peace-loving. The Lady has guided the werewolves of the Brecilian Forest to come to peace with their nature... as she has.

## BOOKS AND SONGS

### Aveline, Knight of Orlais

Aveline was born to an Orlesian farmer near the city of Halamshiral in the early half of the Storm Age. She was a large and ugly baby, and her father had hoped for a boy. Not wanting another mouth to feed, the farmer left Aveline in the woods to die from exposure. But a traveling band of Dalish elves came upon the crying child.

The elves took her into their clan and raised her as their own. They taught her archery, dueling and survival skills. When she came of age, she was larger and stronger than most men, let alone elven women. Her adoptive parents knew that she was a fine warrior, so they encouraged her to enter a human tournament in nearby Montisimmard. But women were not permitted to join the knighthood in Orlais, nor to compete in a tournament, so Aveline joined the tournament as a man. Her clan forged a suit of armor with a full helm and gave her an ironbark sword of the finest quality.

Aveline entered the competition claiming to be a knight of Antiva. She refused to doff her helmet, even during the archery competition. And sure enough, Aveline bested many other knights until, in the grand melee, she came upon Kaleva, a knight who served the emperor and was considered the finest in the land.

Kaleva was determined not to be beaten, and struck swiftly and strongly. As Aveline matched each of his blows, Kaleva grew ever more frustrated. Finally, in desperation, he tripped Aveline and threw her to the ground. The blow knocked her helm from her head, and Kaleva was shamed. He called to have the competition declared invalid, but the crowd booed and jeered. In anger, Kaleva turned and slew Aveline as she lay helpless.

The son of the emperor, Prince Freyan, was also present at the tourney. He too had been beaten by Aveline, but he recognized her skill and bravery and was saddened by the injustice of her death. Upon rising to the emperor's seat in 7:44 Storm, Freyan abolished the law that disallowed women from joining the Orlesian knighthood and posthumously knighted Aveline. Although women in the Orlesian knighthood are still a rarity today, all those who do become knights revere Ser Aveline as their patron.

— *"Aveline, Knight of Orlais," by Lord Francois Maigny, 8:4 Blessed.*

### Ballad of Ayesleigh

the wind that stirs  
their shallow graves  
carries their song  
across the sands

heed our words  
hear our cry  
the grey are sworn  
in peace we lie

heed our words  
hear our cry  
our names recalled  
we cannot die

when darkness comes  
and swallows light  
heed our words  
and we shall rise

— *From the Ballad of Ayesleigh, said to have been written after the Battle of Ayesleigh, which ended the Fourth Blight, 5:20 Exalted.*

### **Meditations and Odes to Bees**

Oh, fair damsel of the garden,  
Arlessa of honeysuckle and rose,  
I humbly beg your gracious pardon  
For the offense that here arose.

Surely your work is far too vital  
To be interrupted by one like me.  
I am in no way entitled  
To earn the notice of a honeybee.

I was a fool to pluck that flower  
For my lady fair. On my honor I  
Swear to bring you dozens more within the hour  
If you give me leave to try.

Listen traveler, if you would walk the garden paths some spring:  
Mind that you don't trespass, for the gardeners do sting.

— *Anonymous*

### **Adventures of the Black Fox**

Born Lord Remi Vascal in 8:63 Blessed, the Black Fox was a dashing thief and rogue who went on to inspire so many tales of his exploits that it is nearly impossible to determine today which are true and which are merely fabricated legend. Despite coming from nobility, he has become something of a hero of the common people.

His initial exploits involved ridiculing the tyrannical and powerful lord of Val Chevin. Wearing a mask, he would appear in public and disrupt the lord's plans to the point that the lord angrily put a huge bounty on the life of "this cunning fox" (the origin of the nickname, which stuck). That the primary bounty hunter who took the job, Karolis, ended up becoming Remi's lifelong partner in crime (only after nearly killing him several times) is one of the most popular tales told in taverns today. The story is often exaggerated to make Remi appear initially buffoonish, until Karolis becomes so furious at the Black Fox's inexplicable ability to survive that the cunning Remi gains the upper hand, which impresses Karolis so much that the bounty hunter joins him.



After years of terrorizing the lord's men and foiling his tax collectors (a favorite pastime of Remi's, according to the Orlesian commoners), Remi was supposedly betrayed by his lover Servana de Montfort (in some versions of the tale a mage of the Circle, no less) and was captured. After more than a year of torture, Remi was rescued from prison by his compatriots (including a repentant Servana), and together they escaped Orlais. In this period of Remi's adventures, he appears almost everywhere in Thedas: As his legend grew, more innkeepers and merchants were happy to claim that the Black Fox had visited their village or establishment and performed some legendary feat. If the tales are to be believed, Remi led the lord's men on a merry chase. He became embroiled in political intrigue in Nevarra, was hunted by the Antivan Crows, and then kidnapped by a powerful mage in Tevinter. In each situation, Remi escaped death at the last moment, foiled the evil-doer, and improved life for the poor and downtrodden. Then, inevitably, he rejoined his band of adventurers and moved on to the next land. His companions Karolis and Servana, the wise dwarf Bolek, and the tempestuous knight Ser Clementis have each spawned their own individual legends over the years.

The stories all agree that, at some point, the Black Fox disappeared: He and his fellow adventurers voyaged into the heart of the Arlathan Forest seeking the sunken city of the elves and never returned. Many more are the tales that expand on what ultimately happened to them in that forest and postulate on how they could someday be rescued.

— *From the Adventures of the Black Fox, by Gaston Gerrault, 9:11 Dragon.*

## **The Holy Brazier**

The brazier that stands atop the stairs in the great hall of our temple has always been something of a mystery to us. This is the brazier that created the beings we call the ash wraiths. This is where Andraste's followers immolated themselves and became the eternal guardians of Her temple.

I have painstakingly pieced together information from old books and from the tales and half-truths passed down to us by our forefathers. I believe I now understand the ritual used to create the wraiths. The brazier was lit with a consecrated taper, its flame taken from the everlasting fire that long ago consumed Andraste Herself. The chosen disciple would fast and pray for weeks, taking into his body nothing but a sip of water a day. When the disciple was finally ready, he would place in his mouth a flawless black pearl, and step into the flames. In ancient Tevinter, black pearls were thought to be magical, able to stop the soul from passing through the Veil when held in the mouth at the moment of death.

Thus, Andraste's disciples consigned themselves to the eternal flame; they became dust and ashes, and rose again and again to protect the most Beloved of the Maker.

— *From the journal of Father Kolgrim.*

## **The Legend of Calenhad: Chapter 1**

Prior to the crowning of King Calenhad, Ferelden was little more than a collection of independent arlings and teyrnirs that warred on each other constantly over petty matters.

Calenhad was born in 5:10 Exalted as the third son of a Highever merchant on hard times. He was eventually sent to a distant cousin, a poor young knight named Ser Forannan, who made Calenhad his squire and dog-handler. As the tale goes, Ser Forannan and his squire became caught up in one of the wars of unity at the time: Arl Myrddin was a strong but generally disliked man who was making a bid for kingship. Forannan's own lord, a young fool of an arl named Tenedor no older than Calenhad, was besieged by Myrddin's forces at his castle, today known as West Hill. When Myrddin called Tenedor out to parley, the young arl asked for a volunteer from among the squires, someone who could masquerade as Tenedor in the parley party. Calenhad kneeled before Tenedor and asked for the honor.

Much to Tenedor's and Ser Forannan's dismay, Calenhad immediately identified himself to Arl Myrddin. When asked by the arl why he was here, Calenhad explained that he had been asked to take the place of his lord. The arl said that he had planned to kill Tenedor—was Calenhad willing to die in his lord's place, as well? Calenhad impressed Myrddin and his allies by saying that he was. Myrddin offered Calenhad a place as his own squire, but Calenhad refused, stating that if Myrddin had planned on betraying the right of parley, he was no man of honor. Myrddin's allies laughed at that, and Myrddin himself conceded that Calenhad had a point. He allowed Calenhad to return to the castle safely and launched his final assault.

During the assault, both Tenedor and Forannan were killed, but Calenhad found himself in one-on-one combat with Arl Myrddin. In front of all of Myrddin's allies, Calenhad defeated the arl and commanded he call off his armies. The arl asked Calenhad who he professed to serve now, if both his knight and his lord were dead, to which Calenhad replied that he would do as his honor bade him to, for he had nothing else.

"You are not a man known for your honor," Calenhad said, "but I believe you wish to be. You allowed me to live once, and so now I do the same for you. Perhaps if more of our people lived by honor, we would learn to trust each other long enough to live together." And with that, Calenhad withdrew his sword.

"I am humbled by your words," Arl Myrddin told Calenhad, dropping to one knee. To his allies he shouted that he now knew he would never be king, but he knew who should be. With that Myrddin pledged allegiance to Calenhad, whom he named teyrn and ruler of Tenedor's lands.

— *From The Legend of Calenhad, by Brother Herren, Chantry scribe, 8:10 Blessed.*

## **The Legend of Calenhad: Chapter 2**

With the allegiance of Arl Myrddin, Calenhad began his rise to greatness.

Some of Myrddin's allies also pledged allegiance, but most thought him foolhardy: A boy commoner was to lead them and become king? Over the years that followed, however, Calenhad would prove himself worthy of Myrddin's trust. With each victory, he won over more men to his command and his reputation as a man of honor spread. Eventually, during his campaign against the lowland bannorn, he met his most infamous friend and companion, the vaunted warrior Lady Shayna. Calenhad married the famously beautiful daughter of Myrddin, Mairyn, and his firm belief in the ways of the Chantry became the staple of his court. In a time when the Chantry was still new to the lands and courts following Andraste held the majority of the power in Ferelden, Calenhad began to solidify the nation as one in line with the other nations around it. This piety eventually won over to Calenhad those faithful in Ferelden who had been waiting for such a leader.

With Lady Shayna at his side, Calenhad was unstoppable, and by 5:42 Exalted, the war for Ferelden had come down to one final battle against the collected forces of Simeon, Teyrn of Denerim and the most potent nobleman in the land. Calenhad persuaded the Circle of Magi to come to his aid, as well as the Ash Warriors, and in the Battle of White Valley, he famously defeated Teyrn Simeon and united the nation.

During the battle, Simeon nearly killed Calenhad, but Lady Shayna intervened and took the wound for him, slaying Simeon. Calenhad was crowned king in Denerim that year, with Mairyn his Queen, but he spent much of the months that followed nursing Lady Shayna back to health.

King Calenhad's Ferelden was peaceful for a time, with the Chantry spreading quickly under the King's guidance. Everywhere the king and queen went, they were surrounded by cheering crowds. The common folk celebrated Calenhad as one of their own who had achieved the impossible, and trade opened up with many outside lands for the first time in Ferelden's existence. But, as with many such golden ages, it was not to last.

—*From The Legend of Calenhad, by Brother Herren, Chantry scribe, 8:10 Blessed.*

### **The Legend of Calenhad: Chapter 3**

Calenhad's legend tells that Lady Shayna harbored a love for her king that went beyond friendship, a love that she had kept secret out of her sense of duty and honor. When offered a love potion by a witch in disguise—a witch who would later turn out to be the vengeance-seeking sister of Arl Simeon—Lady Shayna gave in to temptation. She used the potion on Calenhad, but Queen Mairyn discovered the two of them together that night, and, broken-hearted, fled Denerim to return to her father. She told Myrddin everything, and he angrily threatened to revoke his support of Calenhad and begin anew the civil war.

It is said that Lady Shayna felt remorseful at her manipulation of her best friend's heart and confessed her use of forbidden magic to the court. Although her life was forfeit, Calenhad forgave Lady Shayna for what she had done and refused to have her executed. Myrddin furiously roused the other arls against Calenhad and Lady Shayna, and it was not long before Ferelden stood on the brink of civil war once again.

Against Calenhad's orders, Lady Shayna went alone to Mairyn to plead for peace and plead her case, only to be found out by Myrddin and slain. Angered but also saddened, Calenhad challenged Myrddin to an honor duel, a fight neither of them wanted but both knew was necessary, and Myrddin was slain. The death of the king's greatest ally, an important arl, was too much for the young kingdom to bear. The other arls would not back down in their claims against Calenhad. The threat of civil war rose once again. Calenhad went to his wife one last time then, although none know what he said to her, and then he simply vanished. He left with Mairyn a proclamation abdicating his throne in favor of the son his queen carried in her belly, who eventually ascended to the throne as King Weylan I, the king credited with establishing the Theirin dynasty lasting to this day. Calenhad would never reappear.

The legend of Calenhad himself only grew over time, as stories and sightings multiplied, even long after the point when Calenhad could possibly still be alive. Some say he disappeared into the Korcari Wilds or went to live with the dwarves or even became a monk in a reclusive Chantry order. The Chantry named Calenhad one of the Anointed in 7:88 Storm. Calenhad's sword, Nemetos, was left with Mairyn and became a symbol of Ferelden kingship over the next century. Rumors of its magical powers grew, and when it was lost in the ambush that killed King Venedrin in 8:24 Blessed, it was seen as a great blow to the Theirin line. Several false swords have appeared since that time, but never has the true sword resurfaced.

—*From The Legend of Calenhad, by Brother Herren, Chantry scribe, 8:10 Blessed.*

### **Caridin's Journal**

940, 45th day, 5th year of the reign of King Valtor: I have done it. The vision the ancestors gave me has come to fruition. Today a man sat up from my forge, a man of living stone and steel. I called him golem, for the legend of those great statues animated by the dead. They are our future and our salvation.

940, 60th day, 5th year of the reign of King Valtor: It is a horrific process. Not every man could do such a thing and survive with his mind intact. I am honored that the ancestors believe I have the strength to bear this burden and forge Orzammar's defenders.

Nothing so great may be achieved without sacrifice. Nor may stone and steel walk without a spirit to animate them.

940, 73rd day, 5th year of the reign of King Valtor: I have asked for volunteers. Some few answered, men of the Warrior Caste, younger sons with no property, no chance for marriage. They want to defend Orzammar from the horrors these humans have unleashed. They want to live forever in a body stronger than the finest armor. They do not ask to speak with those who have gone before.

I have put off saying this, even in these pages. But I must say it now. My golems will be powered by their deaths. These brave warriors come to me, naked as the day they were born. I dress them in a skin of armor, so large it makes the burliest look no more than a babe, the anvil their first and final cradle.

We are surrounded by a mile of earth on all sides. No one hears the screams as I pour molten lyrium through the eyeholes, the mouth, every joint and chink in the armor. They silence quickly, but the smell lingers, just a trace of blood in the greater stench of hot metal. I must work fast. The armor is malleable now, as I shape it with hammer and tongs.

It is not long before it moves beneath my hands, writhing and twisting with every blow. It speaks again now, a low moan, but I have learned to tune it out. I can afford no error in this craft. There can be no melted slag blinding the eyes, nor an unhewn bit of granite shackling the leg. They groan at my work, but would they rather be broken, crippled? Those I have spoken to tell me of the pain, but could they see themselves, they would see perfection.

—*From the journal of Caridin.*

### **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 1**

The first Blight devastated the Tevinter Imperium. Not only had the darkspawn ravaged the countryside, but Tevinter citizens had to face the fact that their own gods had turned against them. Dumat, the Old God once known as the Dragon of Silence, had risen to silence the world, and despite the frenzied pleas for help, the other Old Gods did nothing. The people of the Imperium began to question their faith, murdering priests and burning temples to punish their gods for not returning to help.

In those days, even after the devastation of the first Blight, the Imperium stretched across the known world. Fringed with barbarian tribes, the Imperium was well prepared for invasions and attacks from without. Fitting, then, that the story of its downfall begins from within.

The people of the far northern and eastern reaches of the Imperium rose up against their powerful overlords in rebellion. The Tevinter magisters summoned demons to put down these small rebellions, leaving corpses to burn as examples to all who would dare revolt. The Imperium began to tear itself apart from within, throngs of angry and disillusioned citizens doing what centuries of opposing armies could not. But the magisters were confident in their power, and they could not imagine surviving a Blight only to be destroyed by their own subjects.

Even after the Blight, Tevinter commanded an army larger than that of any other organized nation in Thedas, but that army was scattered and its morale dwindling. The ruin of Tevinter was such that the Alamarri barbarians, who had spread their clans and holds over the wilderness of the Ferelden Valley at the far southeast edge of the Imperium, saw weakness in their enemy, and, after an age of oppression, embarked on a campaign not only to free their own lands, but to bring down mighty Tevinter as well.

The leaders of that blessed campaign were the great barbarian warlord, Maferath, and his wife, Andraste. Their dreams and ambitions would change the world forever.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

## **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 2**

When the prophet Andraste and her husband Maferath arrived at the head of their barbarian horde, southern Tevinter was thrown into chaos. The Imperium had defended against invasions in the past, but now they stood without the protection of their gods, with their army in tatters and their country devastated by the Blight. Many felt that the timing of the invasion was yet another of the Maker's miracles in Andraste's campaign to spread His divine word.

Andraste was more than simply the wife of a warlord, after all—she was also the betrothed of the Maker. Enraptured by the melodic sound of her voice as she sang to the heavens for guidance, the Maker Himself appeared to Andraste and proposed that she come with Him, leaving behind the flawed world of humanity. In her wisdom, Andraste pleaded with the Maker to return to His people and create paradise in the world of men. The Maker agreed, but only if all of the world would turn away from the worship of false gods and accept the Maker's divine commandments.

Armed with the knowledge of the one true god, Andraste began the Exalted Marches into the weakened Imperium. One of the Maker's commandments, that magic should serve man rather than rule over him, was as honey to the souls of the downtrodden of Tevinter, who lived under the thumbs of the magisters.

Word of Andraste's Exalted March, of her miracles and military successes, spread far and wide. Those in the Imperium who felt the Old Gods had abandoned them eagerly listened to the words of the Maker. Those throngs of restless citizens that destroyed temples now did so in the name of the Maker and His prophet, Andraste. As Maferath's armies conquered the lands of southern Tevinter, so did Andraste's words conquer hearts.

It is said that the Maker smiled on the world at the Battle of Valarian Fields, in which the forces of Maferath challenged and defeated the greatest army Tevinter could muster. The southern reaches of the mighty Imperium now lay at the mercy of barbarians. Faith in the Maker, bolstered by such miracles, threatened to shake the foundations of the Imperium apart.

Of course, the human heart is more powerful than the greatest weapon, and when wounded, it is capable of the blackest of deeds.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 3**

It is said that at the Battle of Valarian Fields, Maferath stood and looked out over his armies. He had conquered the southern reaches of the greatest empire the world had ever known and built splintered barbarian clans into a force to be feared. With pride in his heart, he turned to congratulate his men and found that they had turned from him.

Maferath fell to the evil of jealousy. After all that he had done, his wife was the one to receive all the glory. He saw his wife's power and influence, and tired of his place as second husband, below the Maker. His heart swelled with fury. If he had conquered just to have his wife wrested from him by a forgotten god and a legion of faith-hungry rabble, then perhaps this war was not worth the trouble.

Here, history and the Chant of Light come apart. History tells us that Maferath looked north into the central Imperium and saw nothing but more war against a rapidly regrouping army, and he despaired. The Chant of Light holds that Maferath chafed with jealousy of the Maker, and jealousy of the glory that Andraste received although it was he who led the armies.

Maferath traveled to the Imperial capital of Minrathous to speak with the Archon Hessarian. There he offered up his wife to the Imperium in return for a truce that would end hostilities once and for all. The archon, eager to put down the voice of the prophet that stirred his own people against him, agreed. Maferath led Andraste into an ambush where she was captured by Imperial agents, putting an end to her Exalted March.

Crowds of loyalists stood in the central square of Minrathous to watch Andraste's execution. By command of the archon, she was burned at the stake in what the Imperium believed to be the most painful punishment imaginable. According to the Chantry, however, Andraste was instead purified and made whole by the flames, ascending to life at her Maker's side. By all accounts, there was only silence where they expected screams. At the sight of the prophet burning, the crowds were filled with a profound guilt, as if they had participated in a great blasphemy. So moving was the moment that the archon himself drew his sword and thrust it into the prophet's heart, ending her torment and leaving those assembled to consider the weight of what they had seen.

Whereas the execution of Andraste was meant to be a symbol of defeat for the faith of the Maker, in truth it all but sealed the fate of the worship of the Old Gods and paved the way for the spread of the Maker's chant.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 4**

The crowds present at the death of Andraste were right to feel despair. It is believed that the prophet's execution angered the Maker, and He turned His back on humanity once more, leaving the people of Thedas to suffer in the dark.

In these dark times, mankind scrambled for a light, any light. Some found comfort in demonic cults that promised power and riches in return for worship. Others prayed to the Old Gods for forgiveness, begging the great dragons to return to the world. Still others fell so low as to worship the darkspawn, forming vile cults dedicated to the exaltation of evil in its purest form. It is said that the world wept as its people begged for a savior who would not come.

Andraste's followers, however, did not abandon her teachings when she died. The Cult of Andraste rescued her sacred ashes from the courtyard in Minrathous after her execution, stealing them away to a secret temple. The location of that temple has long been lost, but the ashes of Andraste served as a symbol of the enduring nature of the faith in the Maker, that humanity could earn the Maker's forgiveness despite its grievous insult to Him.

With time, the Cult of Andraste spread and grew, and the Chant of Light took form. Sing this chant in the four corners of Thedas, it was said, and the world would gain the Maker's attention at last. As the Chant of Light spread, the Cult of Andraste became known as the Andrastian Chantry. Those who converted to the Chantry's beliefs found it their mission to spread Andraste's word.

There were many converts, including powerful people in the Imperium and in the city-states of what is now Orlais. Such was the power of the Maker's word that the young King Drakon undertook a series of Exalted Marches meant to unite the city-states and create an empire solely dedicated to the Maker's will. The Orlesian Empire became the seat of the Chantry's power, the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux the source of the movement that birthed the organized Chantry as we know it today. Drakon, by then Emperor Drakon I, created the Circle of Magi, the Order of Templars and the holy office of the Divine. Many within the Chantry revere him nearly as equal with Andraste herself.

The modern Chantry is a thing of faith and beauty, but it is also a house of necessity, protecting Thedas from powerful forces that would do it harm. Where the Grey Wardens protect the world from the Blights, the Chantry protects mankind from itself. Most of all, the Chantry works to earn the Maker's forgiveness, so that one day He will return and transform the world into the paradise it was always meant to be.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

## **The Tale of Iloren**

In the days after the rising of Zazikel, the dark ones covered every corner of the land. The archdemon drove all the nations of the world before him, shemlen and elvhen alike.

In the far north, where the hills wander the plains and the earth is eternally baked beneath the uncaring sun, the lands which the shemlen call Anderfels, a clan of our people lived, struggling to survive the Blight.

Iloren was their keeper. A hunter in his younger days, crafty as any wolf, he led his people always just ahead of the darkspawn who chased them. But the old hunter knew that even halla cannot run forever. They must turn and fight, or be run down.

At the foot of the Merdaine, the darkspawn cornered Illore's clan. That night, the moon was strangled by clouds, the earth concealed by a dread mist that rose out of nowhere, so that the elvhen could not tell up from down. In the confusion, the darkspawn attacked.

But Illore had prepared for them. All around the camp, the hunters had strewn dry grass, brush and brambles. When the sound of rustling footfalls began, Illore and the other hahren called upon the old magic. They struck out with lightning, and though the bolts missed the darkspawn, they hit their target all the same. The sea of kindling lit, and not one of the dark creatures made it through the fire to reach Illore's clan.

—*From "The Tale of Illore," written by Zathrian, as it has been passed down from keeper to keeper from generations.*

## **Dane and the Werewolf**

Let me sing of heroes and honor lost and found,  
Of monsters and men in all forms,  
Of Dane, hunter without peer,  
Feared by the forests of Ferelden,  
Who one autumn morn spied  
A hart of pure white in beam of warmest sun,  
A prize for huntsman's spear.

Through the greenwood they ran, hart and hunter  
Bringing the stag to spear at last in a long-forgotten grove,  
Heedless that the chase had waked a hunger in the golden wood,  
A werewolf, a creature with mind of man,  
Lured by the hunt and come forth to lay claim  
To the hart as rightful tribute  
Drawn by the scent of cooling blood.

In the silence the two hunters held.  
Dane, spear-armed against the wolf with all his brood,  
Knew with sinking heart he was lost  
Steeled for the winding roads of the Fade  
Then the beast spoke, human-like in voice,  
"You have taken this stag from my woods, and my pack  
But nothing comes without a cost."

The wolf pack circled, ever closer, and he  
Who felled boars and bears with his bright blade  
Knew fear. They spoke his name in roars  
Like gravestones, offering a beast's bargain.  
"Die here, huntsman, alone  
And forgotten, or take my place amongst the wolves  
As I take your place amongst man."

Thus was a bargain struck,  
And Dane the wolf pack served in wolven form,  
And the werewolf to his family sped, as Dane,  
One year and a day all told.  
But some things cannot be repent,  
Some coinage cannot be unspent,  
When hearts are wagered, a fissure rent.

— *From the saga Dane and the Werewolf, as recorded by the minstrel Uccam, 4:85 Black.*

## **Death of a Templar**

The dry, dusty earth swallows up salty drops that splatter its surface. A tiny insect pauses, sensing the vibrations, and scurries off, leaving behind its invisible enemy. As the drops fall, the dark circles merge together, expressing a mirror to their creator.



The primal emotions of bloodlust and sorrow blend into a lethal cocktail that breaks the strongest of men. The jurisdiction of strength must be left to the spirit, not arm nor chest. Only the wisest turn to His inner sanctuary to partition the mind from an all-consuming madness. Seductive voices whispering promise of glory waiting down the weaker path of the flesh, bringing a death far worse than that of hot lead or steel. These blank, hollow promises will echo the unfathomable eternally.

Living comfortably amongst material possessions, it is easy to misunderstand the true meaning of uncontrollable hate. Failing to understand the power of fighting against pure, unfaltering beliefs, against foes that listen only to their soul. Uncontrollable hate. Influenced and thus removed from innocence. The scar is permanent and internal.

The rain, now red, feeds the debt owed for actions passed. Seeking further into the earth, as the mind draws slower. What was it that drew him, himself to this situation? The mind ebbs and parts to a lingering memory of true innocence. He entered war as a newborn enters the world, unknowing of both the horrors and light of the Maker that will save him.

The sound of metal sliding along leather comes from above him. From the second he was born, to his soon-to-be dying breath, his mind was processing and analyzing knowledge and experiences. It is true that he thought he could be wise in his own eyes, but only the most humble recognizes that he knows very little. Bias, speculation and all of false pretenses make way to the sound of the sweeping steel, and then finally, his soul, as ready as his eyes dry from this final understanding, enters His promise of its purist form.

—*From Death of a Templar, by Ser Andrew, Knight of Andraste and Templar Archivist, 9:4 Dragon.*

## **A Very Chewed and Moist Book**

*(Much of this is illegible)*

Day 42: I begin to suspect that we are being manipulated, as if by some unseen hand far above us. Always, I heard the sound of clicking. Click-click. Click-click.

*(Several pages are missing, and much of the ink on the remaining page has run together.)*

.. and then told them I wouldn't take any cheese unless it came directly from the Revered Mother's hand...

*(Mud or something similar has soaked the pages here.)*

Day 115: My mother told me I was special. I never knew how right she was...

*(the ink has smeared horribly.)*

It was Yusaris! I swear it! It looked just like the carving in the Arl's drawing room. I sent it to the Circle to verify, but I haven't heard...

—*From a very chewed and moist book.*

## **The Noladar Anthology of Dwarven Poetry**

The undead exhumed  
Borne from the shallowest graves  
Mined from the living

— *By the Paragon Lynchcar, 7:44 Storm.*

Do you like fried mush and nug?

I do not like them Mister Klug  
I do not like fried mush and nug

Would you eat them on a rug?  
If you eat, you'll get a hug!

I would not eat them on a rug  
From you I would not want a hug

Then would you drink them from a jug?  
Come on, come on, give them a chug!

I would not drink them from a jug  
I'd rather eat a slimy slug

Would you eat them with a bug?  
Would you share them with a thug?

I would not share them with a thug  
I would not eat them with a bug  
Not for a hug  
Not on a rug  
From a jug  
I will not chug  
Come on, come on, now mister Klug  
Are you on some kind of drug?

Eat them in this hole I dug  
Eat them, eat them, don't just shrug

I've had it, had it, Mister Klug!  
Down, into that hole you dug  
Down with the thug  
And the slug  
And the bug

— *By the Paragon Seuss, 2:12 Glory.*

Never surrender  
Dwarvish blood may be lukewarm  
But vital as ore

— *By the Paragon Lynchcar, 7:48 Storm.*

There was once a miner of lyrium,  
Whose face looked like a perineum,  
The dead got him too,  
Not much he could do,  
With a face like that he was shoe-in.

— *By the wordsmith Carlol of House Yonoch, 9:11 Dragon.*

## **Feast Day Fish**

Fluffy Mackerel Pudding

2 stalks celery  
1 green pepper  
Half a pound of poached mackerel  
1 small onion, finely diced  
2 tsp mustard  
1 tsp salt  
half tsp ground Antivan pepper  
eighth tsp ground mace  
dash ground cardamom seed  
2 eggs, beaten  
2 eggs, boiled and sliced for garnish

— *This book, found in Arl Eamon's estate, naturally falls open to this page.*

## **The First Blight: Chapter 1**

Thedas is a land of fierce diversity, from the assassin-princes of Antiva to the faded griffons of the Anderfels, but in my travels, I have found one tale that unites the people of this land. It is a story of pride and damnation, and although the telling differs, the essence of the tale remains the same.

At the height of its power, the Tevinter Imperium stretched over much of Thedas, uniting the known world under the rule of the tyrannical magisters. It is said that the Old Gods whom the magisters worshipped gave them the knowledge of blood magic, and the magisters used this forbidden power to cement their rule. The blood of elven slaves and humans alike ran down imperial altars to fuel magister greed, the tales of their excesses so horrifying that one can only be grateful that blood magic is prohibited today.

But all that stands tall must eventually fall. Perhaps they foresaw their ruin, or perhaps their pride knew no bounds, but whatever the reason, the magisters dared to open a magical portal into the Golden City at the heart of the Fade. They sought to usurp the Maker's throne, long left unattended in the Golden City after the Maker turned His back on His creations. They would storm heaven itself with their power and become as gods.

This is what the Chantry, in its oft-exercised tendency to understate, refers to as the second sin.

According to most versions of the tale, the magisters did indeed reach the Golden City and walked into the home of the Maker, where no living being before them had dared, or been able, to tread. But humanity is not meant to walk in heaven. The magisters were wicked with pride and other sins, and their presence tainted the Golden City. What once was a perfect, holy citadel became a twisted home of darkness and nightmares. The magisters were expelled back through their gateway and cursed for their treachery. As the Golden City had been tainted, so were the magisters twisted and transformed into things of darkness—the very first of the darkspawn. The Golden City, once a shining beacon at the heart of the Fade, became the Black City, a reminder of all that man's pride has cost.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **The First Blight: Chapter 2**

People today have little concept of the consequences of the second sin. Oh, believe me when I say that when asked, pious, Chantry-going folk will curse the use of foul magic, spitting and snapping their fingers—but none live today who actually remember the horror that was unleashed so very long ago. Whatever records might have existed regrettably did not survive the chaos and ignorance that was to follow. We have only the tales of survivors handed down through the murky ages and the dogma of the Chantry to instruct us, and that is precious little indeed.

I believe I am not understating when I say that the second sin unleashed the bane of all life upon Thedas. The darkspawn are more virulent than the worst plague, a heartless force of nature that came into our world like an ill wind. We know from accounts of later Blights (as these darkspawn invasions came to be called—never has a more appropriate name existed) that the darkspawn spread disease and famine wherever they tread. The earth itself is corrupted by their presence, the sky roiling with angry black clouds. I do not exaggerate, my friends, when I say that a mass gathering of darkspawn is an omen of dread cataclysm.

It is said that those cursed magisters who became the first darkspawn scratched at the very earth to find solace in the darkness of the dwarven Deep Roads, and there in the shadows they multiplied. Whether by intelligent design or by some last vestige of worship in their minds, they attempted to locate the Old Gods they had once served. They found what they sought: Dumat, first among the Old Gods, once known as the Dragon of Silence before the Maker imprisoned him and all his brethren beneath the earth for the first sin: usurping the Maker's place in mankind's heart.

The slumbering dragon awoke, freed from the Maker's prison by his twisted followers, and became corrupted himself. Dumat was transformed into the first Archdemon, his great and terrible power given will by a rotting, unholy mind. With the darkspawn horde following, Dumat rose and took wing in the skies once again, bringing ruin to the world the Maker had created. The Old God had become the eye of a dark storm that would ravage the entire world.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **The First Blight: Chapter 3**

The world during the First Blight was different from the world we know today. Aside from the civilized rule of the Imperium, humans as a race were largely barbarous and splintered, divided into clans and tribes and squabbling among ourselves for resources. At the same time, deep beneath Thedas's great mountain ranges spanned a dwarven culture as organized and advanced as ours was primitive.

As the darkspawn bubbled up to the surface from their underground lairs, mankind first buckled and then fought back. The armies of Tevinter attempted to face down the multitudes of twisted creatures and the horrid rotting of the land around them, but they could not be everywhere at once. Human history remembers the First Blight as a time of terrible devastation, and those stories are accurate, but in our arrogance we often forget the price paid by the dwarves in their isolated mountain kingdoms.

The dwarves faced far greater hordes than humanity as the darkspawn challenged them for control of the underground. Despite the might and technology the dwarves brought to bear, the savage darkspawn tore through them, first destroying the more remote thaigs before swallowing up entire kingdoms. Think of it: An entire civilization lost in the space of decades. Compared to the near-genocide that the dwarves faced, what we humans call the First Blight must have seemed a mere skirmish. Against the darkspawn, the dwarven lands have always borne the brunt of the fighting and the majority of the sacrifices.

Four dwarven kingdoms finally managed to combine their might and fight back, and that co-operation saved them. But for the rest of their lands it was too late. The darkspawn had taken the Deep Roads, the majestic underground passages that linked the dwarven lands throughout Thedas. The darkspawn could now attack anywhere on the surface through these tunnels.

Humanity simply was not prepared for such an onslaught. It was clear that the warfare we knew would not avail us. We had to find a new way to fight.

Thus came our salvation: The Grey Wardens were born.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **The First Blight: Chapter 4**

Founded at Weisshaupt Fortress in the Anderfels, the Grey Wardens offered humanity hope in its darkest hour. Veterans of decades of battles with the darkspawn came together, and the best among them pledged to do whatever was necessary to stem the tide of darkness that swept across the land. These great humans, elves, and dwarves pooled their knowledge of the enemy and formed a united front to finally put a stop to the archdemon's rampage.

And stop it they did. Ballads are still told today of the first Grey Warden charge into the waves of darkspawn at the city of Nordbotten—each Warden facing 10 or 20 darkspawn at a time. Squadrons of Grey Wardens mounted on their mighty griffons, soaring through the blackened skies and battling the terrible archdemon with spear and spell: Oh, what a sight it must have been!

Incredibly, the Grey Wardens won that first battle. They raised their arms in victory, and suddenly there was hope. The Grey Wardens led the lands of men and the last stalwart defenders of the dwarven halls against the hordes of the archdemon Dumat for the next hundred years, gaining and losing ground, but never backing away. From all over Thedas, they recruited whoever possessed the skill and strength to raise the Grey Wardens' banner, making no distinction between elven slave or human nobleman, and finally, nearly two centuries after the first Old God rose from the earth, the Grey Wardens assembled the armies of men and dwarves at the Battle of Silent Plains. It was then that Dumat finally fell and the First Blight ended.

The Tevinter Imperium would face a new challenge with the coming of the prophet Andraste. Thoughts of the Blight grew distant. With Dumat's defeat, the darkspawn were considered no longer a threat—but with the wisdom of hindsight, we know that conceit proved foolish indeed. The task of the Grey Wardens was far from over.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **The Maker's First Children**

The Maker's first creations were the spirits, glorious beings that populated the many spires of the Golden City, and the Chant of Light says that they revered the Maker with unquestioning devotion. The Maker, however, was dissatisfied. Although the spirits were like Him in that they could manipulate the ether and create from it, they did not do so. They had no urge to create, and even when instructed to do so possessed no imagination to give their creations ingenuity or life.

The Maker realized His own folly: He had created the spirits to resemble him in all but the one and most important way: they did not have the spark of the divine within them. He expelled all the spirits out of the Golden City and into the Fade and proceeded to His next creation: life.

The Maker created the world and the living things upon it, separated from the Fade by the Veil. His new children would be unable to shape the world around them and thus they would need to struggle to survive. In return for their struggle, the Maker gave them the spark of the divine, a soul, and He watched with pleasure as His creations flourished and showed all the ingenuity that He had hoped for.

The spirits grew jealous of the living and coaxed from them into the Fade when they slept. The spirits wished to know more of life, hoping to find a way to regain the Maker's favor. Through the eyes of the living, they experienced new concepts: love, fear, pain, and hope. The spirits re-shaped the Fade to resemble the lives and concepts they saw, each spirit desperately trying to bring the most dreamers to their own realms so they could vicariously possess a spark of the divine through them.

As the spirits grew in power, however, some of them became contemptuous of the living. These were the spirits that saw the darkest parts of the dreamers. Their lands were places of torment and horror, and they knew that the living were strongly drawn to places that mirrored those dark parts of themselves. These spirits questioned the Maker's wisdom and proclaimed the living inferior. They learned from the darkness they saw and became the first demons.

Rage, hunger, sloth, desire, pride: These are the dark parts of the soul that give demons their power, the hooks they use to claw their way into the world of the living. It was demons that whispered into the minds of men, convincing them to turn from the Maker and worship false gods. They seek to possess all life as their due, forging kingdoms of nightmare in the Fade in the hopes of one day storming the walls of heaven itself.

And the Maker despaired once again, for He had given the power of creation to his new children—and in return they had created sin.

— *From The Maker's First Children, By Bader, Senior Enchanter of Ostwick, 8:12 Blessed.*

## **The Legion of Steel**

Paragon Caridin vanished in the eleventh year of the reign of King Valtor, and with the Paragon the entire process for golem manufacture was lost. Expeditions were sent into the Deep Roads to track him, but the darkspawn drove them all back.

Finally, in the second year of the reign of Queen Getha, one hundred and twenty six golems, the entire Legion of Steel, were sent to recover the Paragon.

None returned.

The Shaper of Golems refused to support any further attempts to find Caridin, and the Paragon was officially declared dead.

The Shaperate never recovered from the loss of an entire legion of golems, and never again allowed an all-golem regiment into the Deep Roads.

— *From Stone Halls of the Dwarves, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **In Uthenera**

hahren na melana sahlín  
emma ir abelas  
souver'inan isala hamin  
vhenan him dor'felas  
in uthenera na revas

vir sulahn'nehn  
vir dirthera  
vir samahl la numin  
vir lath sa'vunin

Translated from the elven tongue:

elder your time is come  
now I am filled with sorrow  
weary eyes need resting  
heart has become grey and slow  
in waking sleep is freedom

we sing, rejoice  
we tell the tales  
we laugh and cry  
we love one more day

— *From "In Uthenera," traditional elven song of unknown origin.*

### **The Legend of Luthias Dwarfson**

At an early age, Luthias was smaller than most children of the Alamarri. At the age of 12, Luthias saved Tutha, the son of the tribal chief, from his own dog. The dog had gone rabid, and when it attacked Tutha, Luthias slew it with his bare hands. Tutha's father, Mabene, was impressed with Luthias's strength and bravery, and so took him in as his own son.

When Luthias grew to manhood, he became known for his charisma and bravery. While shorter than his fellow warriors, Luthias was stronger and doughtier than any warrior in the tribe. When Luthias was still a young man, Mabene sent him to the dwarven city of Orzammar to negotiate an alliance. Mabene's tribe had come into conflict with other Alamarri, and he needed as much help as he could get.

Luthias was unable to convince the dwarven king to aid his tribe, but fell in love with the king's daughter, Scaea. Luthias and Scaea fled the dwarven realm and returned to his tribe. Scaea taught Luthias the art of fighting without pain, the berserker state known as the "battle wrath," and with it, Luthias became a renowned warrior.

Luthias led his tribe to many victories, until eventually he replaced his foster father as chief of his tribe. This peace would not last. During a feast between the tribal leaders of the Alamarri and the Avvar, the beautiful and powerful Avvar chieftain, Morrighan'nan, became enamored with Luthias and seduced him. Scaea learned of the tryst and fled the village to return to Orzammar. When Luthias rebuffed Morrighan'nan's offer of marriage, she left in great anger, and from that moment on, there was war between the two tribes.

For 15 years, the Alamarri and Avvar fought. During the Battle of Red Falls, a powerful young warrior from Morrighan'nan's tribe challenged Luthias to a battle. Luthias was injured grievously, but slew the boy. Morrighan'nan revealed that the boy was Luthias's son, conceived 15 years ago during their tryst. She cursed Luthias as the murderer of his own kin, and the Battle of Red Falls turned against Luthias.

Morrighan'nan defeated Luthias in battle after battle, until the Alamarri were driven to the foothills of the Frostback Mountains. There, Luthias made a last stand. In the night before Luthias's final battle, Scaea came to him and offered him a dwarven suit of chain in exchange for a night together. Luthias agreed and wore the armor the following morning in battle. The battle was fierce and bloody, and Luthias met Morrighan'nan in personal combat. In the end, Luthias slew the warrior woman, but not before receiving a mortal wound to his heart, the chain inexplicably unable to block her final blow. Luthias died, and after the battle was done a party of dwarven warriors came down from the mountain and took the body of Luthias back to Orzammar.

—*From The Legend of Luthias Dwarfson, author unrecorded, circa -350 Ancient.*

### **In Praise of the Humble Nug**

I once served a human some nug and he proclaimed that it was like eating an unholy union of pork and hare. The idea disturbed him so much that he declined to finish his serving, and made himself content with some stale bread.

Of course, this one goes to show that surfacers—human or otherwise—have tragically unrefined palates. The nug is surely the most delicious animal I have ever tasted. Only a dead man would not salivate at the thought of a tender morsel of roast nug melting in his mouth. The Paragon Varen—although his house has fallen—shall always be remembered for discovering the wonders of nug flesh. Admittedly, it was discovered only out of desperation, when he was separated from his legion and lost in the Deep Roads for a week, but we won't hold that against the good Paragon.

While nug pancakes and nug-gets (my own children love these) are the nug dishes one encounters most often, nug can be prepared in other interesting and elegant ways. The late King Ansgar Aeducan adored nug—seared on a hot metal plate and finished in the oven—and dressed in a cream sauce flavored with deep mushrooms. You must be careful when using the mushrooms from the Deep Roads, because they often grow close to darkspawn bodies. They say that this is what gives them their unique flavor and intoxicating scent, but it also means that consuming too many of them may result in curious afflictions of the mind.

—*From In Praise of the Humble Nug, By Bragan Tolban, honored chef to House Aeducan.*



## **Traditional Dwarven Folk Songs**

Nug sits in the mud  
Nug wiggles his ears  
You catch the nug, he slips away!  
Nug gets to live another day!

Nug sits in the mud  
Nug wiggles his toes  
You hook the nug, he slips away!  
Now the nug runs off to play!

Nug sits in the mud  
Nug wiggles his nose  
You tickle the nug, he laughs away!  
Now the nug sits on my plate!

—*"Nug Pancakes", a well-loved dwarven nursery rhyme.*

## **The Sermons of Divine Renata I**

The weakness of mortal will is the great failing of all the Maker's children. We trade our honor as if it were the cheapest of currency. We do not understand what integrity is or what it is truly worth. From this ignorance, original sin was born.

At some time, each of us has thought, "What does it matter if I keep hold of my integrity? I am but one mortal. I am powerless." How blind we all are! The virtue of a single slave destroyed the Tevinter Imperium. The dishonor of one man drove the Maker from our sight. I tell you truly, nothing but the integrity of our hearts will win the love of the Maker back to us. It is all the power we shall ever possess to change this world for good or for ill.

—*From a sermon on integrity.*

## **Journal of the Tranquil**

Some laugh at me. I no longer mind.

Once upon a time, I studied as they did. I learned under the tutelage of an enchanter and attempted to master the art of bending magic to my will, and while I did well enough, I know that I struggled. I saw the way the enchanter looked at me, the sidelong glances of worry and disappointment. While other apprentices were conjuring fire, I could barely light a candle.

I was frightened of magic. When I was a boy, my grandmother regaled me with tales of the terrible Flemeth, the Witch of the Wilds. She told me of the magisters and how their evil magic infected the world with the darkspawn. She told me of demons, and how they were drawn to the dreams of those who possessed magic like moths to a flame. She told me all these things because, she said, the talent ran in our family's blood.

And so it ran in mine. All my young life I had dreaded the thought, prayed to the Maker that I was not so cursed, but I knew otherwise. Deep in my heart, I knew. When the templars came to our home, I knew.

The mages' tower was terrifying, full of secrets and danger. The templars glared at me as if I could spring full into an abomination before their very eyes. My enchanter patiently attempted to teach me to marshal my willpower, my only defense should a demon attempt to enslave me, but it was no use. How many nights did I cry myself to sleep in that dark and lonely place?

Then my Harrowing came at last, my final test. Face a demon, they said, or submit to the Rite of Tranquility. They would sever my connection to the Fade, and thus I would never dream and no demon could ever touch me—but I would also be unable to do magic, and I would never feel an emotion ever again. Facing the demon was certain death, so my choice was easy.

It was not so painful.

Now I serve in other ways. We Tranquil manage the archives. We run the tower, purchase the supplies and maintain the accounts. Our condition also allows us to use the magical element lyrium without ill effect, and thus we are the ones who enchant the magical items. We are the merchants who sell these items to those the Circle permits, and the coin from those sales provides the Circle's wealth.

Thus, we Tranquil are vital. The young and old may stare at me, ill at ease, but they would be worse off without me. They may think me a failure, but there is no horror for me now. I feel no fear of what I am. The shadows are merely shadows, and I am content.

—*Eddin the Meek, Tranquil of the Circle of Magi of Starkhaven, the Free Marches.*

### **Trian's Journal**

21 Ferventis: Noticed Gorim running around trying to get pieces of my sibling's ceremonial armor ready for the feast. Stopped him and asked him how preparations were going. He mentioned that one of the bracers had a spot of tarnish on it. Was quite impressed at his dedication. He is most loyal to our family.

23 Ferventis: Was on my way to discuss the treaty with Father when came across a messenger waiting in the hall. On being asked why he was loitering about the royal palace, he mumbled something about having a gift for the "new commander" and asked me (begged, almost) to pass along some object or other to my sibling. Me! The heir to the throne of Orzammar does not run errands for a messenger! Must have been new on the job. Had him thrown out; however, still reeling from the gall of it.

Learned later that Bhelen had told messenger that the quickest way to get things to our sibling was through me and had made him wait until I came by. So unseemly for a prince of Orzammar to play such tricks. He needs to grow up and understand that, as royalty, he has responsibilities.

24 Ferventis: Found Bhelen's little... playmate (again!) lurking about the corridors outside his bedroom this morning. Must have been trying to steal something, or already had. Bosom seemed fuller than most decent ladies. Some jewels hidden in the bodice? Anyway, pretended not to see her. Would have been awkward otherwise. Wish Bhelen would keep her confined to his room, if he must have her around. Little brother is too concerned with fun and pleasure and not serious enough about his duties as prince. Must talk to him about discipline when have time. Unfortunately, much too busy with the many tasks Father has laid upon my shoulders.

26 Ferventis: Remember to send small token of gratitude to Jaylia Helmi. Alliance between Helmi and Aeducan must be kept strong. Lady Jaylia will of course accept proposal of marriage since will be king sooner or later, but never hurts to be polite and keep the lady happy. Hear that there are some surfacers selling silks. Maybe will send second out for something nice. Jaylia's favorite color: Turquoise.

28 Ferventis: Heard about there being Provings held in our sibling's honor. They did not have Provings for me at my first commission, and I am the heir! What is going on? Must go watch these Provings, make presence felt. Orzammar must not forget that I am to be her next king.

— *From the journal of Trian Aeducan.*

### **Cautionary Tales for the Adventurous**

It was then that he realized he wasn't alone. The abandoned camp in front of him was unbelievably welcoming, like a mirage. The fire felt like a warm hand grabbing his heart. It reminded him of a previous life, so long ago, when he was happy. Running on the sunflower fields with his boy, the sun on his face. Laying next to the fireplace, with his beautiful wife in his arms.

He felt a sharp pain in his heart. His thoughts shifted to that fateful day when everything changed. Blood was everywhere. He held the body of his dead wife in his arms. Around him the ashes of his burned house fell like snow. The stench was terrible. It smelled like darkspawn. He grabbed his axe, touched the icy cold hands of his boy, and left. He would kill them. He would kill them all. The pain in his heart was unbearable.

He opened his eyes and saw the second most terrifying thing he would see in his life—a shadowy wraith leaning over him, leeching his life away. Around him, the camp was gone, replaced by something familiar, almost peaceful: Bones, death and despair. He wondered if all his life had been an illusion, if he'd ever had a family. For a brief moment, he felt relief. You can't lose something you've never had. But being this close to death brought clarity. He knew it was real. Everything else was the illusion. You could see a smile on his torn face. He had been waiting for this moment for a long, long time. He lifted his weak arms, grasped the demon's face, and kissed it. It felt like kissing a cloud made of sand and dust. Suddenly, all sorrow left him, and with it, the last bit of life he had. Before his limp body hit the ground, it was all over.

He was finally free.

—*From Cautionary Tales for the Adventurous, by Brother Ramos of Guilherme, 7:94 Storm.*

## **NOTES**

### **Berwick's Letter**

Berwick,

We need your eyes and ears in Redcliffe. Stay in the village, keep your head down, and watch the castle. Report any changes, and you'll be well paid.

—*A letter in Berwick's possession.*

### **A Letter to Someone in Highever**

Dear Heather,

How are you? How are Father and Mother? I don't know why I ask this; it was made clear so many years ago that I am no child of theirs. You are my only family now and I thank the Maker that you had love and courage enough to keep calling me sister.

I am happy for you and overjoyed to hear of your upcoming nuptials. Count your blessings; I believe you have snagged yourself a fine lad. So young, and already the owner of his own freehold! Soon you will start a family of your own. Oh, Heather, I do envy you.

But perhaps I shall envy you for not much longer. We have hoped and prayed for something, anything, and now I see the prison bars begin to bend and sag. So much injustice has been done to my kind, and they cannot have dreamed that the Maker would allow it to continue. There is a change coming to the tower; I can feel it, and it both excites and terrifies me.

I don't know when I shall write again, dear sister, but do not worry. If all goes well, perhaps no letters will be necessary, and you shall find me on your very doorstep!

—*With much love, Gwynlian.*

### **A Letter from King Endrin**

*If the Warden is not a noble dwarf...*

My Lord Harrowmont,

My guilt weighs heavily on me, and I know now that I was a fool. Only a fool would cut out his own heart and burn it for the sake of appearances. I allowed the Assembly to send my child to exile and death because I feared an inquiry into Trian's murder would taint our house with scandal. You have been my rock and my shield these long months and for that I thank you. But I must ask for one thing more. I wish to discover if my child survived. Even the smallest trace will set my mind at ease. Send your men, your scouts, anyone who will go!

Bhelen thinks I am mad. He says that if word spreads of my wish, our House will be undone. He doesn't know that Aeducan is already lost. I destroyed us when I sacrificed what was most precious. Please, Pyral, help me. I come to you not as a king, but as a father.

—*A note from the late King Endrin Aeducan.*

*If the Warden is a noble dwarf...*

Perhaps you will burn this letter unread. For that, I would not blame you. But I would not return to the Stone without saying this to you: I have seen what Bhelen is. And when I saw it, I knew I had been a fool. For only a fool would cut out his own heart and burn it for the sake of appearances. I never believed in your guilt. I allowed you to be exiled because I feared an inquiry into Trian's murder would taint our house with scandal in the eyes of the deshyrs and cost our family the throne.

But I have saved nothing by this sacrifice: I sent my only child into an uncertain exile. Know that whatever you do now, you bear all the honor and pride of House Aeducan.

—*A note from the late King Endrin Aeducan.*

### **A Note from Ser Henric**

So many of my fellow knights have been searching for the Urn. Surely one of them must have found Brother Genitivi by now. Still, until I hear that all is well, I must proceed as planned. Brother Genitivi holds the key to finding the Urn of Sacred Ashes: We always knew this, but I believe I now know where Brother Genitivi lies. I have been to his home in Denerim and found the trail, and I am amazed that other knights have not done likewise. Unless they have? No, it is best not to get caught up in thoughts of conspiracy. Ser Donall awaits my report in Lothering. I must go to him immediately and report what I have learned. Should anyone find these ramblings, all I ask is that he be informed of my fate. I pray that he complete what I cannot.

—*A note from Ser Henric of Redcliffe.*

### **A Letter from Rica**

My dearest Prince Bhelen,

You are too kind to me. I am a small and insignificant thing and I do not deserve your attention, but your willingness to tolerate my presence shows you to be a prince among men! I cannot thank you enough for the beautiful necklace you presented to me. I will cherish it always and I promise I will wear it at our next meeting. I know my gratitude means nothing to you but I must say again: Thank you. I will always be your humble and devoted servant.

—*Yours truly, R.*

### **A Carved Elven Tablet**

Four panels reproduced here appear to be part of a much larger mural.

The topmost panel shows a jug overflowing with water, standing on an altar. Three elves in robes are positioned around the altar, while a crowd of elves in warlike regalia stands just slightly apart from them.

Just below is a depiction of all the elves, those in robes and those in armor, prostrating themselves before the altar with worshipful expressions.

Third from the top is a carving which shows one of the three robed figures, a woman with an elaborate tattoo on her face, drinking from the jug on the altar while the other elves watch.

The bottom image shows the tattooed woman standing waist-deep in a pool of water. She holds the jug with water spilling out of its mouth. The armored elves bow before her.

—*Describing a strange tablet.*

### **A Tattered Shopping List**

sugar  
wheat flour  
fillet knife  
ginger (for grandpa's flatulence)  
ink  
cod liver oil  
dried mushrooms  
rouge (Orlesian)

Also remember to ask if more beeswax will be available soon.

—*A note on crumpled paper.*

### **Graffiti in Redcliffe's Tavern**

Don't eat the cheese.

—*Scratched into the bar of Redcliffe's tavern.*

### **Load Limit Reached - A confusing note**

"Mass will have an effect," he says.

As long as it lifts us out, I figure.  
Should have specified "within my lifetime."  
"Gives us time to talk", he says.  
"How's a dwarf get named Shepard?"  
Up yer shaft.  
"No really, because blah, blah, blah."  
Axe answers, but I still hear him.  
Drip... ground.  
Drip... ground.  
Worse than his talking.  
Think I'll drop out for some air.  
Excerpt: Dwarven Verse in One Volume  
Selection: Load Limit Reached  
Anonymous scratching recovered from a cage hoist... eventually.

## **The Black Vials**

### **Binding the First Corpse Walker**

Let the dead no longer serve your whim.  
Bound by your true name, no mortal hand shall reach you.  
Cale Viazagat, revenant and perversion of an only son.  
Death beyond death is no longer your stepping stone through the Veil.  
Andraste hold you, demon, and bind your rage for eternity.  
*(Six thumbprints in blood mark the end of the text.)*

---

### **Binding the Second Corpse Walker**

Cast from your host, may you find no purchase on mortal ground.  
Bound by your true name, as we are sworn to do.  
Nethamas Bigal, revenant and perversion of a fine daughter.  
No more will you test the Veil, nor reach the Fade to escape.  
Andraste hold you, demon, and bind your rage for eternity.  
*(Six thumbprints in blood mark the end of the text.)*

---

### **Binding the Third Corpse Walker**

This realm denies you, abomination, for taking our dearest.  
We are united against your kind, and bind you by your true name.  
Argruth Massaad, revenant and perversion of a treasured mother.  
No more shall fall; no more shall need to stand.  
Andraste hold you, demon, and bind your rage for eternity.

*(Six thumbprints in blood mark the end of the text.)*

---

Binding the Fourth Corpse Walker

You deny our dead their rest, and so you also will be hounded.  
Let the strength of our union bind you by your true name.  
Quametha Kagat, revenant and perversion of an honored father.  
Though no spirit cage will undo what was suffered.  
Andraste hold you, demon, and bind your rage for eternity.

*(Six thumbprints in blood mark the end of the text.)*

---

Binding the Fifth Corpse Walker

We condemn both spirit and host for inviting the walker.  
With solemn hearts we bind you by your true name.  
Shamas Goodson, revenant and perversion of a rare friendship.  
Regret holds more pain than burying the dead.  
Andraste forgive you, brother, and bind your weakness for eternity.

*(Five thumbprints in blood mark the end of the text.)*

---

Binding the Sixth Corpse Walker

United we purge this realm of your corruption.  
The smallest among us binds you by your true name.  
Anton Wither, revenant and perversion of a friend not met.  
Your strength and guile denied by innocence.  
Andraste hold you, demon, and bind your rage for eternity.

*(Six thumbprints in blood mark the end of the text. One is small, as though made by a child.)*

## **Correspondence Interruptus**

A collection of embarrassing personal communications between the spoiled wealthy and their objects of obsession.

---

My darling Reginald,

I burn for you and because of you. Please use the enclosed tincture if our love is to endure.

—*Sarie*

---

To Wareth Lowstone,

Age, race, height. I care not for the differences others perceive. But matching your helmet to my tunic for the amusement of standing in line with your new "Silent Sisters" invite attention to where none was desired. I will not suffer your company again.

—*Alison Highover*

*(Scribbled below)*

Gonna miss knocking heads with those girls.

---

A delicate matter,

While I am overwhelmed at the prospect of having you, an unwelcome guest requires that you excuse yourself by the postern of my estate to avoid a mark upon our reputations.

—"M"

---

Miss Ambrose,

A long, slow grind, the motion careful, aided by generous application of oils. Size is no concern with my equipment, and I am always mindful when stuffing, not risking a burst before every order is fulfilled. My meat goes hand in hand with satisfaction.

Your interest astounds, but it is not my to question a customer's choice in nighttime reading. Three pound sausage again next week? No cheek, of course.

Yours,

—*Biller's Butchers*

---

Darling,

When next we meet, I would find it agreeable for you to leave your hat on. And mayhap your boots as well. And trousers. Shirt too. And I shall facilitate said clothed status by locking my door and posting a guard. Duly warned?

—"X"

---

My elfroot,

The herbalist suggested powdered bronto horn. I was very discrete.

—*Your sunflower*

---

Donogan,

On pain of death, you are  
Now warned! My father found  
The letters you previously  
Sent, and is watching as I write  
To tell you our relations are  
Over! We must remain chaste.

—*Patricia*

---

You are filthy! A beast! Such depravity I have never been forced to suffer! How words are so laden when they leave your lips they are beyond decent imagining!

Madam, I love you.

—*Ser Augold*

---

My dearest Virginia Trueroyal,

Regarding: Bodice ripped

Enclosed are seven silver and my most heartfelt apologies for said bodice. I would blame the cold



ocean spray, the loss of my favorite shirt, the bucking of the stallion, or perhaps the strain of maintaining all such elements while sitting for a portrait, but I was certainly not myself. I hope you will forgive me and not take it upon yourself to find your own determined way in this world.

Yours,  
—*Ser Rival Grouseman*

---

Dear Ser Jon,

Your ministrations, while well intentioned, hold no promise. Do not despair, for it is not you, it is of me. I require an interval to acquaint myself with the personage you awakened. I'm certain we can maintain an amiable accord and the engagements with our mutual associations will not be awkward.

—*"Mari"*

---

To one's paramour,

When last we embraced, one noticed the redolence of another's company, but one was unmindful.

—*His Most Eminent Ser Fether Hapsmith Osvald III*

---

My love,

I long to dance you beneath the moonlight, our hearts beating like the paired wings of a dove, in concert with the glory of the Maker and the beauty of the world that we must shepherd in his absence. Join me in a purity that will last the ages, when the brothers mark the Chant of Light anew.

With all my soul,  
—*Erec Denolven*

*(Scribbled below in a delicate hand)*

Otter's pocket! He's earned it tonight!

## **Circles Within Circles**

Arguments between the various fraternities have become more frequent and heated. I have alerted the College of Magi in Cumberland that this needs to be addressed in coming debates, but I fear relations with the Chantry may distract them. I am confident that I can appease the Aequitarians and Loyalists, but the Libertarians are proving divisive. Are the Isolationists even interested in speaking?

The threat of Blight has actually served some good in unifying us under a common cause, but it does not bode well that any given table in the Great Hall is likely to be ideologically weighted against its neighbor. We can be such a moody bunch staring over our tea.

—*Excerpt from First Enchanter Irving's notes on unity*

## **Desire and Need**

Notice of Censure

Templar Drass, your remarks in front of the recruits are only the latest in a series of troubling events. I am beginning to suspect that you may not be suited to the devotional requirements of training. Perhaps it is time for a personal evaluation of your career path within the templars. I will schedule some time after the current deployment to discuss options elsewhere in the organization.

—*Attendant Cerand, assistant to Knight-Commander Greagoir*

(*A note is scribbled in the corner.*)

"Attendant who? Options? Code for dead-end duty on a hedge-mage hunt in the Bannorn."

## **The Notes of Arl Foreshadow**

Books to pursue for future endeavors:

*Lost Countenance: Ferelden to Orlesian Phrase Book*

-Must not offend the potential landlords

*Raising Spirits: Offspring and the Fade*

-Terrible twos indeed!

*Forest Fall: Truth and Legend in the Search for Arlathan*

-Survivors? Poppycock!

*The Origin of Theses: Knowing More than Everyone without Looking Like a Jackass*

-Never get the time to read this. Maybe there's a stage play?

## **Irving's Mistake**

I followed another apprentice through supposed secret maneuvers today, and exposed her tendency towards blood magic. The environment of the tower is such that certain modes of thought are encouraged, both for good and ill. The students think we toy with them. The truth is far more intricate and directed. Deviant traits must be exposed early, or the whole of the Circle suffers.

Uldred has been very helpful in identifying the markers to look for. His skills at misdirection are admirable. I daresay that the apprentices would be shocked at his ability to manipulate them. I must organize a retreat such that the other enchanter can benefit from his skills.

—*Excerpt from the journal of First Enchanter Irving*

## **Promises of Pride**

Uldred will show us the way. Finally, recognition within the Circle and freedom from the scornful eye of the templars. We will not be shunned. Be ready.

—*Enchanter Gravid, Libertarian*

---

The time is drawing near. Uldred has brought his intentions to light and a confrontation is all but inevitable. We will separate or walk with our brothers, but we will be free.

—*Enchanter Boson, Libertarian*

---

If blood must be shed and used, so be it. I will follow when he calls. The yoke must be released, whatever the cost.

—*Enchanter Prist, Libertarian*

---

I have spoken to him directly. His intentions are that we will demand the templars withdraw. I don't know that I am willing to follow, but I will be present to hear his argument.

—*Enchanter Fonst, Aequitarian*

---

Madness! I doubt blood will be of use to you if it is flowing down the tower steps. Step away from this folly, before it consumes us all.

—*Enchanter Luvan, Loyalist*

---

The call is made. We will stride out of here with pride in our step, regardless of outcome. This is for the good of the circle. Uldred will see to it.

—*Libertarian Rhonus*

### **Extracurricular Studies**

I have the utmost sympathy for what happened to your charge, but it is beyond the Cicle's ability to anticipate every obscure demise that an apprentice might face, especially involving methods outside the already extensive realm of magical study. We simply don't have the room for additional training facilities, and there are concerns about becoming too inclusive that I will not elaborate on. Your request is denied.

—*First Enchanter Sinclair*

---

If space is your excuse, I will surrender my quarters. If it is about money, I will hire the appropriate people. I will not graduate another student ignorant of weapons that any ditch-digger can shove into his ribs. We teach them to append ridiculous glamours on parade arms, but they don't know simple steel. That is criminal.

—*Enchanter Bergin*

---

Notice herewith that the exercise area on the fourth floor shall serve as permanent berthing for the templar garrison stationed at the tower. Since facilities that accommodate their particular training requirements are already on hand, they will be assuming an even closer watch over Circle affairs. Enchanter Bergin's optional weapons training is canceled until further notice. Enchanter Bergin has additionally stepped down from his teaching duties.

—*First Enchanter Sinclair*

## **SPELL COMBINATIONS**

### **Grease Fire**

Most forms of grease, magical or otherwise, are highly flammable. When grease comes into contact with an open flame, it ignites, resulting in a sea of burning grease that is deadly to any creature passing through it. Once the grease has burned up, the fire subsides.

## **Entropic Death**

Perhaps the victims would say it makes no difference, since those afflicted by a Death Hex already know there is little hope of survival, but they should avoid a Death Cloud at all costs if they do not wish to hasten the process: Merely touching the edge of the cloud is enough to set off a deadly reaction that deals truly massive spirit damage to the subject of the hex.

## **Paralysis Explosion**

The magic power of a glyph derives from the purity of its shape. When two glyphs overlap and their lines become confused, particularly when the glyph's effects are directly opposed as with Glyph of Paralysis and Glyph of Repulsion, the magic has no choice but to dissipate instantly and explosively, instantly paralysing all those nearby.

## **Storm of the Century**

When two storm systems collide, chaos and destruction inevitably ensue. A mage who combines the blustering ice and snow of Blizzard with the whirling lightning storm of Tempest will generate a terrifying Storm of the Century. Anyone caught within its bounds will suffer spectacular electric damage.

## **Flame-Quencher**

A grease fire is notoriously hard to extinguish, usually burning until it runs out of fuel. However, a mage can suppress the flames of a grease fire by lowering the temperature of the surrounding air. The bitterly cold winter winds of a Blizzard spell will freeze the grease itself, causing the fire to sputter and die.

## **Shockwave**

An adventurer beset from all sides may find solace within the temporary confines of a Force Field spell, which temporarily protects against all damage. Since the spell also prohibits movement, however, the original situation will still persist once the spell fails. If a mage casts Crushing Prison atop the Force Field, the contradictory effects will result in a spectacular disintegration of both spells, generating a shockwave that harms all in the area except the original subject standing in the epicenter.

## **Improved Drain**

The victim of a Vulnerability Hex must be wary not only of damage from the elements, but also spellcasters who wish to sap life or mana to restore their own bodies. The spells Drain Life and Mana Drain are twice as effective in those circumstances.

## **Advanced Reanimation**

A skeleton ally resurrected from the battlefield by means of the spell Animate Dead still suffers from the trauma of its recent demise, and is thus not as fearsome a combatant as it might otherwise be. However, when Animate Dead is cast by a mage whose power has been bolstered by the effects of Spell Might, the skeleton arises with the might and determination of one who has been dead for centuries. This improved skeleton ally is stronger and has more abilities.

## Nightmare

Creatures that are asleep are particularly suggestible, and thus ill-equipped to resist the spine-chilling effect of a Horror spell. The vivid nightmares that result inflict massive spirit damage, the shock killing many lesser creatures outright. Those unlucky enough to survive are certain to emerge from the ordeal in a state of fear.

## Shattering

A creature frozen or petrified by magic, as from the spells Petrify or Cone of Cold, is in a vulnerable state, subject to shattering if excessive force is applied to just the right spot. A critical hit from any weapon may suffice, and the spells Stone Fist and Crushing Prison have been known to achieve the effect as well.

## QUEST-RELATED

### A Rolled-Up Note

I hope whoever finds this can read it. I hate the thought that my last words might be used as kindling or, Maker forbid, to wipe someone's bum, but that's happenstance for you, I suppose.

My name is Branan. I was born in Rainesfere. I grew apples, once upon a time. When the Orlesians came to demand I bow to their emperor, I turned them away. They set fire to my orchards. To my house, too, but I didn't care. I stood and watched them burn. Trees die eventually. Houses fall. But my honor can be lost only if I let it.

They came back a week later and demanded that I swear an oath. This time, when I refused, they clapped me in irons. Now I'm here, and I'll die in this place. It seems a foolish thing to die for, doesn't it? I could have said a few words and rebuilt my home, gone on with my life as if nothing had changed. A hundred generations of my family have lived and died on that land, and I won't be the one to trade our family honor for apples.

Whoever you are, whatever they've brought you here for, if you leave this place, I hope you'll go to Rainesfere. There is no living remnant of us left there, but you'll find my family all the same. We're stamped onto the earth. We're in the wind that rustles the trees. Tell my family how I died, and I promise you, they'll hear.

—*Branan*

### Summoning Sciences

Apprentices are allowed and expected to willfully direct a minor spirit, provided it is within the protective confines of the library. Placement of the shelves allows for passive immobilization and the emergency purging of any rogue entity.

Take care! This exercise is not to be enacted during maintenance or other disruption of library structure! The danger presented by an incorrect summoning, particularly Exercise Three, is extreme.

*(This book has been torn in half)*

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*(The second half of a torn book.)*

The summoning sigil will ignite upon ritual initiation. If the order is incorrect, the ritual will reset.

### Exercise One

- Address the summoning font.
- Select the second passage from the Tome of Spirit Personages, second shelf.
- Pass open hands through the first summoning flames (select first flames).

### **Exercise Two**

- Address the summoning font.
- Recite the Rodercoms Uncommon Calling, first column support shelves.
- Place one silver coin at the feet of the statue of Magus Gorvish.
- Pass open hands through the seconds summoning flames.

### **Exercise Three**

- Alert senior magi of lesson commencement.
- Address the summoning font.
- Recite the second passage of Elvorn's Grande Bestiary, sealed texts, third area.
- Trace the chosen sigil on the first area common table.
- Place a lock of hair between the pages of the Spiritorum Etherialis, right of the sealed texts.
- Perform Callum's Gesture (two fingers) at the statue of Magus Gorvish.
- Breathe on the dried hemlock in the Novice Phylactery, second column support shelves.
- Pass open hands through the third summoning flames.

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### **Spirit Hog**

The equivalent of a Fade bottom-feeder, the gullet of the Spirit Hog can contain minor gems, presumably coalesced from ethereal elements in the Fade. Such creatures cannot survive in the mortal realm without summoner intervention.

### **Trickster Whim**

An amoral entity that delights in observing corporeal and emotional discomfort. A dangerous preference, given that such creatures have little understanding or interest in the fragility of mortal flesh.

### **Fade Rifter**

The Rifter is an assembled consciousness given form in the moment of the ritual. Its appearance is intended to frighten the summoning apprentice, ensuring they respect the Fade. While essentially a construct, the beast is nonetheless very real and possessed of a fearsome will to be free.

## The Dead Caste

Friends, we have argued long, but I would propose a different direction. It is not unprecedented that one of our number should end up in the Legion of the Dead: The Memories attest to some bewildering falls from grace. Only his choice to volunteer has propelled this beyond mere scandal. The question we must ask is: "Does this serve us?" The Legion has always seemed a last hope of redemption. If a noble joins their number—by choice no less—this can only do good things for enrollment. And we sacrifice only one foolish member, the last of a troublesome house. His reforms are better shouted at the darkspawn than in these halls. I say, let him go.

This is the writ that was passed, Durius. I hope you can live with your decision, because you're lost to it now.

—*From Assembly minutes regarding the Legion of the Dead; addendum unknown.*

Dearest Gilly,

I know things have been difficult since the censure of our house. I had hoped to bear the cost of my actions alone, but if I had a full understanding of consequences, I wouldn't have murdered above my caste in the first place. I did not abandon you lightly, but I knew of no other way to insulate you against my shame than by joining the Legion. It is a half-measure that has earned me no right to seek your comfort, but please, I beg you for one moment of foolish optimism. There is talk of a new soldier, a noble! The things I have heard, I will not curse them by voicing them aloud, but it may be a path to respectability for my kin. For you. If there remains any official line open to our name, can you verify he is real, that House Ferald is in good stead?

—*A letter from Maius, unsent.*

May this report find the proper eyes to affect future tactics. We found an enclave of the spawn, possibly a breeding lair, but we could make no approach. There were far more spawn than anticipated, and I divided the squad to draw the main body of the horde away. I do not expect to survive, but I have made certain that most of my men will see another day. I am torn by this, as my petition will go unheard, and that may curse many more of the Legion than would die here. But I simply cannot abandon the men I have looked in the eye and called brother. Perhaps they will not thank me for this, believing themselves already dead, but where there is life there is hope. I will not be the last to see their worth.

—*From a recovered Legion of the Dead field report, by Lord Durius Ferald.*

Casualty: Durius ferald, lieutenant. Found dead with his squad. The corpse was left untouched, suggesting the darkspawn feared his spirit even in death. His ferocity defending his men was corroborated by survivors before they succumbed to corruption. It is rare for a soldier's actual death to exceed the honors given at his enlistment, but Ferald was an odd one, an agitator. His eccentric promises were disruptive, and I fear his death may demoralize more of the Legion than actually heard his fantasies first-hand. He was committed to the Stone with his insignia, as honorable a burial as we can manage with the spawn at our heels, but officially he has formed a second front. Better his foolish hopes are diluted by time than killed outright.

—*From a biweekly casualty report, by Sergeant Unger.*

By virtue of honored ancestry and great personal sacrifice on the part of its last descendant, the joining of House Ferald and the Legion of the Dead is recognized as worthy of investigation by the Memories. If the lineage proves intact and sufficient, relations of the Legion of the Dead may be acknowledged as minor nobility, albeit with restrictions. This minor house will now undergo the generational process of admittance to the Memories. May honor come to its descendants.

—*As recorded by the Memories.*

## The Crosscut Drifters

Fools and renegades, the lot of them. We accept that there is a time for ordered and educated treasure-hunting, but not when a foundation remains to be cut. What fortunes have they made, what houses have they elevated? The minor veins they have traced satisfied neither this Assembly nor their own gambler's thirst. Their actions can only grow more erratic and undisciplined, and while no incidents have been reported, they will eventually undermine the stability of a major passage.

It is the opinion of this Assembly that prospecting be restricted until we can be certain of the stability of the Deep Roads. these "Crosscut Drifters" can find their fortune in a trade. Let animals burrow wherever their nose points them. Dwarves are meant to excavate by careful degrees.

—*From an Assembly memorandum.*

Rogan cut a beautiful line down a minor vein today, twisting his supports along the footwall like a backbone. He's got a gift for lagging; it's almost crystalline. I swear I could tap it and hear the Stone sing. "Non-standard" by any inspector's measure, but that's the sodding point, isn't it? We're letting the Stone take us where she wants, not gouging out highways so the palace can have another pantry. I suspect they will revoke our privileges at the next Assembly sitting. I say good luck to them; they'll never find us to deliver the writ. They are afraid of the road we travel.

We're close to a major strike. The Stone, she's pulling us to something, and to the vents if I'll let dwarves who deny their sense get in the way of it.

—*From the journal of Brunar, founding fellow, Crosscut Drifters.*

We can no longer tolerate your flagrant disregard of this Assembly and published excavation doctrine. The actions of your team have potentially compromised two future projects, resulting in an expensive redesign of the deep roads. Fortunately, development of the largest shaft will continue, or you would have faced additional fines. Claims that the Stone is directing your actions suggest that not only are you ignorant of preplanning procedure, you and your group may also be in the early stages of lyrium poisoning. You are in breach of Orzammar mining code and hereby forfeit all claims made during your unapproved activities. The Assembly expects your response within 30 days or your house, as well as those of your team, will face additional censure.

—*Notice of Assembly censure.*

Here's your response: take a long breath from a short shaft.

B.

—*Addendum by Brunar, founding fellow, Crosscut Drifters.*

We found trouble all right. Rogan's lyrium vein led right to the flank of a darkspawn horde. From the look of their kit, the spawn were a week, maybe less, from breakthrough into that blasted new highway under Orzammar, and they'd be well behind any patrols. The Stone knew. She knew, and she drew her chosen with a promise of ore we could taste in our bones. if all goes well, losing this cavern will kill the darkspawn's taste for digging, and Orzammar will never know it was at risk. We'll be a distant tremor, a ripple in the royal fountain.

The charges are laid. We know it will work and we know the cost. The Stone has shown us the way home.

—*From the journal of Brunar, founding fellow, Crosscut Drifters.*



## The Gangue Shade

The Stone has a will that surrounds and directs; she guides even when we are willfully blind to her influence. But she is not pure. The Stone bears a corruption as old as balance. For the dwarves to prosper, the gangue—the waste and unstable rock— must be cut away. But like the Stone, the gangue also has an influence. Each of us must face this, must carve the worst of ourselves away, but the Legion of the Dead bears a unique responsibility. Only the fully adorned of the Legion can face the gangue, can cut into darkness that afflicts the raw Stone. She encircles us, and we must protect her, here where darkness meets light.

—*A Legion of the Dead inscription, undated*

## The Key to the City

While concerns have merit, the Assembly has made itself clear. Space within the thaig is at a premium, but the intended function of the hall merits the additional resources committed. The statues of the Paragons must be the core of the Hall of Heroes. There is no other placement that so benefits dwarven interests. It is the first glimpse that surface ambassadors have of Orzammar, an introduction not just to our living ancestors, but also to the Stone from which we were born. They must see it shaped before they can understand the complexity of its raw form.

The Hall must also serve a second purpose, as a last sight for departing brethren. Those who choose to leave must do so with the heavy gaze of their Ancestors at their backs. It is a reminder of duty and of consequence. We will promote all manner of trade, but also reinforce that those who leave for too long will return as strangers to the Stone.

—*From an report of the Assembly Zoning Commission.*

Pursuant to order 5-1a, no dwarf of indeterminate caste may conduct business in the Commons. This was subsequently clarified by the Assembly to mean that the owning and operating of stalls or kiosks is limited to those of identified and approved house names with traceable Ancestor lineage of at least three generations. Exceptions include individual purchases of goods or services from established stalls or kiosks, provided the funds are presented at the opening of the transaction, at the discretion of the stall or kiosk owner.

I'm sure you understand the need to maintain strict quality control over all goods and services that flow through Orzammar, especially when we are making a concerted effort to encourage outside investment. The standards of Dust Town and that of the common brand are simply not sufficient. Your trade permit is hereby denied.

—*From a judgment of the Assembly Trade Council, regarding Midal's Reclaimed Wares.*

The restriction of your authority is a temporary consideration, and not a verdict imposed lightly. The Assembly feels that efforts to maintain the sanctity of the Proving have faltered. This is a gentlemen's contest where future generals and respected veterans display their skills. It is intended to be inspiring, and remind the lower castes why their leaders lead. We acknowledge the usefulness of a forum for the settling of honor debts, and concede that the occasional defeat of a noble can serve as appeasement, provided it is by a peer and the contest is properly adjudicated. Extending this practice to the lower castes could prove a dangerous and barbaric precedent. We have already seen the disruption that an unauthorized fighter can cause (the recent brand incident), and similar incidents should be discouraged with all possible prejudice.

—*From an Assembly writ of censure, regarding management of the Provings.*

It is agreed that no rules of procedure were explicitly broken, but a five-day filibuster is nonetheless worthy of censure. Division of House Gorosmote property was deliberated for a full session, and forfeiture of the southern estate deemed a necessity. Since the birth of young Kaid necessitates his elevation to noble status, and it is unthinkable for a noble's family to live in the slums, it is responsibility of the father to accommodate the placement of his family. It is not possible to simply generate new space in the Diamond Quarter without compromising thaig structural integrity.

Lord Dace's comment that "if Lord Gorosmote didn't want a new heir, he shouldn't have slumped for a concubine" was indeed inappropriate, but the proper procedure for resolution through Proving was followed. Both parties agreed to accept his retraction, and that matter is considered separate and closed.

The decision of the Assembly regarding the placement of the Duncoat clan stands.

*—From a writ of the Assembly Zoning Council, regarding the placement of the Duncoat clan.*

Your efforts have been exemplary, but these self-proclaimed cartels must defer to the Assembly and restore order. Exclusion from caste and society is no excuse. Perhaps suggest that it would be a simple matter to march on the quarter, or simpler still to withdraw infrastructure support. A tunnel breach would be most unfortunate, but current policy direction prohibits any deals that would legitimize cartel operations. Downward pressure on certain elements of our society has proven useful in shoring up the economy with an excess of affordable labor. It also encourages enlistment in the Legion of the Dead, the one accepted path to partial redemption and a vital force on our weakening front lines. This model suffers when criminals create their own hierarchies with alternative methods of social advancement.

Every stone has a face that can't be carved, a side that must be earthward. We need their so-called Dust Town, but it would be inadvisable to include that in your negotiations. We have the utmost faith in you, Capt— (The rest is obscured by bloodstains.)

*—From a confidential Assembly directive, regarding proliferation of cartels.*

## **The Shaper's Life**

The blessing of the Shaperate is given only to those who walk with the Stone. It is a path that cuts deep and the road is far from secure, but those who desire to work in memory must first honor it. Document the Stone, protect her, and present a new history to the Memories. Only then will the blessing of the Shaperate be upon you.

*—From The Shaper's Life.*

Orzammar has carved a legacy from the Stone, but history is more than the comings and goings that fill the streets. These caverns are old cuts and well traveled; the true will of the Stone is revealed far from the halls of politics and commerce. The Shaper must step away from the familiar, and seek out revelations from the frontier or buried secrets from paths abandoned. The shaper must first walk away if he is to return.

*—"First Steps," from The Shaper's Life.*

Far from abandoned, the Deep Roads are patrolled by those who fight for Orzammar and the Stone. These defenders have seen great and tragic events unfold, but they are committed to the moment, not the memory. It is the shaper's burden to walk this path with a mind to observation. He will fight if pressed—every dwarf owes that to the Stone—but his purpose is to record, not create. Although dark and deep, the old paths are alive with deeds; only the dedication of the shaper can ensure they are not lost to the Memories.

*—"The Old Path," from The Shaper's Life.*

Before the darkspawn, the Stone held an empire—dozens of thaigs, each cavern a shade of dwarven pride, communities separate but united. They fell by degrees. Ruins crumbled into tombstones, a forgotten glory. But the Stone is a living history, and absence can reveal more than constant scrutiny does. As the Stone shifts, she chooses what remains buried and what must see the light. The shapers must return, must walk the lost way, so the children of the Stone can see what has been surrendered and what can be gained.

This is the sacrifice of the shaper.

—*"The Lost Way," from The Shaper's Life*

You have walked the path of the Shaperate and documented the Stone. The blessing of the Shaperate is yours to wield in the carving of a new path, one for tomorrow's shaper to follow.

—*From The Shaper's Life*

## **Topsider's Honor**

The fool has been following us for three days, but what can I do? I'm sure a city guard could lock him up for being a sodding idiot, but there's no law that says you can't seek your death in the Trenches. There's no law down here at all. I said to his face that if he puts our patrol at risk I'd split him myself, but he's quiet, I'll give him that. Topsiders usually assume the end of a Blight erases the darkspawn from the world. Why does this one care that his victory just drives them back on our doorstep? It's one thing to face them up in the light; he'll cut his own shaft out of here once he fights them in the dark where they live. That, or the lyrium will get him.

—*From a Legion of the Dead field report, by Lieutenant Gant.*

I swear, Mortavold, I have never seen the like. This... elf... fought like a man possessed. His strikes were light and did not echo on the Stone like those of our greatest, but the precision was that of a shaper carving a Memory across the darkspawn. Damned if we didn't raise our glasses to him last eve and share stories of honored family. With a topsider! In the lyrium glow, he looked no more out of place than any of us. It makes me think of cousin Bern. I wonder how he fares on the surface. I think if he sends another letter I will read it. Ties of kin should be stronger than where we choose to do business.

—*From a letter from Corporal Trovid Oreson, date unknown.*

The Stone take this topsider as she would welcome her own. He was born to air and sky, but has served the Deep Roads better than a native son. Many will see another day because he fought at their side and fell in their stead. We don't know his rites, and I fear the loss of his family blade may cause unrest on whatever journey he faces, but we know him as brother in blood and extend that which is sacred to us. Willem Trialmont, if the path home is dark, the Stone is honored to have you in the foundation.

—*Epitaph for Willem Trialmont, 7:5 Storm*

There must always be another to take up arms against the darkness. That is the core of true family beyond kin and the unifying link that will bring day to night and allow the fallen to rest.

—*Restored inscription, Trialmont family blade.*

## **Jammer's Stash**

Been a profitable season, Kanky. Cutthroat too, so we got to be careful. I'm talking my half topside so I can get a good price. Your half is in my stash box. It's got one of Pique's locks on it. Standard drill, you need the three pieces of junk from our common chests to even try to open it. She set them up "high/low" because you've got the best eye for value in this dig.

So, yes, I faked some loot. Take **only** the cheapest looking piece in each chest, and you'll be able to open the stash box. I wired the expensive-looking stuff as bait. You take the right one, or you don't. And if you don't, hope you like having a limp.

Good luck,  
—*Jammer*

## **Letter from the Blackstone Irregulars**

*(A letter, written in a careful script, addressed to you)*

To the inimitable Grey Warden,

Your deeds have spread since the tragedy of Ostagar, and I find myself in need of one such as you. I am Raelnor, captain of the venerable Blackstone Irregulars, and I hope to win your trust.

The Irregulars have come on hard times since the war with Orlais, but I have fought to improve their reputation. Gone are the days of my father's shady deals with unscrupulous nobles in Denerim! No, I have trained a guild filled with honorable men ready to fight for Ferelden, and I am proud to say that I have seen your own Grey Wardens as a sort of model.

We are not perfect; my own son advocates a move back to the more lucrative way my father ran the guild. But we are steadfast. It is in this context I ask for your help, and I promise we will reward you accordingly.

Should you be willing, please find letters in this box and others like it all over the land, and carry out the request therein. For this matter, consider requests from my son as if they came from myself.

And thank you again, from the bottom of my heart, whether you choose to assist us or not. You are doing tht Maker's work, Warden, and I am honored to work with you.

—*Raelnor*

*(This letter is marked with the seal of the Blackstone Irregulars.)*

## **Blackstone Letter of Conscription**

Dear friend,

You are receiving this letter because you or someone else placed your name on an Article of Conscription, thereby pledging your life to the Blackstone Irregulars. With war looming on all fronts, the Irregulars must build their numbers. We are forced to call upon those who have sworn their assistance to make good on those oaths.

Say farewell to your friends and family. While you may return to them, you must prepare them for the possibility that this will be your last day together.

Your sacrifice is appreciated.

—*Taoran*

*(This letter is marked with the seal of the Blackstone Irregulars.)*

## **Blackstone Letter of Condolences**

My dear lady,

It is with great regret that I must inform you of the death of your husband. He died as he lived, with the greatest honor, completing a task of vital importance to the guild. Rest assured that we will take vengeance on those responsible for his death.

Please accept my condolences for your loss.

—*Raelnor Hawkwind*

*(This letter is marked with the seal of the Blackstone Irregulars.)*

## **A Pinch of Ashes**

*(Torn from a book of local myths and legends)*

The Korcari Wilds are rife with legends and myths that have amazed and confounded scholars since the fall of Ostagar in ancient times.

One such mystery lies behind the tale of Astia and Nebbunar, two young lovers who lived in Ostagar. The legend says that Astia grew up in the company of Gazarath, a spirit of the earth bound to an overhang on the bank of a lake in the Korcari Wilds. Gazarath began to fancy her, and they spent much of their days together, talking and laughing. Over the years, however, Astia became a woman and began to seek the company of men.

When Astia met Nebbunar, the two fell in love, and Astia hoped to bring her lover to see her spirit friend. But the spirit, angered and jealous, bade her begone. Gazarath told her that she would never see it again until she brought her lover's ashes and sprinkled them over their spot.

Astia was horrified, and she fled from the enraged spirit. But she began to miss Gazarath, and on the day Nebbunar asked her to marry him, she cut her beloved's throat, burned him, and brought his ashes to Gazarath, knowing that their marriage would forever sever her ties to her dear spirit friend.

There are legends among the Chasind that Gazarath still haunts that lake, and that those who sprinkle ashes of the deceased over the right spot can summon the spirit. In memory of the contract with its beloved Astia, Gazarath will grant a single wish and then vanish, never to be heard from again.

*(A note is scribbled in the margin beneath the page)* "Markus, I think this is real! If you take the ashes I gave you and scatter them over a pile of rocks on an overhang overlooking the half-sunken Tevinter Dome, maybe Gazarath will appear and give you a wish! If the battle takes you there, I think it's worth a try!"

## **Letter to Jogby**

My dearest son,

It pleases me that you wish to follow in my footsteps and bring the Maker's word to the unenlightened. I wish you had chosen a less dangerous place to do so!

Apologies for leaving early for the Wilds, son, but I wanted to set up camp and get things started. The Chasind respect one with survival skills in the Wilds, so I hoped to get a grip on that before you arrived, and maybe establish an agreement with a local tribe so that we had friends when you came.

When you reach the Wilds, you'll find it difficult to navigate. I've listed certain landmarks below. If you follow them, they will lead you to a location I've scouted out, where I've left you some supplies. If you're lost, try to get back to that spot, and I'll find you.

The landmarks are as follows, beginning at the entrance to the Wilds from Ostagar:

- Look for a tree leaning on the ruined building
- Pass under a fallen tree "bridge"
- Pass a submerged tower on the right
- Look between a high, ruined arch and a mossy standing stone
- Walk along a path of roots and stones
- Look for two large statues with a chest between them

There you will find our meeting point.

I love you Jogby, my son. I hope to see you soon.

Your father,

—*Rigby*

### **Farewell Letter to Jogby**

My dear son, Jogby,

I fear this is the last letter I will write to you, I have had difficulty finding the Chasind to bring them the Maker's word. I have, however, seen evidence of their passing. They appear to have left this area in great haste, possibly fleeing the so-called "darkspawn" that are rumored to be gathering in the Wilds in ever greater numbers.

I have left you a weapon and everything else i can spare, my son. I will try to find you once I have found a safe place. I only hope that you will be safe. Within luck, we will meet again.

If you see her, tell your mother that I love her. And take care of you family.

Your loving father,

—*Rigby*

### **Rigby's Last Will and Testament**

To whoever finds this note,

This is the last will and testament of Rigby the missionary, proud speaker of the Maker's word. I have come to the Wilds to speak the Chant, but I fear I will die here at the hands of the darkspawn.

I leave all that I came with to my wife, Jetta. Should the reader of this note feel charitable, I have buried a sealed lockbox in our camp, nestled in a Tevinter ruin in the western reaches of the Wilds. It is my will that this lockbox finds my wife in Redcliffe, and that it is still sealed shut when it reaches her.

To my wife and my son, I apologize that my work has taken me from you, but I know that I die in service to the Maker.

—*Rigby*

### **Signs of the Chasind**

The Chasind barbarians are nothing if not clever. They have hidden markers and signs in the arrangements of stones and rubble along the paths of the Wilds. In this way, they mark trails, note places of interest, and even give warnings in a way outsiders cannot understand. Interestingly, these markers look indistinguishable from a regular pile of stones.

I have dedicated my time to deciphering these signs, and I believe I am close to a breakthrough. The trail markers seem to point to a hoard or a location used for secret storage among the Chasind. I have only found a portion of the message however. I think that if I could complete the message, find all of the trail markers, I can find this cache and see what treasure the Chasind have to hide.

I have found one such marker near this camp, under a fallen tree leaning against the ruins. Each marker seems to point to one or two others.

I hear rumours that a darkspawn horde is coming. I hope I can find this treasure before it's too late!

—*An excerpt from Rigby's field journal*

## **The Mages' Collective**

Despite the Loyalists' grasp on the mages' political community, many Libertarians and Aequitarians have begun to see eye to eye with respect to the Chantry's role in a mage's daily life. A growing number of mages, particularly those whose magic never strays from the Maker's mandate, feel that the Chantry's constant oversight is a burden upon their creativity and their very will, and one that hinders their ability to do their work.

These mages, along with a number of hedge wizards who work their arts outside the Chantry's influence, have formed a shadow-guild of sorts, a mages' collective, wherein members can submit requests and have them seen to without judgement. This collective manages to work in relative secrecy, their members discreet and their clients anonymous. As of yet, this collective has seen no sanction from the templars, and there has been no sign that its members are practicing magic of which the Maker would not approve.

Still, practicing magic outside of the influence of the Chantry is a dream for some and a dangerous notion for others, and many believe that it is only a matter of time before the veil of secrecy is lifted and the mages' collective is brought to swift and brutal justice.

—*From A Treatise on Magic and Politics, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## **Asunder**

The ritual was very specific, as such things probably should be. Torso, head, and limbs spread amongst the Deep Roads to prevent the creature from returning. Looks like they died during the cutting, but we can fulfill the last part in their stead. I'm not familiar with elven ritual—why would I be—but it seems pretty straight forward.

—*Shaper Axis*

*(Scribbled in the corner)*

Never even saw the thing. Bet a sword would take care of it.

Sod it, and this bag of legs.

---

Might not be elven, maybe human. Doesn't matter, we can still follow direction. Torso, head, and limbs bagged and dispersed. Simple enough. This magic stuff doesn't seem that complicated.

—*Shaper Axis*

*(Scribbled in the corner)*

No job for a warrior! First hole gets the bag!

---

*(A torn ritual page of indeterminate origin.)*

The body rendered to its separate parts, spread wide such that no life is witnessed, no heartbeat detected. In this way, the beast can remain for an age, as knowledge passes and pursuers live out their lives.

*(Scribbled in the corner)*

I was wrong! Not elven! Hunters didn't kill it. It allowed this?

Keep the pieces apart, I guess. Away from the heart.

---

The scratchings should be unreadable, but meaning swims in your head, as though whispered:

The limbs, mere meat.

The torso, but a vessel.

The head, all but unnecessary.

The heart, separate, keeps life.

The heart, safe from the blade, can be restored.

The heart waits, in the Fade.

—*Rough inscription, author unknown*

## **Unbound**

The riders follow after every town, ever since my lucky break deciphering the story. I see it now, how they take the locals closest to me, preventing rest or kinship. I thought this a road to glory, but I am dogged at every step by his talons. Gaxkang: curse his name and the day I heard it.

—*Journal excerpt from an unnamed, long dead adventurer*

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You asked, so I'm telling you. Don't go. The stories talk of the riches, but never the names, never where they supposedly spent their wealth. I heard the same tales as a lad in Denerim, felt the same pull, but it's a lie, son. They may paint a trail, but once you're on it, does it lead to the beast or back to you?

—*Unsigned letter, father to son*

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*(Three weathered parchments, with three versions of the same incomplete story.)*

Excerpt:

And when his kingdom fell, so disappeared the stolen riches of an age. The beast, the Unbound, dormant until one of true spirit claims his throne. So must hunt the hero of his people, the principled who would search for ancient evil. This is how they can make a real difference.

*(Scribbled in the corner in a shaky hand)*

Three pages, three ages. Same story, updated.

Same as the tavern song, but older!

Signature torn on purpose, but compare and get "Vilhm Madon".

All from him! How?

## **Caged in Stone**

*(The inscription is old and worn, overlooked by most as a carving detail)*



The beast is foreign, but the need is familiar. Home and hearth suffer beneath strength and strangeness. These new kin of this Fereldan are better as friends than strangers, so we resist on their behalf, and work with their users to bind with the Stone. They no longer fear their skies, and we further our trade above.

Lured from above, cornered and coralled. Three standing in position, a fourth signals the throne. Stasis for the beast, so long as a king holds the throne. So long as a king wills it held.

—*Inscription, circa 5:90 Exalted*

### **By Order of Emer Thorogood**

We know they are out there, and they will move when their fellow vermin call them out. Watch for the sign and slaughter the lot. They will know it is coming, and probably abandon the poor sap of a messenger, but even in that, our message will be sent with an authority theirs cannot have.

—*By order of Emer Thorogood*

### **Scrolls of Banastor**

To align with the power of the Fade is but the first of many steps. Further is to align the mind to the Fade's rules and find the ties between the realm of the dream and the realm of the flesh. This is the true power of blood magic: The flesh and the mind are inseparable, and therein lies the power to influence and control minds.

*(Below the text are indecipherable runes and stains of blood and ink)*

---

Others may speak of the sanctity of the mind. To those who know the true power of the blood, this is foolishness. The mind is no more sacred than the knee, the small toe, or the ear. It is man's organ of reasoning, nothing more. And true reasoning requires connection to the rhythm of the blood, the tireless pounding of life. Interrupt this, and even the mind is yours to control.

*(Below the text is a diagram of a blood magic ritual in progress, with no notation or description)*

---

In the Fade dwell creatures both foul and fair, but all plague mankind with lusts and prides incalculable in our waking hours. Our power attracts them, and for good reason: Our unique bridge between flesh and dreams is one way they can enter the realm of flesh. To begin the path to true power, court these poor, terrible creatures and best them. Force them into servitude or pledge your heart to them. Either way, you gain immense power and the means with which to tear holes in the world.

*(Below the text, scribbled in the margin, are arcane symbols drawn with blood.)*

---

The creatures, these demons, require little in the way of bribery. Their natural state is one of longing for the world of flesh and blood. This is what you offer them: respite from their eternal search for true life. Engage them in a battle of wills, and you will be successful. Should you fail, the power will be yours, but your body will belong to the demon. Relish this infernal power while it lasts, for once you are an abomination, your demon half will soon swallow your mind.

*(Below is a litany of lines written in an arcane, forgotten language, indecipherable to all but the most obsessed of linguists.)*

---

Finally, once you have come to ascend, have tasted the sweet nectar of the demonic blessing, rise anew, ascended, as a god. Through the connection between earth and sky, flesh and dream, blood and memory, you have risen above the petty concerns of the Chantry and her minions, past the notice of secular nobles and their petty squabbles. Through the rituals inscribed in these scrolls, you have mastered the minds of others, braved the temptations of the Fade, and quashed the terrible will of demons. Let no murder or theft weigh upon your mind, as your will is absolute, and the world is yours to claim.

*(Below the text are more arcane glyphs, terrible and dark in their implications.)*

### **Friends of Red Jenny**

The task was never promised to be easy. You said you could enter the Circle Tower, and you were believed. Find the small painted box in First Enchanter Irving's office and deliver it to the door marked in Denerim as agreed, or be prepared to find yourself hunted across Ferelden.

—*Friends of Red Jenny*

*(There is a sketched map of several doors. It requires the box to be placed on it to block out false leads.)*

### **Five Pages, Four Mages**

Tome Deus vi Eternus

In malefactorum, dragos te' ventim. Solariat ven deos mentoris, pluratic ven contrivarian.  
Spake he the words, and brought life. Speak you the words... ascension.  
Answers lie in... *(text illegible)*

*(Notes on the page below)*

Here I begin my study, knowing full well it will change the Circle forever. Let history mark the date that this work began, 9:29 Dragon, so that when new calendars are put to paper, the date Fonst 0.0 is known with certainty. From the mouths of gods, finally to the people. Through me.

—*Enchanter Fonst*

---

Tome Deus vi Eternus

In malefactorum, dragos te' ventim. Solariat ven deos mentoris, pluratic ven contrivarian.  
Spake he the words, and brought life. Speak you the words... ascension.  
Answers lie in... *(text illegible)*

*(Notes on the page below)*

479 sovereigns, plus favors.

Immortality worth every coin.

Words of creation, proof of Maker.

No one must know until translations are complete! I will have First Enchanter... the ear of kings... I will **own** kings!

Glory everlasting!

—*Enchanter Modalt*

---

Tome Deus vi Eternus

In malefactorum, dragos te' ventim. Solariat ven deos mentoris, pluratic ven contrivarian.

Spake he the words, and brought life. Speak you the words... ascension.

Answers lie in... *(text illegible)*

*(Notes on the page below)*

Notes on a wondrous discovery:

A strange script. Uniform, by steady hand. Yes, one would expect an agent of the Maker to be steady. In fact, it follows all my expectations of the words the Maker would bestow. It is perfect, and once translated, I will have such fun lording this over the Chantry. Worth every bit.

—*Enchanter Gaius*

---

Tome Deus vi Eternus

In malefactorum, dragos te' ventim. Solariat ven deos mentoris, pluratic ven contrivarian.

Spake he the words, and brought life. Speak you the words... ascension.

Answers lie in... *(text illegible)*

*(Notes on the page below)*

Maker take the vendor, **a copy! A fake!**

Why didn't I see? It was obvious! Spake?!

Laughing stock!

No one must know!

Beyha Joam—I find him; **I'll kill him!**

---

Tome Deus vi Eternus

In malefactorum, dragos te' ventim. Solariat ven deos mentoris, pluratic ven contrivarian.

Spake he the words, and brought life. Speak you the words... ascension.

Answers lie in... *(text illegible)*

*(Notes on the page below)*

The words elude me, but I will defy their obstinateness. Worked by the Old Gods or the Maker himself, I will wring their secrets into my hands. I need the essence of the powerful. And the pure. And so begins a bloody road, but at the end, godhood, the keys to the Black City.

—*Enchanter Rhonus*

## Watchguard of the Reaching

I'm telling you guys, it's a test like the summoning. Why else would lessons be canceled? And that outburst in the library with Uldred? An older tome fell to a page on "the Reaching." I copied what I could before they pushed us out.

Ritual Note:

A sword lowered, to strike through and ground.

You can't tell me I wasn't supposed to see that. It's too convenient. I'm looking for more, and you'd be smart to help.

—*Gant*

---

No, no, no and stop asking! I'm not getting in trouble because of you again. I don't care what's in the basement, and neither do the senior magi. Everything is about Uldred and the upper floors. I don't know what you're digging up, but those tomes are way older than our lesson texts. An apprentice shouldn't touch them!

Ritual note: The threads burned before a Giant, spear raised. He stands alone, so whispers are known false.

—*Nolan*

*(scribbled in corner)*

Don't need him. Owain knew "Reaching."

---

First Enchanter Dorval fell suddenly to a disease of the lungs. This unfortunate disruption in the direct line of descent from tower founding should be treated as opportunity. The Circle will reform practices to better address the times. Many rituals remain valuable, but some—The Two Bells, Garnold's Lament, Watchguard of the Reaching, Benford Da—have little or no meaning in our texts.

We will move forward, as Dorval would have wished, and commit these and other ceremonies to the age we have left. With no plan of estate, his belongings have been transferred into the common library for the benefit of all.

—*Excerpt: Circle of Magi Declaration, Kinloch Hold Transitional, 5:90 Exalted*

*(Scribbled in corner)*

"Reaching" again! And old! They don't know! Idiots! Wards weaken!

---

Today we passed even further, far beyond any reach of man. The inverted glow of the Black City was always on the horizon of perception, but a path eludes, as always. Untraveled in memory, living or otherwise, there is a pull, and whispers abound. Something great is there. And away from this, always in peripheral, another mind, untethered. Tomorrow I will reach out with my full attention, and try to rescue him from his listing. Can someone else have come this far? The wonders we will share.

Ritual note:

The vessel in hand, words from another time drip literal power.

Documents of the Reaching, estimated second century, Ancient

First enchanter appointed Watchguard of the Reaching, to be held in secret

*(Scribbled in corner)*

"Reaching!" Before the Circle! Someone else in the Fade? I want this!

---

His silver cord transmuted black. Black! There is no wonder his form shattered. What returned was not of the mortal, nor native Fade. Does an afterthought prove the gods when direct action is long missing? There is no purpose to this beast. Let the strength of the tower wither it and memory pass. The only legacy to be taught: Stay focused with the Fade. Whims escape to their own action.

Ritual note:

A sword raised, to sever connection.

Documents of the Reaching, estimated second century, Ancient

First enchanter appointed Watchguard of the Reaching, to be held in secret

*(Scribbled in corner)*

Cord? Peasant magic! Must know. Can almost see. Whispers want!

---

*(Hastily scribbled)*

Whispers say Great Hall? Hidden above us the whole time!

-The vessel in hand, words from another time drip literal power. (Put on bowl!)

-A sword raised, to sever connection. (Cord cut!)

-A sword lowered, to strike through and ground. (Bile!)

-The threads placed before a warrior, spear raised. Shielded from each side, so whispers are known false. (Where is this? It whispered order, but not where! It's in my head!)

---

## **Shah Wyrd**

A collection of powerful but undirected thoughts coalesced in the Fade. Such a being is in direct opposition to singular focus and drive. Distraction made flesh. The mind or minds that loosed this within the Fade must have been powerful and ancient indeed.

## **Maleficarum Regrets**

I won't go back. Let them hunt, and dread finding me. But you, Melis, should not live this life. It would please me if you found a life in the Circle Tower. I left a few things there, mostly stolen from the enchanter's. Sell them to fund a new path. The cache is in the study area, middle alcove. Goodbye

—*Bel Gruce*

## **Renold's Plea**

Should you find this note, I beg you, please complete my task.

I am Renold, master mage and mentor to the misguided fool, Heshir. It seems that my young apprentice got mixed up in magic unmentionable, for which I pledged to pursue him to the ends of the world.

If you are reading this, then my apprentice caught up to me and choked from me my last breath. I beg you to delve into this ancient elven forest and end the threat of the abomination my beloved apprentice has become.

Should you do this, then I beg you, keep the feldspar ring you find on my apprentice's finger as a token of my thanks. And may you never know profound failure such as that I feel as I write this.

—*Renold*

## **The Spot**

Maker's wind, Daarci, I said I'd wait, but it's not just a disagreement! Uldred set abominations loose! One was in my mentor's robe! If you make it here, something in the "the spot" may help you out. No point in hiding it from the senior mages now, and don't worry about Denri's usual fee for moving his bed. He's dead.

—*Apprentice Mand*

## **Letter of Termination**

My dear apprentice,

I have sent this courier with this note to officially end your period of apprenticeship. I harbor you no ill will, for despite your complete incompetence, you have failed to do lasting harm to myself or my work. Sadly, I will not have a chance to witness your floundering attempts at improvement.

When you return from your current errand, your apprenticeship will be over. Now, hurry, I have dire need of the supplies I sent you to procure.

Sincerely,

—*The mage Terraster*

## **AWAKENING EXPANSION**

### **Armored Ogre**

### **Creatures**

The darkspawn scavenge their armor from the Deep Roads, from lost thaigs and from battlefields where vast armies once clashed. Typically, only hurlocks, shrieks, and genlocks wear any such protection, ogres being far too large for conventional armor.

But occasionally the Legion encounters ogres wearing crude patchworks of breastplates and shields threaded together with rope and wire. While better than nothing, there are many vulnerable gaps in the assemblage. Thank the ancestors that the darkspawn and their ghouls make such lousy craftsmen.

—*From the journal of Kardol, Legionnaire of the Dead.*

### **Blighted Werewolf**

### **Creatures**

When a man in West Hill told me about his encounter with a blighted werewolf, I was inclined to believe him. Although werewolves may be abominations of a sort—wolves possessed by rage demons, or so the story goes—it is true that their bodies still live. The Blight is known to corrupt bears and wolves in addition to humans, elves, and dwarves, so it is conceivable that any living creature, even a werewolf, is at risk.

The man saw the beast ambush a bear, springing from the shadows with such speed that it seemed a blur. The bear was dead within seconds.

I thank the Maker that I have never even seen a run-of-the-mill werewolf. I am sure I never want to encounter one that is blighted.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **Charred Sylvan**

### **Creatures**

Occasionally, demons attempt to escape the Fade by possessing something other than mortal flesh. By corrupting a tree, for instance, a demon avoids the madness that results from possessing a sentient creature. Demon-possessed trees are known as wild sylvans.

On rare occasions, demons possess trees almost completely destroyed by fire but that still retain a spark of life. This union often rekindles the fire that first damaged the tree, resulting in a sylvan that burns continuously without being destroyed.

### **The Children**

### **Creatures**

The Children appear to be twisted mutations of darkspawn. They have set even hurlocks, genlocks, and ogres to fleeing.

The monsters appear first as childer grubs, gruesome larval creatures that wriggle on the ground. This is the only vulnerable stage of their development. To squish them is to do the world a favour.

When grubs devour the flesh of slain darkspawn, a dramatic change occurs. To a sound of tearing flesh, legs emerge. The childer can now run down its prey with startling speed.

Upon gorging itself again, the childer transforms further, developing spindly limbs tipped with spikes that skewer prey.

These foul creatures are the progeny of the Mother, a mysterious broodmother about whom little is known.

## **The Disciples**

## **Creatures**

The disciples are darkspawn that have become sapient after some sort of process of awakening, after which they choose their own names. They are cunning, powerful, and hold influence over non-awakened darkspawn.

The disciples are split into two factions. Some serve the Architect, some the Mother.

The Architect is responsible for awakening the disciples. Those who now serve the Mother appear to have turned to her because they resent their newfound freedom.

## **Inferno Golem**

## **Creatures**

"It's so much better when it's on fire!"

Centuries ago, during the dwarven empire's golden age, dwarves commanded vast armies of golems. Golems guarded the thaigs and patrolled every branch of the Deep Roads. As men of steel and stone, they were eternal, indestructible, and perfectly obedient.

But Paragon Hirol was not satisfied. He wanted Kal'Hirol's golems to be greater. In his forge, he gave them hearts like furnaces that would burn evermore. Thus became the inferno golems, with eyes that burned and veins coursing with molten lava.

## **Baroness of the Blackmarsh**

## **Creatures**

The magic worked! I banished the dragon's essence to the Fade, but the enchantment was imperfect and the bond between spirit and physical body remained. The beast lay dormant long enough for me to rip her apart and scatter her about the marsh. That should suffice for now.

Had the spell failed, I would have perished. What was I thinking, working untried magic on such powerful beast? Ah, hindsight.

So I saved this soggy cesspit. I don't know what that proves, but these are my lands now, and Orlais must not see me as a failure.

*—From the journal of the baroness of the Blackmarsh*

## **Tears in the Veil**

## **Creatures**

Studies of the Veil have never been thorough. The Tevinters once theorised that the Veil is thin in places that have seen great bloodshed. As the Chantry is so fond of reminding us, the magisters of the Imperium only once crossed physically into the Fade, the catastrophe that blackened the Golden City. As the story goes, the ritual consumed a vast quantity of lyrium and the blood of a hundred slaves. But was it the deaths that bridged the worlds, or simply the blood and lyrium? Or both?

Demons seize every opportunity, every tear in the Veil, to enter our world. Once the Veil is torn, it is extremely difficult to mend, some say impossible.

*—From The Lectures of First Enchanter Wenselus*

## **Pilgrims and Amaranthine**

## **Magic and Religion**



The faithful travel great distances to see the birthplace of Andraste in Denerim, yet many make their pilgrimage longer still by visiting Amaranthine. After all, it was from the city's port that Maferath and his army departed to invade the Tevinter Imperium, and the Chantry of Our Lady Redeemer now stands on the site where Andraste first revealed the Chant of Light.

This is why the road that joins Amaranthine to Denerim is known as the Pilgrim's Path, and why the Chantry of Our Lady Redeemer is the wealthiest chantry in all of Ferelden.

—*From Annals of Northern Ferelden, by Brother Bedine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Crown and Lion**

## **Culture and History**

One Satinalia long ago, a bevy of bards met in Amaranthine to determine whose songs best stirred emotion and whose stomachs best digested foul brew.

The first bard fell, mid-ballad, into his barley soup, the second into the lap of a lass most fair. (Some say forfeiture was worth the price.) The next could not keep his innards inside. One-by-one, they succumbed to fatigue, boredom, or insobriety.

At the end, no man was left standing. There was only I, the lovely and fair Rosalyn, master and mistress of the Crown and Lion, who proved that no man is mightier than the slightest of lasses.

—*From The War of Lions, by the bard Rosalyn*

## **The Port City of Amaranthine**

## **Culture and History**

Outside of Ferelden, the City of Amaranthine is now synonymous with the arling herself, but before the Orlesian invasion, it was only a modest fishing village despite a deep port well-suited to commerce. At that time, few other kingdoms had any need to trade with the Fereldan "barbarians".

The city changed rapidly with the Orlesians came. They built temporary docks to accommodate ships packed with chevaliers, and for a time, Amaranthine was the capital of occupied Ferelden. The bann of Amaranthine became one of the wealthiest nobles in the kingdom, as goods like wool were leeched from the city's swollen ports.

During the liberation, the fleeing Orlesians looted the city but left it otherwise unscarred. She recovered quickly. Ironically, Amaranthine's current prosperity is the legacy of Orlesian occupation. Do not share that opinion with the locals, mind.

—*From Annals of Northern Ferelden, By Brother Bedine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Howes of Amaranthine**

## **Culture and History**

The Howes of Amaranthine are one of the oldest noble families in Ferelden. Their lineage traces to the time of Calenhad, when Elias Howe was one of the first freeholders to follow Calenhad.

During the occupation, Arl Tarleton Howe, Rendon Howe's father, threw his lot in with the Orlesians. After several bitter battles with rebels, the town of Harper's Ford—an outpost governed by Tarleton Howe—fell to the Couslands of Highever. Tarleton hanged.

Rendon brought the Howe family over to the side of Maric Theirin and Loghain Mac Tir's rebellion. Rendon's bravery at the battle of White River, fighting alongside Bryce Cousland, earned back his family's honour. When King Maric took the throne in free Ferelden, Rendon Howe was decorated for his service.

—*From Annals of Northern Ferelden, by Brother Bedine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Blackmarsh**

## **Culture and History**

The Blackmarsh is a dreary place, so damp you can feel the chill in your bones. Leave your clothes out to dry for a week, and they'll still be cold and wet when you put them on.

I called Martan daft when he suggested we move there. "An awful place," he said, "but also a place where one can make a great deal of money collecting peat." By the Maker's soggy underclothes, he was right!

—*From the journal of Vera, a seamstress*

## **Drake's Fall**

## **Culture and History**

Legends speak of a place where dragons go to die. In the far south, in the lands of the barbarian tribes, it is said that a dragon at the end of her days lies down and allows the bitter cold to take her.

It is not just a legend! I have seen Drake's Fall with my own eyes, the ancient bones of these grand beasts piled atop one another. I felt the power that suffused this place and knew the Imperium would claim it.

We built a city on the bones. We delved deep into the earth, collecting what remained of the primordial dragons who were so like our Old Gods. With these bones we created staves for our magisters, armour for our warriors, and crowns for our archons. We fashioned phylacteries to hold our blood and sarcophagi to hold our bodies, and prayed they would make us immortal.

—*From the writings of Archon Melos*

## **The Fortress of Kal'Hirol**

## **Culture and History**

The fortress of Kal'Hirol was established by Paragon Hirol and became known as a center of learning for smiths. Its workshops are where Paragon Hirol conceived his famous improvements to golem resilience and power, and where Hirol's favorite student developed a method for storing refined lyrium that is still used today.

These breakthroughs brought Kal'Hirol great prosperity, its passageways glittering with gold and silver. For decades, the thaig was the favored home of apprentice smiths. Unfortunately, as time wore on, only the richest could afford to train there.

When the darkspawn came, Kal'Hirol was among the first of the great thaigs to fall. Our people still mourn the loss.

—*From the writings of Shaper Ezerain*

## **The Paragon Hirol**

## **Culture and History**

Paragon Hirol was born a warrior. He excelled at arms and strategy, but was not content. Hirol believed he was born outside the caste system, able to be anything he chose—a warrior, a smith, even a noble. He would not rest until he'd mastered the art of war, the art of smithing, and the art of rule.

He was eccentric, maybe even mad. Some said he'd taken too many blows to the head in the Provings. Yet Hirol accomplished what he set out to do. He trained under the greatest smiths and the greatest warriors, and his achievements in both fields were so great that the Assembly could not help but make him a Paragon. Thus noble House Hirol was born.

—*From the writings of Shaper Ezerain*

## Surfacer Dwarves

## Culture and History

Cloudgazer, stone-blind, skyer—these are how dwarves describe their surfacer cousins. It's traditional to snort these words with disdain. A dwarf who goes "topside" forfeits his caste, his house, and the favor of his ancestors. Once he sets foot on the surface, he is no longer welcome in Orzammar.

Still, in recent years a great many dwarves have moved to the surface. Some are casteless and have nothing to lose. Others believe they have something to gain. Some think it's only a matter of time before Orzammar falls to the darkspawn.

Then there are the merchant caste dwarves with their frightful flair for business. I met one who nearly talked me into buying my own hat. I daresay most merchants don't give a nugget about losing their caste or the favor of their ancestors—not the way they're compensated!

—*From Tales from Beneath the Earth, by Brother Genitivi*

## The Great Strife

## Culture and History

*(Worn inscriptions deep in the bowels of Vigil's Keep tell of the Avvar clan that settled here:)*

...with our warriors, unmatched in skill and strength. And here we settled, in the caves carved by the hand of Korth the Mountain-Father...

Ruadan, shaman of the people, turned from the gods who had ever sheltered him. In his grief, he destroyed the gifts of the Mountain-Father and brought us low.

...and Ruadan pursued her. She fled into the earth and prayed to Korth to preserve her. He sent deliverance. They called themselves the dwarves, and they protected Kaelah.

The darkness drove him to madness but also gave him power. He turned our warriors against us. Kiveal sought out the dwarves, and together they bound Ruadan in this place.

...remember Kiveal. May Ruadan forever be bound here.

## The First Warden

## Culture and History

The nominal leader of our order is the First Warden, but you can expect little assistance or guidance so far from the Anderfels. Even those close to Weisshaupt learn to suffer alone. The murmurs are true—the First Warden is often embroiled in the politics of the Anderfels and has little opportunity to consider worldly matters. I would like to believe it is a matter of survival, not of political self-interest.

Know that your mission is vital. You carry the hopes of our order. If the highest among us holds noble titles outside of the Anderfels, perhaps we will be better situated when the next Blight comes, as we all know it must.

—*A confidential report for the Warden-Commander*

## Vassals and their Liege

## Culture and History

Some kingdoms rigidly define the rights of vassals and their duty to their liege. In Ferelden, a relatively new kingdom, the arls and arlessas theoretically command their arlings' banns and lords. In practice, those lessers often zealously maintain their independence.

Some Fereldan vassals must be goaded instead of ordered—swayed, not ruled. Vassals owe military obligations to their liege, yet often deny even sworn oaths and signed contracts. In contrast, the vassals expect their liege's protection despite provocation otherwise. A successful Fereldan liege applies force, persuasion, and duplicity in equal measure.

—*From A Guide to Statecraft, published anonymously*

## The Vigil

## Culture and History

Vigil's Keep is one of the oldest settlements in Ferelden, older than Denerim and Gwaren. The barbarians who battled the Tevinter Imperium chose this location for a fortress so that their warning fires would be visible at great distance, when Tevinter ships neared the coast.

The Vigil has seen battle in every major invasion of Ferelden. Tevinters, rival barbarian clans, and Orlesians have all held her battlements. The Vigil was the first fortress to fall to the Orlesians and the last to be freed.

The cellar beneath Vigil's Keep retains traces of the Avvar barbarians. To the Avvars, the Vigil was both a fortress and a holy site. The cellars bear monuments to their gods, heroes, and their rare military victories.

The Vigil's cellars connect to the Deep Roads far below. Evidence suggests the Avvars and dwarves traded in secret, a breach of promises made to the Tevinter Imperium in the days before the darkspawn.

## Anders

## Characters

"**Most** people enjoy being kicked in the head to be woken each morning. Me, I'm just so picky."

Anders is an apostate mage. He was arrested by templars who intended to cart him back to the Circle Tower; Vigil's Keep was to have been a short stop on the long journey. Unfortunately, the keep was attacked just after the group arrived, and Anders was found standing over the bodies of his captors. He insists they were killed by darkspawn.

Regardless, Anders joined the Warden to defeat the darkspawn in Vigil's Keep.

*If he undergoes the Joining:* Afterwards, Anders was recruited into the Grey Wardens. He survived the Joining.

*If he is taken by the templars and given leniency:* Although Anders fought alongside The Warden-Commander at Vigil's Keep, the Warden-Commander returned the mage to the templars' custody after the battle—with a request that the templars be lenient, given what Anders had done to help the Grey Wardens.

The Warden-Commander gave Anders a kitten as a gift. Anders stowed the kitten, Ser Pounce-a-lot, in the folds of his robe.

Anders' old friend Namaya revealed that the templars had moved the phylacteries for most mages in Ferelden—including Anders—to the City of Amaranthine.

But the warehouse where the phylacteries were supposedly stored was actually a templar trap. The Warden stood with Anders against the templars, for which the mage was grateful.

Anders takes great pride in his appearance and enjoys fine things.

## The Architect

## Characters

The Architect is a powerful darkspawn possessed of an intelligence seldom seen in his kind—and obsessed with Grey Wardens. He seemed to be conducting strange experiments in the old silverite mines near the Wending Wood, although their purpose was impossible to discern.

The Architect is often seen with a dwarven woman at his side. He treats her with great respect, even affection. No one knows her name nor has heard her speak.

The Architect and the Mother seem to be at odds. She is undermining his plan, whatever it is.

The Architect finally revealed his plan as the Warden-Commander was preparing to kill the Mother. The Architect was born with a mind of his own, able to ignore the call of the Old Gods. He dreams of freeing all darkspawn from their urge to seek out the Old Gods, thereby ending the threat of future Blights.

To awaken other darkspawn, however, he employs a modified version of the Joining using the blood of a Grey Warden. He sent the disciple known as the Withered to Vigil's Keep to propose an alliance, but the Wardens misunderstood the Withered's intentions and attacked.

*If the Architect is spared:* The Warden-Commander and the Architect agreed that preventing future Blights is a noble goal. The Warden-Commander pledged that the Architect's work could continue after they killed the Mother together.

*If the Architect is killed:* The Architect wished to ally with the Grey Wardens to destroy the Mother, but the Warden-Commander refused to deal with darkspawn and killed the Architect.

## Justice

## Characters

"I have no name, only a virtue to which I aspire."

A spirit of justice fought on behalf of the villagers that the baroness trapped in the Fade. When the Warden-Commander escaped through a tear in the Veil, Justice was dragged along and trapped in the body of the Grey Warden Kristoff.

The baroness's defeat left Justice trapped in the mortal world. Believing Kristoff's mission to be worthy, he agreed to travel with the Warden-Commander.

Kristoff's wife, Aura, arrived at Vigil's Keep. Upon realizing what had become of her husband, she accused Justice of desecrating Kristoff's body. This distressed Justice, who insisted on finding a way to ease Aura's pain.

Justice visited Aura again later, promising to avenge her husband's death. This pact gave both a measure of peace.

Justice likes tokens that remind him of the Fade as well as items that provide insight into Kristoff's life.

*If the Warden-Commander saves the City of Amaranthine, and leaves Justice to defend Vigil's Keep:* Justice likely died in the second siege on Vigil's Keep.

## Mhairi

## Characters

"Allow me to say, I'm very proud to serve under your command."

Mhairi was a knight in Fereldan's army until agreeing to join the Grey Wardens. She can think of no greater honor, nor better way to serve the nation, and is eager to undertake the Joining.

Sadly, Mhairi's enthusiasm did not save her. She perished in the Joining like so many others before her and was laid to rest as a Grey Warden.

## Nathaniel

## Characters

"The Howes are pariahs now, those of us left."

Nathaniel Howe is the son of the disgraced Arl Rendon Howe and among the last scions of the once-great family. He blames the Grey Wardens for his father's death and had intended to assassinate the Warden-Commander. Upon seeing Vigil's Keep, however—his childhood home—Nathaniel decided to simply reclaim some of his family's treasures. The Wardens caught Nathaniel breaking in.

*If conscripted into the Grey Wardens:* The Warden-Commander, impressed to hear that it took four Wardens to capture Nathaniel, invoked the Right of Conscription, making the young Howe a Warden recruit.

*If hanged:* The Warden-Commander ordered Nathaniel executed.

*If released:* The Warden-Commander released Nathaniel.

*If released, then later conscripted:* Such mercy had an odd effect on Nathaniel. He returned, seeking to become a Warden himself.

Nathaniel undertook the Joining and survived.

In a chance encounter with the Howes' old groundskeeper, Nathaniel learned that his sister, Delilah, had married a shopkeeper in the city. Nathaniel was eager to find her.

But Delilah was content with her commoner husband, and revealed that their father was exactly the tyrant everyone claimed.

In time, Nathaniel came to terms with his sister's choices and his family legacy.

Nathaniel is a sensible fellow who values practical gifts over useless trinkets.

*If the Warden-Commander saves the City of Amaranthine, and leaves Nathaniel to defend Vigil's Keep:* Nathaniel died defending Vigil's Keep from the army of darkspawn.

## Sigrun

## Characters

"A wise man once told me never to argue with someone better-armed than the entire warrior caste on parade."

Sigrun is a member of the Legion of the Dead, warriors exiled from Orzammar and sent on suicide missions against the darkspawn. The Warden-Commander found Sigrun fleeing a darkspawn nest in Kal'Hirol, the last survivor of her group. She has broken the Legion's oath by not fighting to her death.

*If she is not recruited:* Sigrun wished to return to Kal'Hirol to finish what the Legion began, but the Warden-Commander deemed Sigrun's injuries too grave and sent her on her way.

*If she joins them:* Sigrun joined the Warden-Commander to destroy the darkspawn nest.

After Kal'Hirol was purged of darkspawn, Sigrun agreed to join the Grey Wardens. She survived the Joining.

Sigrun is fascinated by the surface world. She collects little curios from all over Thedas.

*If the Warden-Commander saves Amaranthine, and leaves Sigrun to defend Vigil's Keep:* Sigrun met her end fighting darkspawn at Vigil's Keep, fulfilling her promise to the Legion.

## The Mother

## Characters

The Mother is a powerful, intelligent broodmother who holds a large group of awakened darkspawn under her spell. She is utterly insane, orchestrating twisted schemes with the darkspawn she controls.

The Mother and the Architect appear to be in conflict.

The Mother's darkspawn brood are twisted mutations that prey on all who cross their path... even other darkspawn.

The Architect confessed that the Mother was one of his failed creations. He attempted to free her from the call of the Old Gods, but her awakening drove her mad. She has plotted against the Architect ever since.

## Oghren

## Characters

"Now let's go introduce some darkspawn arses to my foot. Only polite thing to do."

Oghren was once married to Branka, Orzammar's sole living Paragon, but she left him to search for the Anvil of the Void. Oghren took to drink, then accidentally killed another warrior in a drunken Proving match. For this mistake, Oghren was stripped of his house and barred from baring weapons—for a warrior, worse than exile.

When the Grey Wardens called for aid from the dwarves, Orzammar's throne was contested and only a Paragon could settle the dispute. Oghren, hoping to find his wife, offered to guide the party through the Deep Roads.

But Branka's obsession with the Anvil of the Void had driven her mad. The Wardens helped choose a new king, and Oghren, having lost everything, left with the Wardens.

When the Blight was ended, Oghren settled down with his old flame Felsi and had a child. But domestic bliss did not last, and so Oghren travelled to Vigil's Keep in the hopes of becoming a Warden himself.

Oghren's passion for strong drink hasn't waned.

Oghren survived the Joining. His extensive experience drinking bitter swill likely helped.

Felsi arrived at Vigil's Keep demanding to see Oghren. Their conversation ended poorly.

He admitted to feeling guilt over abandoning his child and resolved to be a better father.

*If the Warden-Commander saves the City of Amaranthine, and leaves Nathaniel to defend Vigil's Keep:* Alas, Oghren cannot hold off a hangover, let alone an entire army. He died when the darkspawn sacked Vigil's Keep again.

## Seneschal Varel

## Characters

Varel has spent his life defending Amaranthine. When Rendon Howe was arl, Varel briefly became seneschal of Vigil's Keep, but he repeatedly objected to Howe's orders and was demoted to lower and lower ranks. Nonetheless, he continued to serve with defiance. When Howe's acts turned more sinister, Varel secretly sheltered those in need and used what little power he had to counteract the Arl's atrocities. Soon, Varel was languishing in the dungeon awaiting execution. But Howe died first.

When the Grey Wardens took over Amaranthine, the order reappointed Varel as seneschal. Although Varel is not a Warden himself, his position as administrator of the Warden's lands makes him privy to many secrets of the order, including the Joining ritual. This rare honor is a testament to his character.

Alas, Seneschal Varel was killed in the second darkspawn assault on Vigil's Keep.

## Velanna

## Characters

"I know a human crime when I see it. I have experienced more than enough of them."

Velanna wreaked havoc in the Wending Wood, murdering humans who crossed her path to terrorize the nearby villages into releasing her sister.

However, the Warden-Commander discovered that darkspawn were to blame for Velanna's sister's disappearance. Hoping to rescue her sister, Velanna offered to help the Warden-Commander destroy the darkspawn.

*If she is refused:* The Warden-Commander refused an alliance and killed Velanna, believing her crimes too great to go unpunished.

Velanna was upset to discover that her sister, Seranni, was working willingly with the Architect. She pledged herself to the Grey Wardens and survived the Joining.

An encounter with Velanna's former clanmate Marren revealed that the clan had cast Velanna out and denounced her anti-human crusade.

*If Velanna's approval fell too low:* But Velanna grew impatient with the Warden-Commander and left the Grey Wardens.

*If Velanna is brought along to Drake's Fall:* Seranni reappeared as the Grey Wardens were making their way through the Mother's lair and explained how the Architect has convinced her of the similarities between the darkspawn and the Dalish. Seranni's passion may have swayed Velanna's feelings.

Velanna is fond of the color green as well as items that remind her of elven culture and nature.

*If she is left at Vigil's Keep and The Warden-Commander saves Amaranthine:* Velanna likely perished in the second darkspawn assault on Vigil's Keep.

## Dailan's Journal

## Books and Songs

2 Pluitanis: More southern thaigs have fallen. Varen Thaig and Kal'Barosh are overrun. Four thousand lives lost. The darkspawn are almost at the gates of Kal'Hiol. The fortress must be evacuated.

4 Pluitanis: There will be an exodus to Orzammar. Many nobles are appalled, Orzammar being a trade city so close to the surface. They fear losing their stone sense to the surface vapours—a ridiculous notion. But Orzammar is the easiest to defend.

7 Pluitanis: Scouts have sighted the horde. It is vast. To outrun the darkspawn, the commanders say we must leave now with nothing beyond bare essentials.

7 Pluitanis (addendum): I have volunteered to remain behind with a contingent of men. We'll hold off the darkspawn so others can escape. Ancestors have mercy.

9 Pluitanis: The casteless are still here, forgotten in the panic. They are 500 strong. If even half can be inspired to fight, they'll make an army. There is a chance—a small chance—that this will make the difference.

10 Pluitanis: Two hundred men and women. Ancestors grant that 200 are enough.



15 Pluitanis: The darkspawn have pushed us back to the inner keep. Only a handful of us survive, but we've held them back five days. We could not have done this without the casteless—no, not casteless. To call them "casteless" would be a mistake. Their sacrifice must not be forgotten.

### **Records of the Blackmarsh**

### **Books and Songs**

Some years ago, a dragon rampaged through the countryside, gorging herself on animals and people. Before long, she nested near the village of Blackmarsh. Fearing she would drag off villagers to feed her young, we sent men to drive the beast away. The men were never seen again.

The new baroness had till then done little for her people. But she emerged from her manor and told us not to worry—she'd been sent from Orlais not just to rule, but to protect. She promised the dragon would be gone by sundown the next day.

She set off in the morning, alone. We were certain she'd gone insane. What chance had one woman against a dragon? At sundown there came a loud clap, like thunder, so great it shook the earth. Then our baroness returned to us, triumphant; of the dragon, there was no sign.

The baroness, no longer aloof, sang and danced with the lowest of us. There were dark whispers that the baroness was a witch, but we did not care. Her magic had saved us, and for that we loved her.

—*From the records of the village of Blackmarsh*

### **Kristoff's Journal**

### **Books and Songs**

Few in town have heard anything about darkspawn stragglers. I doubted reports myself until a man told me he encountered darkspawn in the Blackmarsh. Although locals say the marsh is haunted, brave and desperate souls like this man still risk collecting peat.

The man said their leader spoke, but all know darkspawn cannot talk. More horrifying, he described a monster, a worm with legs. Surely he was mistaken about it following the darkspawn.

I shall leave for the Blackmarsh in the morning.

—*From the journal of Kristoff, Grey Warden*

### **The Baroness's Secret**

### **Books and Songs**

The Veil is weak near the stone circle. Perhaps it's my rituals, but I suspect it has always been weak here. I feel traces of old, ancient magic. Maybe this is what drew me here. I think the girls feel it too.

As we approached the circle, they sensed something was wrong. With me? Did they fear me? Something about this place is changing them, claiming them for its own.

It is **conceivable** that using their blood to reinvigorate me traps their souls in the Fade. Perhaps they become the same demons, ghosts, spirits who invade my dreams. I—no, it doesn't matter. They are nothing—peasants!—while I am a Baroness of Orlais.

—*From the journal of the baroness of Blackmarsh*

### **Ancient Vows**

### **Books and Songs**

*(There is an inscription in the stone:)*

And so you are defeated, by Avvar and dwarf, Bound by the blood of your people, May they hold you here forever.

*(Whatever was imprisoned here scratched a message in the stone:)*

Kiveal, nothing will hold me. These walls will rot before I expire. When they do, I shall defame your gods, call your mortal shells to serve me, and hunt down every last one of your kinsmen, Avvar and dwarf.

### **Kristoff's Note**

### **Books and Songs**

These darkspawn act like no pack I've seen, employing misdirection to keep their location secret. When an archdemon leads, darkspawn are predictable, straightforward. Yet these elude even a Grey Warden!

I've tracked the pack through the Kolorind Forest to the edge of the Blackmarsh. The marsh is dangerous, but soon I'll be home, back with Aura. The Wardens can take me from her bed, but never her from my heart.

### **The Canticle of Maferath**

### **Books and Songs**

*(These verses were carved into statues in the Wending Wood. They appear to be from the Canticle of Maferath, which the Chantry includes among the Dissonant Verses, unacknowledged in the Chant of Light.)*

Spite ate away all that was good, kind, and loving till nothing was left but the spite itself, coiled 'round my heart like a great worm.

And in my darkest hour, I turned from Her and vowed that I would destroy Her.

At the moment of Her death I knew what I had done, and I wept.

I shall bring the lands of my fathers to Her Word. Therein lies their salvation and mine.

And She came to me in a vision and laid Her hand on my heart.

Her touch was like fire that did not burn. And by Her touch, I was made pure again.

Despair not, said She, for your betrayal was Maker-blessed and returned me to His side.

I am forgiven.

### **A Letter from the Architect**

### **Notes**

Utha,

I know this has tested your patience. You first gave your blood years ago to further our common dream. I know at times it seems we're going nowhere. Trust me, Utha, I echo your frustration. Vigil's Keep was a setback, yes, but minor. I intend to keep my promise to you.

Perhaps you should venture above ground. The greenery and fresh air would do your spirit good.

### **The Architect's Journal**

### **Notes**

The Seeker collected two elves, male and female. The rest died defending their camp. Unfortunate, but a small price to pay. The male has since dashed his head on the wall. Odd. Don't all living beings strive for survival?

The Seeker confessed that he did more than simply collect the elves. He found the elves and humans at odds, then exacerbated the conflict by making the humans look responsible for the two elves' disappearances. He said he wanted to see how the elf leader would react. Odd again.

The female elf has developed a...bond of sorts with her guard. Many of the other disciples seem drawn to her as well. The Seeker says her name is Seranni. Perhaps I should speak to her. Maybe she will understand.

### **A Letter from Aura**

### **Notes**

Dearest Kristoff,

My sister and her babe are well. I shall leave Jader as soon as they're settled. Expect me at Vigil's Keep within the month.

Ferelden is cold and wet, so make sure your socks are dry before you put them on. I know how it is with men. You can slay a thousand darkspawn, but when it comes to clean clothes and dry socks, you're hopeless!

I can't wait to see you.

Love, Aura

### **A Miner's Letter**

### **Notes**

Thaddeaus, it's too dangerous to work here. Sure, the money's good, but there's been nothing but trouble since we broke into the ruin—the foreman down the shaft, the scaffold on poor Horace. He'd heard voices calling his name. Then the incident with the stew. An eyeball! Something's not right, Thaddeus.

Oh, and that carbuncle on my neck is back! I swear it's a Tevinter curse. Half the men have left. I'm leaving today with the next lot. We can find work elsewhere. This isn't the only mine in Ferelden.

—Karl

### **The Architect's Notes**

### **Notes**

*(These are scribbles on loose sheets of paper, barely decipherable.)*

-What happens if the Old Gods perish? Does the song die with them?

-The blood is the key. The blood is always the key.

-The female elf is accommodating, allowing me to take her blood for my work. Perhaps she thinks I'll release her if she cooperates.

-My disciples report that another elf is rampaging through the woods, killing humans. Revenge for what we did to her kind, only she hasn't seen through the Seeker's ruse. We'll keep this from Seranni. If she is upset, she may stop cooperating.

-Perhaps I should have killed it while it slept.

### **Orders to the Militia**

### **Notes**

The caravans can't get through the woods and the village is running low on supplies. It's that Dalish clan causing trouble again, I know it. I had my man speak to their "keeper" several months back and she (I think it was a she, you can't tell with these elves) said they'd leave for more remote parts. It looks as though they're back, likely their stupid landships blocking the roads. They're a stubborn race and more than a little dense!

I must trouble you for a favour. Go to the Wending Wood and order them to leave.

--Mayor Grisby

## Letter to Rendon Howe

## Notes

My lord Howe,

Some of the men are not pleased with your plan. They will incite others against you. For the plan to succeed, our forces must be united. If word gets out, if even one of them informs Cousland, it will be your head on a plate. I say this with all due respect, ser.

Your captain,

Lowan

## Response from Rendon Howe

## Notes

Lowan,

We cannot afford an insurrection. Put any troublemakers in chains. Do whatever it takes to weed them out. **Whatever it takes, Lowan.** Do not fail me.

—Arl Rendon Howe

## A Scout's Report

## Notes

The defenses have failed and the golems are lost. The way is clear from the Pillars of Cadash to Kal'Hirol. The darkspawn are three days from Kal'Hirol, four at most.

Prepare the thaig.

## A List of Instructions

## Notes

Irlana, the warriors say we must leave Kal'Hirol for Orzammar. Here are my things to pack.

- 1) I need my gowns. If the trunks can't hold them all, leave the old rose one with the pearl buttons. And perhaps the midnight blue.
- 2) All my jewels. I don't know when we're coming back, so I'd like to have them with me.
- 3) At least a week's worth of food, including ten bottles of wine, ten bottles of ale, and thirty bottles of water from the spring. Orzammar is a dirty city teeming with surfacers and casteless—I dread to drink its foul water.
- 4) The children will need all their toys.
- 5) And their beds! Make sure they bring the beds.
- 6) On a second thought, bring ours as well. And at least three changes of bedclothes. I don't know where they'll house us. I hear Orzammar's Diamond Quarter is smaller than House Hirol's dining room. Ugh, just thinking about it makes me ill.

## A Letter from Leliana

## Notes

Dearest,

I hope you are well. Alas, I am unable to come to the keep as I promised. I am so sorry, but the Grand Cleric herself wishes to speak with me. I will tell you all about it once I have had my audience.

Is it true the darkspawn have not retreated? No matter, I'm sure you have it under control. Wish I could be there, killing darkspawn beside you. Perhaps you could save some for me?

(All right, that was a joke. Do not spare them. That would be silly.)

You are always in my thoughts.

Love, Leliana

P.S. Maybe you could consider growing some roses around your keep? That would make it so much prettier, don't you think?

### **A Letter from Zevran**

### **Notes**

Greetings from Antiva!

I would prefer to be where you are, my sweet. Antiva is so dull without you to brighten it. Even with the Crows trying to hunt me down, this place lacks the excitement of being at your side. Ah, well. I expect the Guildmaster will agree to meet me soon. Or maybe I should kill him! What do you think?

I hear the darkspawn have still not gone away? They are like houseguests who overstay their welcome, no? I am saddened you have to deal with such business without me. I must deal with the Crows, but when I return to you, not even sharp razors will be able to separate us!

Until then, you remain in my dreams. Especially the naughty ones.

Yours always,

Z .

### **Karsten Wilde's Last Testament**

### **Quest-related**

They came to me for help, these three maidens of the Blackmarsh. They were young, beautiful, vital, everything **she** desires. They gave me gold, jewels, and family heirlooms. I imagined their mothers and fathers, uncles and brothers pressing those treasures into their hands, enough to ransom a life promised to their baroness. I agreed to spirit them away from Blackmarsh.

**She** learned of it. She appeared the night before. Her eyes were like flat, dull stones; her hair was stringy and streaked with grey. And I saw why she needed the women.

I hid them in my wagon. The youngest embraced me before she crawled between the bales of hay. She said, "Maker bless and watch over you." I drove them to the crossroads where the baroness's man waited. He took the wagon. Their families never knew.

The witch, as good as her word, brought me a chest of gold. She twirled like a little girl, eyes now sparkling. "You've earned every bit, merchant."

The gold was no comfort. I saw their faces on each sovereign, heard their voices in the tinkling of the coins. I couldn't bear it. I buried it all in the deepest part of the marsh. Still, I found no peace. There will be no peace for me until I stand before the Maker.

—Karsten Wilde

*(Attached is a map to the cache.)*

### **Darran Lyle's Missive**

### **Quest-related**

Elmor, I've found what we've been looking for. Better, even! Stop digging and pack up your gear. I'm heading back to camp. Meet me there. We'll go to Amaranthine, find a buyer, and strike it rich!

Darran Lyle

## Bonnie's Angry Letter

## Quest-related

Corin, is our relationship a joke? Am I a joke to you? What am I supposed to think, waking up to this "love" note:

"Follow my trail of love, my darling,  
You are my hen, the mistress of my flock,  
You nourish my body, and tend to my... rooster."

Really, Corin? I tend to your "rooster?" That's the most disgusting thing I've heard in my entire life. You said there was a surprise waiting for me. I'm supposed to follow your trail? Ugh, I despise you! I abhor you, you petty, ill-made wart!

You said last week that everything would be different for us. Well, you were right! I'm leaving.

With venom and spite,  
Bonnie

## Materials for Working with Dragonbone

## Quest-related

What a lovely specimen! But dragonbone is so very hard. I need a diamond—yes, that will do—and a balm of great strength to keep the sword from burning my hands. The liquid from a fresh dragon's egg will also come in handy, I should think. Shouldn't be a problem for **you**. Oh, and a flame rune—grandmaster caliber. Do hurry!

## Materials for Working with Golem Shells

## Quest-related

What a day! First, I'll need some wool padding. Working with golem shells can chafe, don't you know? Second, a lyrium potion made by a master, to ensure the soul that once inhabited this armor is washed away for good. You wouldn't want that golem coming back, would you? Also some pure iron—pure, mind you. No imperfections at all! And a packet of ground blood lotus. Maybe some soup? No? No.

## Materials for Working with Heartwood

## Quest-related

Those blasted elves didn't write anything down! And the Dalish are positively unfriendly. I could use some oil to make the wood more malleable, some catgut to string the bow or to make a handle for the shield, and a flawless ruby—always handy and certainly pretty. Oh, and I know: a grandmaster lightning rune.

## A Scholar's Journal

## Quest-related

7 Cloudreach: Ordered roast boar at the inn. Love that stuff! I shared the meal with a weary old traveler newly arrived via the Pilgrim's Path. Told me that he stumbled upon an odd structure of stones in the Wending Wood. He showed me a souvenir he brought back, one of the smaller stones. It looked familiar somehow.

9 Cloudreach: I remember where I saw that stone—an old history book in Denerim's chantry! The Tevinters built structures to harness mystical energies. Most have been destroyed, the stones used for construction, yet the traveler claims this one survives.

10 Cloudreach: He was at the inn again and sold me the stone. I'm heading to the Wending Wood as soon as I find a caravan, although people seem wary of the place.

29 Justinian: Finally found a caravan! Nervous lot, though—barely halted to let me out. Found the structure and spent the day studying it. Burned myself on the magical fire several times, but I think I've figured it out. Must make a path of fire that connects all the stones in a single loop. Will attempt after I drive away whatever creature's making that rustling noise.

## **WARDEN'S KEEP**

### **The History of the Drydens**

### **Culture and History**

In the years following the siege of Soldier's Peak, all those who carried the Dryden name were hunted by King Arland's forces. Our noble Dryden name was smeared, and all lands and holdings belonging to the Drydens were seized by the crown. The king feared that the rebellion started by Sophia would be kept alive by her loyal friends and family, and anyone with connections to the Drydens suffered greatly. It is little wonder, then, that the few remaining Drydens found themselves with no allies and nowhere to turn.

Toben Dryden, Sophia's brother and guardian of her young son, had no choice but to flee Ferelden. Toben bought passage to Antiva on a merchant vessel and traveled under the name Derocher. Once in Antiva, Toben set about building a new, quiet life for himself and his nephew. He started a small business and eventually made a name for himself as a trader.

The Derocher merchant family prospered, and the name Dryden was almost forgotten. However, in 8:15 Blessed, Silvie Derocher uncovered old documents belonging to Toben and pieced together the family's history. In her pride, and perhaps in her naivete, Silvie reclaimed the name Dryden and returned to Ferelden.

King Arland lies dead, and the Dryden name lives on. Our family has survived—even thrived—since the death of Sophia Dryden. The nobles of Ferelden may still spit on the Dryden name, but we Drydens know that Sophia Dryden was greater than them, almost a queen, and a hero of the people of Ferelden.

*—From the personal files of Levi Dryden, merchant.*

### **The History of Soldier's Peak: Chapter 1**

### **Culture and History**

The Grey Warden base at Soldier's Peak was built in the middle of the Glory Age, several decades after the second Blight was ended. Before then, Grey Wardens in Ferelden would take up residence in castles and forts that belonged to generous nobles. Warden-Commander Gaspar Asturian desired a fortified headquarters where his forces could train and live. He planned that Soldier's Peak would be a city unto itself. The defeat of the darkspawn and the archdemon Zazikel was fresh in the minds of the Fereldan people, and many were willing to donate gold to build Commander Asturian's fortress.

Soldier's Peak was fully completed within 10 years, and dedicated to the Maker in 2:34 Glory.

*—From The History of Grey Wardens in Ferelden, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **The History of Soldier's Peak: Chapter 2**

### **Culture and History**

As he approached his 60th year, rumors swirled that the corruption in Warden-Commander Asturian's blood was beginning to take its toll. According to reports from that time, the commander experienced terrifying waking dreams and heard his name whispered from the dark corners of Soldier's Peak. It is said that Asturian would spend hours locked up alone in the Great Hall of the base, muttering to himself, though no one was ever able to make out what he was saying. Many also believed that Asturian began, in secret, to draw up plans to expand his fortress, adding to it hidden passages and alcoves, all to protect himself from the shadows that pursued him.



No one knows whether Asturian was able to complete his project, for his deterioration had become obvious to anyone who spent any amount of time with him. He was quickly replaced by Warden-Commander Frida Halwic. Asturian was taken to Orzammar, where he submitted to the Calling, the last rite of the Grey Wardens, and went to his death with honor.

—*From The History of Grey Wardens in Ferelden, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **The History of Soldier's Peak: Chapter 3**

### **Culture and History**

After Asturian's death, the rumors and theories became increasingly outlandish. One of the more ridiculous rumors told of Asturian's infatuation with an elven princess of lore, whom he was trying to resurrect in a secret ritual chamber through the use of blood magic and the princess's favorite food, raspberry jam.

Warden-Commander Frida Halwic launched a thorough investigation into Asturian's "secret plans" but was unable to uncover any evidence that anything in Soldier's Peak had been changed. Commander Halwic declared that the rumors about Asturian were a slight on his memory and that anyone found repeating them would be harshly punished. The stories were thus silenced.

—*From The History of Grey Wardens in Ferelden, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **The History of Soldier's Peak: Chapter 4**

### **Culture and History**

There was one mystery, however, that persisted, and this mystery perplexed even Commander Halwic herself. When Commander Asturian went to his Calling in the Deep Roads, he did not have in his hand his sword, Asturian's Might, forged for him by dwarven smiths and presented to him upon the completion of Soldier's Peak. Nor did he pass the sword on to his successor, or to any other Grey Warden.

While some maintained that Asturian had simply destroyed the sword in his dotage, others believed he had stashed it away somewhere in Soldier's Peak. One young Warden claimed that Asturian had once grabbed him by the shoulders, fixed him with an unwavering gaze and said, "The sword will remind you what it is to be a Warden. Speak your oath to me, when the shadows come. You must speak the words."

What this was supposed to mean was never made clear.

—*From The History of Grey Wardens in Ferelden, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.*

### **Sophia Dryden**

### **Characters**

"Sophia Dryden is Ferelden's light and her most brilliant jewel; nothing on this earth can ever quench her fire."

Arlessa Sophia Dryden was the young Arland's rival for the throne of Ferelden. Dryden was a strong and charismatic leader with much support from the Bannorn. When Arland finally won the crown, Dryden refused to relent. She pushed her claim, was caught, and accused of treason. Her sympathizers continued to support her, however. In order to appease them, Dryden was spared execution, and forced to join the Grey Wardens instead.

Dryden survived the Joining and dazzled the Grey Wardens at Soldier's Peak with her leadership skills and charm. She eventually rose through the ranks to become Warden-Commander of Ferelden. Before Commander Dryden, the Grey Wardens were seen as a relic of an older time and an unnecessary drain on the nobles' coffers. Dryden, though, with her political connections, reinvigorated the Wardens and rapidly increased their numbers.

In the meantime, Arland proved himself a devious king, willing to go to brutal lengths to silence his opponents. Arland's reign of terror grew worse with each passing year, and some of the banns approached Commander Dryden in desperation, begging her to intercede. She agreed, and thus was the rebellion against King Arland born.

Arland learned of the rebellion and took steps to end it. He publicly suspended all tithing to the Grey Wardens and declared they were no longer welcome in Ferelden. Some of the Wardens, mindful that they were supposed to remain politically neutral, felt disgraced by Dryden's involvement in Fereldan politics and left her side even as the king's forces lay siege to Soldier's Peak. The siege took months and ended with the death of Sophia Dryden.

—*From the personal files of Levi Dryden, merchant*

Addendum: King Arland had driven the Grey Wardens from Ferelden, and after the siege of Soldier's Peak, the base was abandoned. When Soldier's Peak was finally entered again for the first time in centuries, it was discovered that Sophia Dryden had been possessed by a demon.

## **Sophia Dryden's Journal**

## **Books and Songs**

21 Eluviesta:

It is done. The nobles have thrown their lot in with Arland—Arland the snot-nosed man-child, Arland who did not walk till he was in his fifth year, Arland who had to be pried off his nursemaid's breast not two years ago. Or so it is whispered. The teyrns and the arls believe him to be a simpleton, and easily led, but I have seen something in the boy's eye and it terrifies me.

10 Moriolis:

I watched the Summerday processions from a room high in Fort Drakon. The regent has me for treason, when my only guilt is of being true to my country and my heart. My guard's tongue was easily loosened with a gift of a ruby ring, and I am told that the banns are fighting against my sentence. I shall pray, but not hope that it will be anything but the gallows for me.

2 Ferventis:

The draught was like bitter fire, but I survived. Weep for me, for I survived. Would that they had made a clean end for me. I should have died a lady, the greatest of the Drydens, not lived to become this nothing—this monstrous nothing!

19 Maternalis:

Enough. I shall waste no more time with wretched, womanish lamentation. Death would have been easy, but fate saw fit to spare me and I will seize upon this chance. The Grey Wardens are an army, and the old commander is weak—a wisp of a man. I will inspire the Wardens, and Arland will rue the day he spared my life.

—*Select entries from the journals of Warden-Commander Sophia Dryden.*

## **A Letter From Bann Mathuin Wulff**

## **Notes**

Sophia,

Arl Ruahn and his entire family have been slaughtered, even the children. The Ruahn line is no more and the arling belongs to the crown, for now. Arland believed Ruahn was plotting against him. Ruahn criticized the king's spending on Wintersend—that is all. It was an idle word, spoken out of turn. The king goes too far. His brain is filled with madness and he clings to the crown like a drowning man clutches at a straw.

Sophia, I beg you, help us. If nothing is done, more will suffer.

Your humble servant,  
—*Wulff*.

### **Avernus's Notes**

### **Notes**

The taint allows us to sense the darkspawn. The longer we survive with the taint in our blood, the more potent it becomes. Unfortunately, this corruption will eventually overwhelm the Warden; over time, it devours both mind and body, leaving nothing. But what if the spread of the corruption could be stopped, or contained in some way? What if the Warden could become more powerful, without having that power kill him? How great would that power be? Would it be enough to stop the demons?

The Joining ritual is crude. We take into ourself the blood of the darkspawn in the most obvious way. Most die from the corruption immediately; it is, after all, poison. There must be some way to refine the Joining. Isolate the true power that is found in darkspawn blood, and leave behind the evil that kills us.

I can feel the corruption starting to take its toll on my body. I must not succumb. There is too much work to be done. Through my magic I've been able to slow its inevitable spread, but not stop it completely. I am starting to hear things, even while awake: A voice—more beautiful than any other—that calls to me from the depths. In my dreams, I see the Black City, and I am drawn towards it. There is something there, an answer to what this taint is, this taint that we share with the darkspawn...

—*From the notes of Avernus.*

### **A Plea from Commander Athlar**

### **Notes**

Soldier's Peak is more than we bargained for. There is sinister magic at work here. The men are seeing things and cannot tell nightmares from reality. The fallen return to life to attack again and again, and we are assaulted by dark creatures the likes of which I have never seen. Whoever is responsible is intent on destroying us all—the king's army and the Grey Wardens both.

Send help! We cannot last much longer.

—*Commander Athlar.*

# **THE STONE PRISONER**

## **Shale**

## **Characters**

"What can I say? I have a heart of stone."

The golems of Orzammar once made up the vanguard of the dwarven army, holding back the tides of darkspawn that flooded out of the Deep Roads. But the art of making them was lost, and many of them succumbed to wear and damage in battle.

Shale has no memories either of the time spent fighting in the Deep Roads, or of coming to Honnleath, only a few spotty (and bitter) recollections of its last master.

The Warden unearthed Shale's control rod and awakened it, adding a bitter, malfunctioning golem to the menagerie of companions.

Three hundred years earlier, she had been Shayle of House Cadash, warrior of King Valtor, and a volunteer who chose to dedicate her life for all time to the defense of Orzammar.

*If the Warden sided with Branka with Shale in the party during "The Anvil of the Void":* Shale was destroyed while fighting the Warden.

## **The Journal of Enchanter Wilhelm**

## **Books and Songs**

13 Pluitanis: The interrogation of the demon is going well, and is rather fascinating—provided that what it is saying is true. I have sent all my research so far to First Enchanter Arden, and while he is concerned about my safety he does not think there is a reason to stop just yet. All I hope is that the templars do not discover what I am doing. How will we ever find another way to deal with demonic possession if the Chantry does not let us research it?

20 Eluviesta: Young Matthias nearly wandered down here again today, and this time I forgot to leave the barrier up. I believe I will key the defenses to ignore anyone of my blood. I would rather have the boy stumble into the laboratory than have him killed by my forgetfulness. Poor lad, all he wants is to know why his father spends so much time beneath the tower. I will spend more time with him soon, I swear it.

28 Eluviesta: Shale is acting strangely. I wonder if I should discontinue my experiments upon it? I am so near a breakthrough, I am certain! Ahhh, perhaps it is best if I focus on the demon.

2 Matrnalis: The demon almost managed to get away again. Tricky. I shall have to be more careful. Young Eamon sent a letter asking me to return to Redcliffe. I shall have to consider it. Soon.

11 Matrnalis: Could it be? What an intriguing discovery, especially considering that the demon was attempting to keep me from it at all costs. Or did it lead me to that information by seeming to deny it from me? I must discover the truth.

19 Umbralia: I think it is time to dismiss this demon. It is too dangerous for me to continue holding it, and I cannot discount the possibility that it is having some influence over the golem. Or is it my experiments? I will try to deactivate Shale for the time being and then deal with the demon once and for all. Let it end here.

(There are no further entries.)

—*From the journal of Enchanter Wilhelm Sulzbacher.*

## **A Note from the Honnleath Village Council**

## **Notes**

Mistress Matilda,

The council has unanimously agreed to put you in charge of the decorations for Honnleath's upcoming harvest festival. We all adored what you did with the village for the winter solstice. As usual, the statue must be adorned with items that capture the essence of the season. Iris kindly offered the use of her wide-brimmed straw hat with the berries and daisies and would love to see it on the statue. Farmer Goodman will also donate some of his baby pumpkins. We think a garland of small pumpkins and ribbons draped about the statue's shoulders would be lovely.

Whatever you decide will be splendid, I'm sure, and we are all looking forward to it.

—*Councilman Murray*

## **A Decades-Old Letter**

## **Notes**

Madam,

I can assure you that the Circle of Magi is not a sacrilegious institution and that, indeed, we operate under the supervision of the Chantry. It would make our investigation of your husband's death much easier if you would simply co-operate with us. I am disappointed to hear that you sold the golem's activation rod—I understand both it and your husband were of invaluable aid to King Maric during the war against Orlais. Without the rod, we cannot discern whether Wilhelm's golem was responsible for his murder. The golem will simply have to remain where it is unless the villagers can find a means to destroy it. Our condolences to you and your son for your loss. I imagine it is of little consolation to you, but your husband is much admired here and will be missed.

Maker keep you.

—*First Enchanter Arlen*

## **RETURN TO OSTAGAR**

### **Cailan's Documents - Page 1 of 3**

### **Notes**

To his Majesty, King Cailan of Ferelden:

My Warden-Commander assures me that we face a Blight. This thing threatens us both, and we must work together to fight it, lest it devour all. Our two nations have not had a happy history, but that is all it is—history. It is the future that is at stake now. Let us put aside our fathers' disagreements so that we may secure the future for both our countries.

My chevaliers stand ready and will accompany the Grey Wardens of Orlais to Ferelden. At your word the might of Orlais will march to reinforce the Ferelden forces.

Sincerely,  
Empress Celene I

*—An official letter from Empress Celene I of Orlais to King Cailan of Ferelden.*

### **Cailan's Documents - Page 2 of 3**

### **Notes**

Your Majesty,

My men will arrive as soon as possible to bolster your forces. Maker willing, this Blight will be ended before it has begun.

Cailan, I beseech you, as your uncle, not to join the Grey Wardens on the Field. You cannot afford to take this risk. Ferelden cannot afford it. Let me remind you again that you do not have an heir. Your death—and it pains me even to think of it—would plunge Ferelden into chaos.

And yes, perhaps when this is over you will allow me to bring up the subject of your heir. While a son from both the Theirin and Mac Tir lines would unite Ferelden like no other, we must accept that perhaps this can never be. The queen approaches her thirtieth year and her ability to give you a child lessens with each passing month. I submit to you again that it might be time to put Anora aside. We parted harshly the last time I spoke of this, but it has been a full year since then and nothing has changed.

Please, nephew, consider my words, and Andraste's grace be with you.

*—A letter from Arl Eamon to King Cailan*

### **Cailan's Documents - Page 3 of 3**

### **Notes**

(This letter appears to have been crumpled, then carefully smoothed out and folded again)

Cailan,

The visit to Ferelden will be postponed indefinitely, due to the darkspawn problem. You understand, of course?

The darkspawn have odd timing, don't they? Let us deal with them first. Once that is done, we can further discuss a permanent alliance between Orlais and Ferelden.

*—A note, written in an uncharacteristically familiar tone, from Empress Celene to King Cailan*

# **DARKSPAWN CHRONICLES**

## **Oghren**

## **Characters**

Oghren was a decorated and highly respected warrior of the Dwarven city of Orzammar—until his wife, the Paragon Branka, made him into a cuckold. Oghren turned to drink, then accidentally killed a young noble while intoxicated. After the dwarves stripped Oghren of his pride and weapons, he left for the surface. He settled in at the Gnawed Noble Tavern in Denerim, ranting about his glory days to anyone who would listen.

## **People of Ferelden**

## **Characters**

### **Ser Cauthrien**

Ser Cauthrien was Teyrn Loghain Mac Tir's trusted second-in-command. She was always suspicious of Alistair, but put aside her dislike to support his battle against the Blight.

### **Bann Ceorlic**

Bann Ceorlic was one of many nobles who came to Denerim for the Landsmeet, where he agreed with just about everything that Teyrn Loghain said.

### **Cullen**

Cullen was one of many templars sent to defend Denerim from the darkspawn attack. His colleagues often whispered that he was mentally unstable.

### **Goldanna**

Goldanna was a washer-woman who lived in Denerim. Alistair believed that she was his half-sister. She smelled of sour milk and cabbage.

### **Gorim**

Gorim was once a second to a prince of House Aeducan. When the prince was framed for fratricide, Gorim was exiled to the surface, where he made a living as a merchant in Denerim.

### **Knight-Commander Greagoir**

Knight-Commander Greagoir was the leader of the templars who watch over Ferelden's Circle of Magi. When the darkspawn assaulted Denerim, he brought many of his forces to the city's defence.

### **Habren**

Habren was the spoiled daughter of Arl Bryland of South Reach. She enjoyed spending her father's coin and once became bored with a dozen separate puppies in a three-month period.

### **Herren**

Herren was the partner of Master Wade, Denerim's most famous armorer. Herren managed the finances and day-to-day operations of their shop. He and Master Wade escaped the massacre in the Denerim market under mysterious circumstances.

### **Arl Rendon Howe**

Rendon Howe was the hereditary arl of Amaranthine, known as a cagey ally to Teyrn Loghain. Dark rumors suggest he was behind the destruction of Castle Highever and the annihilation of the Cousland line.

### **Kardol**

Kardol was an experienced member of the Legion of the Dead. He met Alistair in the Deep Roads and promised to fight the darkspawn along with him.

### **Sergeant Kylon**

Sergeant Kylon was a member of Denerim's guard tasked with maintaining order in the market. Because his superiors did not think the post important, they sent Kylon a progression of ever-more-incompetent new recruits, usually the bastard sons of minor lords.

### **Ser Landry**

Ser Landry was a knight in the service of King Cailan. He believed that the Grey Wardens were to blame for the king's death, and once challenged Alistair to a duel. He lost and was humiliated.

### **Mother Perpetua**

Perpetua was the revered mother of the Denerim Chantry. She filled her days arguing with Sister Theohild over interpretation of the Chant.

### **Ser Perth**

Ser Perth was a knight in the service of Arl Eamon of Redcliffe. He was sent on a quest for the legendary Urn of Sacred Ashes, but found no success.

### **Riordan**

Riordan was a Grey Warden from Orlais. While on a diplomatic mission, he was arrested by Teyrn Loghain, and held in the dungeons of the arl of Denerim's palace. Alistair freed him, temporarily doubling the number of living Wardens in Ferelden.

### **Sanga**

Sanga was the proprietress of The Pearl, a brothel in Denerim. Her establishment was renowned for the variety of temptations it offered.

### **Bann Teagan**

Teagan Guerrin, the bann of Rainesfere, was the younger brother of Arl Eamon Guerrin. When Arl Eamon was incapacitated by poison, Teagan took over his duties.

### **Sister Theohild**

Theohild was a priest in Denerim's chantry. She liked nothing more than to argue with Mother Perpetua over interpretations of the Chant.

### **Valendrian**

Valendrian was the keeper of the elven alienage in Denerim, with years of experience in speaking up to defend his people when human guards came to threaten them.

### **Vaughan**

Vaughan Kendells was the son of the late Arl Urien Kendells and the rightful arl of Denerim. He was captured by Arl Rendon Howe and left to rot in the dungeons of the arl of Denerim's estate. When Alistair broke into the estate to rescue Riordan, an Orlesian Grey Warden, he also released Vaughan.

### **Master Wade**

Wade was a master blacksmith who ran a shop in Denerim with the assistance of his partner, Herren. He and Herren escaped the massacre in the Denerim market under mysterious circumstances.



## **LELIANA'S SONG**

### **Raiding the Collective**

*I remember...*

The note from the Mages' Collective had said there were clues around the market that would point to a hidden cache. At the time, I didn't care that someone had earned that money, or that someone else had scrounged to collect it. Finding the clues would be adventure—distraction. I even looked forward to the inevitable guard. By the signature, Severin was the poor fellow's name.

### **The Orlesian Game of Intrigue**

*I remember...*

Marjolaine had given me clippings from a Fereldan book. A social dissection of Orlais, or some such:

*"Orlais presents a veneer of opulence, but the aristocracy are committed to a system of social one-upmanship they call the game. Sprawling receptions delight friend and foe, while bards strike from shadow with insinuation, larceny, and assassination, often to the strange delight of their targets. Control of these auteur agents is yet another layer of the game."*

"Auteur agent" I liked. The rest could not be more dry. Fereldans truly did not understand my world. And that, of course, was Marjolaine's intent. I had arranged my favorite associates and followed her to Denerim not for the promise of money, but for the excitement of toying with fools. I was her creature.

### **The Arl's Estate**

*I remember...*

Like many of Marjolaine's little surprises, I was more excited than afraid. The arl's estate was the typical posturing of a fortress in peacetime, its ramparts meant to appease nobility, not defend soldiers. It may have been fearsome long before, but at that moment, it was just another prize I longed to humble for Marjolaine. I would come to learn that in the arl's absence, the estate had been left in far more troubling hands.

### **The Hard Line**

*I remember...*

The soldiers called their group the Hard Line, and it was not unearned. They were freeholders sworn to one Harwen Raleigh, a noble who had distinguished himself during the Orlais-Ferelden conflict. But they ended the war in disgrace, and their patron was even denied the return of his title and land. I knew nothing of this at the time. I would come to regret it later.

### **War Journal, Revised**

*I remember...*

Had my younger self cared, I'd have seen that early in the war journal the Hard Line were highly praised, but after their patron's land was lost, they were censured by King Maric directly for brutal treatment of prisoners. Their patron being Harwen Raleigh, whose latest request to forcibly retrieve his territory had been denied. But they were distant problems, and not mine to worry about.

## **Harwen Raleigh's Personal Journal**

*I remember...*

The personal journal of Commander Raleigh was a horrible insight. He boasted of cruelty far beyond the public accounting. He pined for an excuse to attack Orlais, to take back his lost land. It was easy to imagine how clinging to such hatred would poison a man. But I could not know how this stranger's private war would collide with my love for Marjolaine.

## **Marjolaine**

*I remember...*

Marjolaine commanded fear, respect, and a high price. She was the Orlesian aristocracy's answer when the next step in a rivalry was to end it. And she was everything I wanted to be. She never spoke of herself, never gave hints of who she was away from the game, but she always seemed to know how to captivate us. She was a mentor, not a leader. She suggested, and others grew wealthy in her shadow.

At the time I only casually noted that Marjolaine's satchel held just the bare essentials for travel. It was barren of anything even remotely sentimental.

## **Sketch**

*I remember...*

I met Sketch in Val Royeaux, but he had spent so much of his life hiding among immigrants and smugglers he lacked the connection, resentment, and even accent of other city elves. His primary concerns were persecution as a mage, not an elf. He was not the bardic type, but I suppose the game was more forgiving than the templars.

I remember his books. Not unexpected for a mage, but most were mere distraction—the thinnest pulp of history. The only proper "mage tome" was a volume of *Philosophy and Ethics Regarding the Manipulation of Summoned Creatures*, which he owned because it was large. He was slowly covering every page with little preoccupied scribbles, as though the text wasn't even there.

## **Tug**

*I remember...*

Tug. Tug was a dwarf with few words for strangers, and choice words for friends. He was a strange fit in Orlais, but he never offered a reason for why he left his home. I had accepted his company and friendship knowing he would share what he wanted in his own good time.

He laughed when I first asked about the silk kerchiefs. We'd be in some noble's vault pocketing gems, and Tug would be rummaging the linens. They were his practical luxury, because "one can never be sure of toiletries while traveling." He once said, far too loudly, that he'd spoiled himself and "lost his callus," but I suspect that may have been for Sketch's blanching reaction.

## An Introduction

*I remember...*

A statue of Andraste. There were many, in both Orlais and Ferelden, but I had never held still long enough to really see one. The Chant of Light would have put my younger self to sleep, but the beauty and strength of that figure offered strange comfort. I was too foolish for revelation, but doubt would bring me back, and there would be no shortage of that.

## Silas

*I remember...*

Silas Corthwaite was an odd one. He eagerly fell back into the role of soldier. At the time I assumed he wanted revenge. I would come to see that he was trying to be the example that Raleigh had spoiled. I'm not sure Silas even realized he was doing it. Eventually I would feel a sad kinship—Marjolaine had offended my profession in a similar way.

Silas had been stripped of everything, so he had nothing personal to show his nature. But there was something about the way he looked at the trappings of the Chantry, especially the candles. He was a stranger there, like me, but as a Fereldan, he was not so far from home. It was important that everything be "just right," not because he believed, but because **someone** believed. I found that charming.

# **THE GOLEMS OF AMGARRAK**

## **A Bronto Named Snug**

## **Creatures**

Years ago, Jerrik saved a young, injured bronto from the darkspawn. The bronto took to Jerrik immediately and refused to leave his side. It even started sleeping under Jerrik's bed, even though the space was far too snug for him. Jerrik started calling the bronto "Snug," and the name stuck. Snug is extremely protective of Jerrik and will defend him to the death.

## **The Harvester**

## **Creatures**

The Harvester is the product of a misguided attempt to recreate Paragon Caridin's research to build golems for Orzammar. The researchers used the flesh of casteless dwarves as a cheap alternative to stone or steel. Fade spirits were bound to dead flesh, animating it. The creature turned out to be uncontrollable, resulting in the death of the research team.

The Harvester appears to be a twisted construct of rotting, flailing limbs with a disproportionately large head. It is able to attach itself to, and control, larger constructs of flesh.

## **Protector Golem**

## **Creatures**

Golem has chain lightning and cleansing aura (heals slowly while active and removes injuries when cast).

Heals everybody.

Golem makes your weapons do fire damage.

Big electric storm.

Party member revived.

Generic buff to stats.

Generic buff to stats.

## **Jerrik Dace**

## **Characters**

Jerrik Dace is a noble from House Dace and a distant cousin of Lord Anwer Dace. He was unable to go on the Amgarrak expedition and now feels responsible for his brother going missing with the rest of the men. However, he does not believe his brother, Brogan, is dead and has enlisted the help of the Grey Warden to find him.

## **The Warden-Commander of Ferelden**

## **Characters**

*This codex entry is only for the Orlesian Warden-Commander:*

Eager to find new allies on this hostile soil, your seneschal has urged you to help one of the powerful noble families of Orzammar: the Daces. Jerrik Dace has sent a missive to Vigil's Keep requesting your assistance in a sensitive matter.

## **Darion's Journal**

## **Books and Songs**

A page ripped from a journal

"... We learned of an old laboratory called Amgararak, where a man of Orzammar and a mage of Tevinter were attempting to recreate Caridin's work. Amgararak was mentioned in Branka's notes, although why she did not pursue it is a mystery."

"They used not stone or metal, but flesh. Flesh of the dying, the diseased, the casteless. We found evidence of this — a putrefying construct of meat and bone. It looked awkward and headless, and the stench was unbearable."

"The switches divert the lyrium streams, causing unpredictable effects. Sometimes it even alters the environment, changing it to look — even feel — different. It must be magic, but our understanding of such things is limited."

"There is something in here with us."

"They called it the Harvester. They knew it was a terrible mistake and used magic to trap it within these tunnels. Our foolish greed led us here, and now we are trapped along with it. Our only hope of escape is to destroy everything: the creature, the research, the magic that sustains this place. They are all tied together. I must get to the forge, but it is locked. Only a specific combination of switches will work. I must think more on this."

"It found a body — rotting flesh harvested from the dead. It ripped them all apart and used them.

Pelted with heads of friends, tripped in their entrails... Ran. Still alive. Only one alive."

"I can still hear it out there. It knows I'm here. I cannot get back to the forge.

I found a golem control rod. The golems are keeping it away for now. There's a shaft of light here. I can see my escape but I cannot reach it. The ground is too damp, the rocks too slick.

I could go out there and make it quick, or... stay here. Death is certain, either way."

## **Ancient Writings**

## **Notes**

### **A note scribbled on old, moldy parchment**

"Very little remains of Caridin's writings. The memories say the Paragon destroyed much of his own research. What madness would drive him to do such a thing? King Valtor preserved what he could; thanks to him we have something to work from. Nereda, my mage colleague, believes lyrium is the key."

### **A note scribbled on old, moldy parchment**

"I have ordered more iron from the Miner's Guild. The shaft-rats will deny this request, citing our "waste" of good iron, but I've prepared for this eventuality. I've come up with an alternative: the casteless. No-one will miss them, and it's far better for them to die in the service of this great experiment than to continue living their worthless lives. Nereda seems reluctant, but she is from the surface and doesn't understand. No matter, she wants the research to continue as much as I do, and will eventually come around."

### **A note scribbled on old, moldy parchment**

"A breakthrough! Nereda bound a Fade spirit to a construct of flesh and bone, and it moved! We'll have something concrete to show to the nobles and the Shaperate, once we put it back together. Someone must have overlooked a missing seam. When the construct came alive, the head tore itself from the body, and... scrambled off. Nereda says it's nothing to worry about. She's out looking for it now. In fact, that scratching at my door is probably her."

## **Seneschal Garevel's Missive**

## **Notes**

"Warden-Commander,

We recently received a message from one Jerrik Dace of Orzammarr. He requires your aid locating an expedition lost in a place called "Amgararak," somewhere in the Deep Roads. I have enclosed the letter.

Your faithful servant, Seneschal Garevel"

# WITCH HUNT

## **The Varterral**

## **Creatures**

According to Ariane, the elven gods created varterrals to guard the elves and their most treasured artifacts. They are so rare that even the Dalish believe they are only legends.

The one you encountered was especially vicious, attacking even Ariane—one of the people it was created to protect. Why, exactly, is anyone's guess.

## **Letters from the Past**

## **Culture and History**

Commander Regnar of House Cadash,

You were wise to send the relic you uncovered. The Shaperate has compared the carvings on it to various records, and believe them to be of elven origin, possibly thousands of years old. I would advise that you cease repair work on the warrior training grounds immediately and continue investigation. A team will be dispatched from Kal-Sharok as soon as possible.

—*Shaper Warrek*

The excavations are going well. I think Shaper Warrek secretly hopes that the artifacts will lead him to the lost city of Arlathan, despite Tevinter records that insist on its complete obliteration. Even if he found the site of the city, there would be little remaining of any worth. As for the artifacts, they must have come to this area by trade. Cadash Thaig is old, built upon an ancient settlement called Cad'halash. Lots of junk can accumulate over that much time, even elven junk.

—*From Shaper Assistant Shalla's journal*

Dyer,

Got the carvings. These two depict elves forming an alliance with the Cad'halash dwarves, after the destruction of Arlathan. Scholars say it's proof that they took refuge here to escape the Imperium. Should get a great price for this from collectors and historians.

And I almost got caught running these things to your man. They'll hang me if they find out. I want a bigger cut—fifty or we're done.

—*A letter from an excavation worker*

We thought the Imperium found the elves hidden in Cad'halash, and destroyed them, but it doesn't add up. The thaig was destroyed with conventional dwarven weaponry, not magical forces. No supernatural means melted the stone and no immense forces pulverized the pillars.

We uncovered shields (among other things) bearing the heraldry of old Kal-Sharok houses. We destroyed Cad'halash—our own people. The only remaining conclusion is that Kal-Sharok learned that they were sheltering elves and, knowing it would jeopardize their alliance with the Tevinter Imperium, took steps to cover it up.

Thus far, there has been no evidence to contradict this theory, but it has split the Shaperate. Some wish to enter it into the Memories, while others demand that it lies forgotten in the dark halls of the Roads.

—*From the notes of Shaper Warrek*

## **The Mabari Hound**

## **Characters**

*If it's the Warden, or the Warden-Commander:* He has returned to your side after some time spent in the kennels in Denerim. Ferelden lost many of its war dogs during the Blight and kennel masters selected your prized hound to strengthen their packs. He has been mated with female hounds from all over Ferelden and has sired several litters of puppies.

*If the Warden never got a mabari in Origins:* After your defeat of the archdemon, Teyrn Fergus Cousland of Highever presented you with a prized, purebred mabari hound. He has joined you on your hunt for Morrigan.

*If it's the Orlesian Warden-Commander:* After you were appointed as Warden-Commander of Ferelden, Teyrn Fergus Cousland of Highever presented you with a prized, purebred mabari hound. He has joined you on your hunt for Morrigan.

## **Flemeth's Demise**

## **Characters**

*This codex entry may only appear if the Warden has killed Flemeth...*

Flemeth saved you during the first stages of the Blight, and her daughter Morrigan helped nurse you and Alistair back to health. Morrigan later revealed that Flemeth was an abomination who has sacrificed her daughters to preserve her own unnatural life.

You agreed to confront Flemeth before she could sacrifice Morrigan and found the enigmatic old crone at her hut in the Wilds. After a short exchange, she shapeshifted into a high dragon, and with difficulty, you killed her.

So much about Flemeth remains a mystery. Standing in front of her deserted home in the marsh sent a shiver up your spine—like someone walking over a grave.

## **The Grey Warden**

## **Characters**

*This codex entry is only for the Orlesian Warden-Commander...*

Weissaupt has provided little direct assistance but has recently promised more aid if you complete one small task.

During the last Blight, the hero of Ferelden worked with a purported witch of the Korcari Wilds: Morrigan. The role she and her mother, Flemeth, played in the Blight has caused a great deal of concern to the First Warden. Although scarce on details, the First Warden is offering considerable support if you find Morrigan and acquire some information. What information you need to attain though, is frustratingly vague.

After you sent scouts to track down Morrigan, you discovered that you are not alone in looking for her. The templars believe that she is a dangerous blood mage and are offering a high price for her elimination, and the Crown has soldiers looking for her in southern Ferelden. Morrigan has ignited controversy in your ranks, too. Some believe she should be found and killed (such as your seneschal, Garevel), while others believe she should be spared if she cooperates and answers some questions.

Your scouts recently uncovered the location of Flemeth's Hut and report unusual activity in the area.

## **Random Recipes**

## **Notes**

### **Ellie's Exploding Elixirs**

A good explosion will always spice things up. This volume of knowledge showed you recipes to make dispel grenades, elemental grenades, and soulrot bombs.



### **Franny's Recipes**

This wise herbalist's collection of information showed you recipes for making superb health poultices and potent lyrium potions.

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# **MAIN GAME**

## **CREATURES**

### **Abomination**

**Same as in DAO**

"We arrived in the dead of night. We had been tracking the maleficar for days, and finally had him cornered... or so we thought.

As we approached, a home on the edge of the town exploded, sending splinters of wood and fist-sized chunks of rocks into our ranks. We had but moments to regroup before fire rained from the sky, the sounds of destruction wrapped in a hideous laughter from the center of the village.

There, perched atop the spire of the village chantry, stood the mage. But he was human no longer.

We shouted prayers to the Maker and deflected what magic we could, but as we fought, the creature fought harder. I saw my comrades fall, burned by the flaming sky or crushed by debris. The monstrous creature, looking as if a demon were wearing a man like a twisted suit of skin, spotted me and grinned. We had forced it to this, I realized; the mage had made this pact, given himself over to the demon to survive our assault."

*—Transcribed from a tale told by a former templar in Cumberland, 8:84 Blessed.*

It is known that mages are able to walk the Fade while completely aware of their surroundings, unlike most others who may only enter the realm as dreamers and leave it scarcely aware of their experience. Demons are drawn to mages, though whether it is because of this awareness or simply by virtue of their magical power in our world is unknown.

Regardless of the reason, a demon always attempts to possess a mage when it encounters one—by force or by making some kind of deal depending on the strength of the mage. Should the demon get the upper hand, the result is an unholy union known as an abomination. Abominations have been responsible for some of the worst cataclysms in history, and the notion that some mage in a remote tower could turn into such a creature unbeknownst to any was the driving force behind the creation of the Circle of Magi.

Thankfully, abominations are rare. The Circle has methods for weeding out those who are too at risk for demonic possession, and scant few mages would give up their free will to submit to such a bond with a demon. But once an abomination is created, it will do its best to create more. Considering that entire squads of templars have been known to fall at the hands of a single abomination, it is not surprising that the Chantry takes the business of the Circle of Magi very seriously indeed.

## Arcane Horror

Same as in DAO

"Upon ascending to the second floor of the tower, we were greeted by a gruesome sight: a ragged collection of bones wearing the robes of one of the senior enchanter. I had known her for years, watched her raise countless apprentices, and now she was a mere puppet for some demon."

*--Transcribed from a tale told by a templar in Antiva City, 7:13 Storm*

Demons, of course, have no form in our world. When they enter, either where the Veil is particularly thin or through blood magic summoning, they must take possession of a body.

When a pride demon takes control of the corpse of a mage, an arcane horror is born. Although they appear to be little more than bones, these are fierce creatures, possessing not only all the spellcasting abilities of a living mage, but also the capacity to heal and even command other animated corpses.

## Corpse

Same as in DAO

"To anyone who doubts the wickedness of blood magic, I say: With your own hands, strike down the corpses of your own brothers who have fallen in battle to a maleficar, then we may discuss morality."

*--Knight-Commander Benedictus, in a letter to the Divine, 5:46 Exalted.*

The walking dead are not, as superstition would lead you to believe, the living come back for revenge. They are, rather, corpses possessed by demons.

The shambling corpse, controlled by a demon of sloth, causes its enemies to become weak and fatigued. Corpses possessed by rage demons go berserk and simply wade into their opponents mindlessly. Devouring corpses are held by hunger demons and feed upon the living. The more powerful demons rarely deign to possess a dead host.

## Desire Demon

Same as in DAO

"In all my studies, I must say that the most intriguing was my interview with the desire demon. That the creature was willing to speak with me was a sign that this was no mere monster, mindlessly driven by its nature, but rather a rational being as interested in me as I was in it. It took a form that I would call female, though I had no doubt that it could appear otherwise. I wondered if it appeared as it did because I wanted it to or because I expected it to. She... and, indeed, I could only think of her as such now... smiled warmly at me and laughed a musical sound that seemed to thrill my old heart.

So frightened was I of this creature's legendary abilities to twist the hearts of men, and so relieved was I when I looked across the table into her dark eyes. This was a fearsome creature of the Fade, but as I spoke with her I slowly came to realize that this demon was merely as misunderstood as we mages are, ourselves."

*--From the journal of former Senior Enchanter Maleus, once of the Circle of Rivain, declared apostate in 9:20 Dragon.*

Of all the threats from beyond the Veil, few are more insidious and deceptively deadly than the desire demon. In folklore, such demons are characterized as peddlers of lust, luring their prey into a sexual encounter only to be slain at the culmination. While a desire demon can indeed deal in pleasure, in truth they deal with any manner of desire that humans can possess: wealth, power, and beauty, to name a few.



Far more intelligent than the bestial hunger and rage demons, and more ambitious than the demons of sloth, these dark spirits are among the most skilled at tempting mages into possession. Many who serve the whims of a desire demon never realize it. They are manipulated by illusions and deceit if not outright mind control, although these demons are reluctant to resort to such crude measures. Instead, they seem to take great pleasure in corruption. The greater the deceit, the greater their victory.

Only demons of pride prove more fearsome opponents when roused. Their abilities to affect the mind allow them to assume disguises and even alter the environment to their purposes, not to mention the great strength and speed they possess if they should have to resort to more physical means. Most often a desire demon will attempt to bargain its way to freedom if overpowered—many stories exist that depict mages defeating desire demons to the point where a wish can be wrested from them. It should be noted that in such stories the demon almost always gets the upper hand even when the mage thinks his wish has been granted.

## **Dragon**

**Same as in DAO**

### **Dragonlings**

Newly-hatched dragons are roughly the size of a deer and voraciously hungry. They live for a short time in their mother's lair before venturing out on their own. The slender, wingless creatures are born in vast numbers, as only a few ever make it to adulthood.

### **Drakes**

Male dragons never develop into the winged monsters of myth. At most, their forelegs grow vestigial spurs where wing membrane might have been.

Once they have fully matured, males immediately seek out the lairs of adult females. When they find one, they move into her lair and spend the rest of their lives there, hunting for her and defending her young. They will aggressively defend her nest, and many would-be dragon hunters have been lost to their fiery breath and crushing blows from their tails.

### **Dragons**

Female dragons take much longer to mature than their male counterparts. They too undergo a metamorphosis of sorts at adulthood; But while males lose the use of their forepaws, females actually grow a third set of limbs specifically to serve as wings.

Young females travel great distances looking for a suitable nesting site. Because of their nomadic habits, these are the dragons most frequently encountered by man.

### **High Dragon**

A fully mature adult female dragon is the high dragon: the great monster of legend, the rarest of all dragonkind. These dragons hollow out massive lairs for themselves, for they need the space to house their harem of drakes as well as their eggs and the dragonlings.

High dragons are seldom seen. They spend most of their time sleeping and mating, living off the prey their drakes bring back. But once every hundred years or so, the high dragon prepares for clutching by emerging from her lair and taking wing. She will fly far and wide, eating hundreds of animals, most often livestock, over a course of a few weeks and leaving smoldering devastation in her wake. She then returns to her lair to lay her eggs and will not appear in the skies again for another century.

## **Golem**

**Same as in DAO**

Once a crucial part of Orzammar's defenses, golems have all but vanished as the secret to their manufacture was lost over a thousand years ago. What few golems remain are guarded closely by the Shaperate, brought out when the battle with the darkspawn grows desperate enough to risk their loss. No one now would sell a golem for any price, but in ancient times, dwarves sold many golems to the magister lords of Tevinter.

They are devastating weapons in war, living siege engines, capable of hurling boulders like a catapult or plowing through enemy lines like an earthquake.

## **Hurlock**

**Same as in DAO**

Taller than their genlock cousins, the hurlocks are roughly of human-size but are possessed of considerable strength and constitution. The shock troop of the darkspawn, a single berserking hurlock can often be a match for numerous opponents at once. They are known to adorn themselves with roughly-carved tattoos to keep track of their kills and deeds, though it is unknown whether or not there is a uniform standard to these markings.

### **Alphas**

Alpha hurlocks are more intelligent and more skilled fighters, often serving as commanders or even generals.

### **Emissaries**

Hurlock emissaries have also been known to appear during a Blight. These darkspawn are the only ones recorded as being capable of human speech and are often capable of employing magic.

## **Mabari War Hound**

**Same as in DAO**

Dogs are an essential part of Fereldan culture, and no dog is more prized than the mabari. The breed is as old as myth, said to have been bred from the wolves who served Dane. Prized for their intelligence and loyalty, these dogs are more than mere weapons or status symbols: The hounds choose their masters, and pair with them for life. To be the master of a mabari anywhere in Ferelden is to be recognized instantly as a person of worth.

The mabari are an essential part of Fereldan military strategy. Trained hounds can easily pull knights from horseback or break lines of pikemen, and the sight and sound of a wave of war dogs, howling and snarling, has been known to cause panic among even the most hardened infantry soldiers.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History* by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **Ogre**

**Same as in DAO**

Towering over their darkspawn kin, the massive ogres are a rare sight on the battlefield. Traditionally, they only appear during a Blight, but some records claim that ogres have been spotted in the Deep Roads hunting alone or in small groups. At least one report by the Grey Wardens claims that an ogre was spotted alone in the Korcari Wilds in 9:19 Dragon, though it was weakened and easily dispatched. Up to a hundred of these creatures can accompany a darkspawn horde at any one time during a Blight, often using their great strength to burst through fortifications and demolish the front lines of the opposing army.

They use brute force to charge their enemies like bulls, slam the ground with their fists to shake enemies off their feet, and hurl great rocks into the face of oncoming foes. Melee can be difficult against a giant that snatches a warrior up in one hand, crushing the life out of him or beating him into oblivion with the other hand. The nimble can try to wiggle his way free, or an ally can attempt an array of stunning blows on an ogre to free the comrade in danger.

Grey Warden lore urges caution when slaying an ogre. Unless it is ensured that they have received a major wound to the head or the heart, it is possible that they are lying dormant and will regenerate to full health within a matter of minutes. During a Blight, most Grey Wardens recommend burning all darkspawn to ashes... "dead" ogres in particular.

## **Pride Demon**

**Same as in DAO**

You may scoff and say that our talents exist only to face mages, but you will encounter demons often. They will be summoned by a maleficar and bound to do his bidding, and while at times they will be forced into the possession of a host, they will also face you in their true form... a powerful opponent indeed. Do not underestimate it.

Pride is powerful, and intelligent. When we have encountered one in its true form, its most common attacks are bolts of fire and ice. Fire they will use to burn an opponent, and the magical flame will combust anything you wear regardless of make. Ice they will use to freeze an opponent in place—be cautious, for they enjoy employing this against warriors in particular. More than one group of templars has made the mistake of attempting to overwhelm a pride demon and suffered the consequences, believe me. And if you think that having the aid of other mages will assist you, you are wrong. Pride demons can render themselves immune to magic for short times, and are adept at dispelling magic that is cast upon you... as much as we templars are able to disrupt spells.

Think on that for a moment, my friends. Be wary of how prideful you become, lest you find too much in common with such a fiend."

*--Transcript of a lecture given by Vheren, templar-commander of Tantervale, 6:86 Steel*

## **The Profane**

We who are forgotten, remember,  
We clawed at rock until our fingers bled,  
We cried out for justice, but were unheard.  
Our children wept in hunger,  
And so we feasted upon the gods.  
Here we wait, in aeons of silence.  
We few, we profane.

*—Found scrawled on a wall in the lost Revann Thaig by explorer Faruma Helmi, 5:10 Exalted.  
Unknown author.*

## **Rage Demon**

**Same as in DAO**

Encountered in the Fade, the true form of a rage demon is a frightening sight: a thing of pure fire, its body seemingly made of amorphous lava and its eyes two pinpricks of baleful light radiating from its core. The abilities of such a demon center on the fire it generates. It burns those who come near, and the most powerful of its kind are able to lash out with bolts of fire and even firestorms that can affect entire areas.

Fortunately, even powerful rage demons are less intelligent than most other varieties. Their tactics are simple: attack an enemy on sight with as much force as possible until it perishes. Some rage demons carry over their heat-based abilities into possessed hosts, but otherwise the true form is mostly seen outside of the Fade when it's specifically summoned by a mage to do his bidding.

*-Transcript of a lecture given by Vheren, Templar-Commander of Tantervale, 6:86 Steel*

## Revenant

Same as in DAO

An entire unit of men, all slain by one creature. I didn't believe it at first, your Perfection, but it appears that this is so. We have a survivor, and while at first I thought his rantings pure exaggeration... it appears to be no simple skeleton. The descriptions of the creature's abilities were eerily similar to those our brothers at Marnas Pell encountered almost a century ago: men pulled through the air to skewer themselves on the creature's blade, and attacks so quick that it was able to assault multiple opponents at once. No, your Perfection, what we have here is indeed a revenant and nothing less.

*—From a letter to Divine Amara III, 5:71 Exalted.*

A revenant is a corpse possessed by a demon of pride or of desire... making it amongst the most powerful possessed opponents that one can face. Many possess spells, but most are armed and armored and prefer the use of their martial talents. They are weak against physical attacks but regenerate quickly, and commonly use telekinesis to pull opponents into melee range should they try to flee. Revenants also have the ability to strike multiple opponents surrounding them. Stay at range if possible and strike quickly—that is the only way to take such a creature down.

## Rock Wraith

Twenty years in the Legion of the Dead. I've seen spiders larger than a bronto, broodmothers lounging in putrescence surrounded by their corrupted children, and unnamed things with flesh turned against itself. But worse, by far, was in an old mine shaft down from Heidrun Thaig.

We chased an emissary down there to a tunnel dead-ended in rubble. It was a vicious fight. He picked my men off until only four of us were left. When it seemed like we'd finally fulfill our oaths, our fight woke something long dormant.

What I thought was rubble gathered beneath my feet, taking a terrible form: a beast of stone surrounding the shattered skeleton of a man. A rock wraith. The spirit of a dwarf so foul the Stone itself rejected him. One swing of its boulder-hand crushed the emissary, and then it turned its eyeless skull toward us. We fled back up the tunnel, its heavy footsteps thundering at our backs.

When we reached the thaig, we finally turned, knowing that out in the open, we had no cover and couldn't hope to outrun the wraith. But when it came to the exit, it struck the trusses holding up the ceiling of the shaft, closing itself in forever. Perhaps, in the end, it felt remorse. Perhaps it was one lost soul recognizing another.

*—From the journals of Amrun, Legion of the Dead*

## Shade

Same as in DAO

"It has often been suggested that the only way for a demon to affect the world of the living is by possessing a living (or once living) body, but this is not always true. Indeed, a shade is one such creature: a demon in its true form that has adapted to affect the world around it.

My hypothesis is this: we already know that many demons become confused when they pass through the Veil into our world. They are unable to tell the living from the dead, the very static nature of our universe being confusing to a creature that is accustomed to a physicality defined entirely by emotion and memory. Most demons seek to immediately seize upon anything they perceive as life, jealously attempting to possess it—but what of those that do not? What of those that encounter no life, or fail to possess a body? What of those that are more cautious by their nature?

These demons watch. They lurk. They envy.

In time, such a demon will learn to drain energy from the psyche of those it encounters, just as it did in the Fade. Once it has drained enough, it has the power to manifest and will forever after be known as a shade. Such a creature spurns possession. It instead floats as a shadow across its piece of land, preying upon the psyche of any who cross its path. Perhaps it believes itself still in the Fade? There is evidence to believe that is so.

A shade will weaken the living by its very proximity. If it focuses its will, it can drain a single target very quickly. Some have even been known to assault the minds of a living victim, causing confusion or horror and making the target ripe for the kill. The tragedy of a shade is perhaps that, once it has drained a target whole, its appetite is only heightened rather than slaked."

*—From the journal of former Senior Enchanter Maleus, once of the Circle of Rivain, declared apostate in 9:20 Dragon Age.*

## **Giant Spider**

## **Same as in DAO**

Giant spiders tend to appear in old ruins and other places where the Veil has become thin because of magical disturbances or a great number of deaths. In such places, spirits and demons pass into the world of the living and attempt to take control over living beings, spiders among them. Not all scholars accept this explanation for the presence of these beasts, however. Some claim that the thinning Veil allows magic to "leak" from the Fade, tainting such creatures as these spiders to transform into larger and more potent creatures than they ever would become naturally. While such spiders are known to possess powerful poisons and the ability to fling their webs at opponents in combat, studies of them have been few and the full range of their abilities are unknown.

Corrupted spiders are giant arachnids which grow in the depths of the Deep Roads, and feed on numerous species of large bats. When the Deep Roads were lost to the darkspawn, they started feeding on genlocks, and their numbers began to grow exponentially. Some moved up to make their lairs in surface forests, but most remain underground, close to their blight-tainted meals which make them larger and fiercer than they have ever been.

## **Varterral**

In the days before Arlathan, there was a city in the mountains beloved by Dirthamen, Keeper of Secrets. Its people were wise beyond measure, thanks to his counsel, and the city flourished.

Then a high dragon settled in the mountains, and her hunger threatened the city. The elders cried out to Dirthamen for protection as the dragon's rampages struck ever closer, and for three days and nights, the people shut themselves in their homes and watched the skies in dread.

On the fourth day, Dirthamen heard them. He whispered into the mountains and the fallen trees of the forest gathered, shaping an immense and agile spider-like beast. It was the varterral. With lightning speed, vicious strikes, and venomous spit, it drove back the serpent. From then on, it was the guardian of the city and its people.

Many years passed. The gods were trapped by Fen'Harel and the people left to gather in Arlathan, but the varterral kept its everlasting vigil, guarding Dirthamen's city as it eventually crumbled to dust. To this day it stands there, watching over the rubble. Any travelers foolish enough to wander there find themselves face to face with wrath incarnate.

—*From The Tale of the Varterral, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of Dalish elves*

## ITEMS

### **Absolution**

Antiva doesn't have a monopoly on assassins. The bleak Anderfels have produced some of the most ruthless killers in the world, and in the capitol of Hossberg, there are never fewer than ten in the service of their king. They served only the king, and the politics of the Anderfels are a brutal affair. Among the pious, the most dangerous thing a man can do is disgrace himself, for the king sends his killers not for those who plot to overthrow him, but for those who break the Maker's laws and fall into sin and decadence. In the Anders, this is called absolution, not assassination. Death is the sinner's act of penance.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **Armor of the Fallen**

There is a legend in the Free Marches regarding "the Fallen:" a cadre of knights from various Marcher cities that formed to fight the growing power of Orlais in the Exalted Age.

To the Orlesians, these knights were little better than bandits... but to the Marchers they were heroes, warriors that fought for freedom and autonomy. Most of the Fallen died on the Fields of Ghislain in 5:40 Exalted, defending the newly-crowned King Tylus of Nevarra from Orlesian attack. They held their line against a mounted chevalier charge, managing to keep Tylus alive long enough to retreat—and are credited with Nevarra's continued independence everywhere outside Nevarra itself.

### **Armor of the Overseer**

The Overseer was a nickname given to Magister Claudian Vyrantus, the last and perhaps most notorious of those assigned to the Maharian jetstone quarry outside of Kirkwall (now known locally as the Bone Pit).

The magister was known for his sadistic cruelty. His malevolent social experiments were designed to make examples of those who disobeyed him. Vyrantus even noted that feeding slaves to his pet dragonlings was "little more than they deserved."

The slave revolt in 25 Ancient put an end to the Overseer. He was assaulted by a mob of slaves who stripped his enchanted robes and threw Vyrantus into the Bone Pit to be feasted upon by his dragonlings. What became of his robes during all the chaos is unknown, but it is assumed they remain in Kirkwall.

—*From Kirkwall: the City of Chains, by Brother Genitivi, 9:24 Dragon*

## **Aurvar's Prize**

Aurvar Raed was a gifted young smith of Orzammar. He fell in love, in secret, with the youngest daughter of Walder Turin, a high-ranking warrior, but Aurvar knew their union would never earn Walder's blessing. He worked hard at his craft, and fashioned a beautiful mace, wrought from the purest steel, enchanted with lyrium. He presented it to his love's father, who immediately recognized its value.

Walder Turin asked what Aurvar desired in exchange for the weapon. Aurvar replied, "This is a masterwork piece. It is worth more to me than my own life. As payment, I can only accept something that is as dear to you as this mace is to me." Walder was silent for a moment, and then burst out laughing, amused at Aurvar's boldness. He agreed to a price that he believed was worthy of the mace.

Not two days later, Aurvar and his love stole away from the city, with the princely sum her father had provided. Incensed, Walder tore Orzammar apart looking for his daughter, but she had gone with Aurvar to the surface to start a new life. He never saw them again.

The mace remained in Orzammar, but Walder could not bear to look upon it. It was hidden away deep in his estate, and sold to a merchant upon his death.

## **Bardin's Folly**

A dwarven rune crafter named Bardin made this for his lover, Mayla, a nobleman's wife who was fond of dalliances. As the story goes, Bardin fell hard for Mayla, and after a few passionate nights, he presented her with a beautiful handcrafted ring. Feeling sorry for the love-struck fool, she graciously accepted the gift.

Unfortunately for Bardin, his fine workmanship had become well known, and Mayla's husband immediately recognized the handiwork. No one knows exactly what happened to the rune crafter, but he disappeared from Orzammar shortly after. It's said that the nobleman tracked him down, tied him up, carved runes on every square inch of his body, and tossed the sinewy mess into a river of magma outside Orzammar.

Mayla fled for the surface with the ring. Some versions of the story have her making it to Orlais, while others involve Mayla getting hopelessly lost in the Deep Roads, never to be seen again. The ring, however, turned up years later in a merchant's stash outside Ostwick.

## **Bianca**

Varric's crossbow is a marvel of dwarven craftsmanship, clearly the work of a master. However, she bears no smith's mark.

When asked how he procured the weapon, Varric has a few claims. He could have won it in a game of Wicked Grace against Paragon Branka, it could've been a gift from a mysterious old beggar who disappeared into thin air, and it's possible he bought it off a crooked merchant in Lowtown with the previous owner's hand still wrapped around the trigger.

None of those explanations is very likely and continued questioning simply results in Varric grinning and walking away.

## **Blade of Mercy**

An enchanted replica of the blade Archon Hessarian used to slay Andraste as she burned—an act of mercy that he said the Maker commanded.

Of course, the Tevinter Imperium did not become part of the Chantry until well after its formation centuries later, so the first of these blades was created in 2:2 Glory as a gift from Archon Therion to his general, Lord Galineus, for battles fought at the height of the Second Blight. Since then many archons gave similar gifts and it is seen as a badge of honor within the Imperium—though more than one of these blades have ended up on the black market, either stolen or sold by the recipients when their family fell on hard times.

Ironically, one of the four swords found impaled in the body of assassinated Queen Madrigal of Antiva in 5:99 Exalted (thus inspiring the Age of Steel) was a Blade of Mercy. It was a great sacrilege to the Chantry.

## **Bloom**

Our hero strode the winding road,  
Defiant of the vile.  
Uncertain pause for home and cause,  
When met the monster's smile.

A man his kin through blood and sin  
A bastard of the gloom.  
A rising cut through bone and gut,  
An awful skyward bloom.

—From *"Song of Old Marches: The Death of Goodman Ser Austice at the Hand of the Reaver Shius,"* inscriptions collected by Philliam, a Bard!

## **The Celebrant**

The Grand Tourney is the oldest, and perhaps only, tradition of the Free Marches. On those rare, one-in-a-thousand days when a Contest of Arms may be called, every Marcher unites in fellowship to witness the birth of a new champion.

Contestants come from all over Thedas. Minrathous alone always sends no fewer than two dozen entrants hoping to claim the honor for the Imperium. Once, the champion was an Avvar mountain man. Twice in a row, it was Talisa of Sundarin, a lady knight from the Anderfels—which scandalized the crowd, created endless drama amongst the participants, and therefore got her declared the "Most-Loved Champion in the History of the Tourney".

Each champion is presented a crown of sage leaves and a sword. The leaves wither, of course, as a reminder that all victories are fleeting, but the blade, Celebrant, endures and has passed from champion to champion since the first, inscribed with the names of each victor, a reminder that legend is eternal.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi

## **The Centurion's Cuirass**

In the 435th year of the Tevinter Imperium, Archon Almadrius built a summer palace for himself near the Eyes of Nocen. The palace was considered one of the greatest wonders of the world, and many of Almadrius's jealous rivals hatched plots to burn it to the ground.

To protect his palace, the archon stationed one hundred soldiers on permanent guard. These centurions were sworn only to the service of the archon himself, their oaths sealed with blood.



The reign of Almadrius ended in violence and his successor, Tidarion, converted the palace into a garrison for his troops fighting the insurrections all across the Imperium. Amidst the bedlam, the centurions maintained their watch. They eventually fell in battle, but their oaths held and the bodies rose again to take their posts.

When Tidarion's reign came to an end, the magisters fought amongst themselves for twenty vicious years before they crowned a new archon, and when Parthenius finally took the throne, he found that the palace and its guardians had vanished. Not a single stone remained in the Nocen countryside.

Some say the centurions, faithful to their oaths, carried the palace away brick by brick and rebuilt it in a distant land where it would be safe, waiting for an archon to lay claim to it.

—*From Impossible Tales of the Imperium, by Hendrik of Cumberland*

## **Cold-Blooded**

Adain of Starkhaven escaped from the Circle of the Magi in the winter of 8:76 Blessed, the coldest winter that the Free Marches had seen in decades. He decided that it was better to die a free man than remain a servant to the Chantry and broke out of the Circle's stronghold, fleeing into an unforgiving blizzard. The templars gave chase, but there was little they could do in the harsh winds and bitter cold.

They came after Adain again in the spring, tracking him to his hideout. But Adain was prepared, and he tore them to pieces with blood magic and destroyed the phylactery they used to find him. With his phylactery gone, Adain was finally free. He married a young woman from the village of Hambleton, near Markham, and dedicated the rest of his life to the study of blood and primal magic.

When Adain passed on, he left his memoirs, his magical research, and his staff to his children, one of whom was also a mage. The staff bears one notch on its shaft for every templar Adain dispatched over the course of his life.

## **Enasalin**

Little knowledge remains of the great war the Tevinter Imperium waged upon the elves of Arlathan. Many human scholars believe that Arlathan was the only elven settlement of note, and that if elves existed elsewhere on the continent their forces were at best negligible. My conversations with the Dalish, however, indicate that there was a time when the elves had many cities, and it's possible that the elven civilization declined long before the Imperium entered the height of its power.

An example of such a place is Sundermount in the Vimmark Mountains near Kirkwall. According to Dalish legend, this was a burial site for elders and the location of a great battle between Imperial and elven forces—nowhere near Arlathan (if one believes the city was near the forest of the same name in northeastern Thedas).

The arcane warriors that remained at the mountain to defend their slumbering elders were known as the Enasalin'abelas, or "sorrowful victory". These elves knew they were going to die, but were bound by duty to protect their charges. The enchanted armor that belonged to these warriors was looted by the Imperial victors, so pieces that resurface today are considered relics of great importance.

—*From An Investigation into Arlathan, by Alstead the Sage, 9:18 Dragon*

## **Finesse**

Some might find it strange that the greatest assassin in the history of the Antivan Crows was both a woman and a commoner—a whore, if the legend is to be believed. I conferred with several Crows myself (all of whom spoke only with monetary incentive as well as assurances of anonymity) and they say it is true.

The assassin known to legend as "Finesse" was Callisto di Bastion, a wealthy courtesan who was welcome in many noble homes as well as their bedrooms. She was gifted with a silver tongue, and according to my contacts, may have received training among the Orlesian bards in addition to her time with the Crows. Perhaps this is where her success can be credited? Finesse achieved fame and adoration among the common folk with the fatal stabbing of King Guimar the Younger in 4:22 Black.

This adoration is not necessarily shared by the Crows, however. That she was captured, hanged and had her fabled dagger auctioned off to the highest bidder speaks poorly of her skills. Still, in centuries since, the Crows have embraced her legend as their own. Convenient, as it only adds to their dangerous reputation.

—*From A Shadow Unfolds, by Brother Ansel of Hossberg, 7:10 Storm*

## **Garahel's Helm**

I watched from across the battlefield as Garahel struck the final blow against the Archdemon and a great wave of energy surged out from the beast.

It was enough to level what buildings were not already destroyed by the endless battle we had fought, enough to knock horses and ogres aside as if they were little more than parchment. Even at my distance, the force struck me like the blast of some great storm. The darkspawn around us felt it too, as savage desperation turned to sheer terror.

A great pillar of energy rushed up into the dark clouds, the blackness that had gathered with the horde and blocked out all glimmer of hope. When we stood again, we saw the first rays of sunshine peeking through those clouds and we let out such a cheer of joy and relief that it shook the very earth. I joined the others as we searched for Garahel, but as the eve approached all I found was his enchanted helm. It was not until much later that I heard his body had been retrieved, flung to the far side of the battlefield by the Archdemon's death throes. My friend, this elf who helped us unite the lands and cleanse Thedas of the darkspawn scourge will always be remembered. I swear it.

—*Excerpt from a letter written by the Grey Warden Prosper, 5:24 Exalted*

## **The Gem of Keroshek**

Go to any hive of drinkers and gamblers in the Marches and you will undoubtedly hear the legend of the Gem of Keroshek. Ask three different men about it and you will get three different stories. One will say that an alchemist found it in the ashes of Andraste's pyre and then steeped it in wine for forty days and nights. Another will swear that it was a bezoar cut from the belly of a boar that was found inside a griffon that was swallowed by a high dragon. The last will tell you that it's the petrified heart of Trajan the Quick, a merchant prince of Orzammar who almost became a Paragon.

One thing all will agree on, however, is that it brings luck. Keep the Gem of Keroshek in your pocket and you will never lose a bet. Sleep with it under your pillow and it will bring wealth and prosperity into your life.

And where is the gem now? That is the sovereign-plated question. I'm told it's in the mausoleum of a prince of Starkhaven, and that this is the reason for the city's wealth.

—*Excerpt from Tales and Legends of the Free Marches, by Lord Rodney Pierce*

### **Girdle of the Elders**

The elf seemed pretty upset when we started pawing at his stuff, especially the belt. Turns out it's some kind of heirloom. The knife-ear claimed that it came from Arlathan, that it had been in his family for generations.

Well, things change.

We dumped the body by the mine for the clan to find. I took a closer look at the belt and it was clear that the leather was new, but there was something odd about the buckle. So I brought it to this fellow in Val Royeaux who deals in antiques, and he tells me it's old—could even be from the time of the ancient elves. Suppose the runt was telling the truth.

Anyway, hope this is adequate payment for the job. You could sell it or melt the buckle down. I believe it's real silverite.

—*Excerpt from a letter found in a gambling den in Jader*

### **Glandivalis**

It is heresy today to speak of Shartan, an elven slave that rose up against his Tevinter masters to help Andraste's barbarian invasion.

It seems most people would prefer to believe that Andraste crossed the Waking Sea with little more than a basket of flowers and songs of peace and harmony. The truth is that she came with a horde of warriors at her back, and that without a rebellion occurring behind the enemy lines it's very possible that the holy invasion could have been foiled.

Shartan was a slave who became a fabled warrior and later a devotee of Andraste herself, and we know this because the Canticle of Shartan spoke of their meeting on the Valarian Fields. Andraste gave him a mystic blade that he called Glandivalis (translation unknown) and he even fought at Maferath's side. But now the Canticle is one of the Dissonant Verses, and has been ever since the Exalted March of the Dales.

It seems we don't wish to speak of elven heroes or the role they played in Andraste's war any more than we wish to speak of barbarians or the bloody death toll that accompanied the war. With each passing age, heroes like Shartan become more of a fable, but some of us will always know the truth.

—*From The Dissonant Verses by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar, 9:25 Dragon*

### **Hands of the Carta**

The dusters have a saying: "Blood or coin, the Carta always gets its cut." When Beraht was running Dust Town, he took the saying literally. He commissioned a pair of wicked blades made by Smith House Dural. Beraht gave one to his right hand, Jarvia, and the other to his second, Karshol, so that whatever hand of the Carta you got, it'd be holding a big sodding knife. Beraht wasn't exactly a poet.

Jarvia was killed in Dust Town during the messy succession, and Karshol turned all of Orzammar upside-down looking for her blade. Some duster struck gold finding that blade and must have been clever enough to sell it right away. Stone only knows what Karshol will do to the luckless clod who has it when he finds it.

—*From the account of Kalah, a casteless of Orzammar*

## **Karasten's Belt**

The antaam infantry field commanders wear these belts. They may indicate rank, division within the army, or they may simply hold an officer's pants up. As with most everything else, the Qunari refuse to explain the significance of the items.

## **The Last Descent**

The Legion of the Dead are comprised of dwarves who are looking to regain their honor. These discredited dwarves must venture into the Deep Roads to battle an endless tide of darkspawn. The Legion guarantees redemption for its members, but so too their deaths.

There are records indicating that one human joined the Legion. Sir Aurelian Pentaghost, the defeated contender for the Nevarran throne, retreated into dwarven lands in 8:60 Blessed. Sir Aurelian was a pious man who was ousted after clashing with his people. He believed the Maker demanded that he return his homeland to Chantry rule.

With little recourse but to live out his days as a dishonored exile, he joined the Legion of the Dead and went into the Deep Roads a dwarven hero. He was never seen again, but pieces of his enchanted armor have turned up on the surface in the ensuing decades. Some say the armor was scavenged off his body, others that he sold the pieces after secretly returning to the surface. The truth, as always, is known only to the Legion, whose motto has always been, "our secrets die with us."

—*From Legacy of Orzammar, by Alstead the Sage, 9:05 Dragon*

## **Longbow of the Jackal**

There once was a bard from Montsimmard, whose tongue was made of purest silver. His name was Corsa the Jackal, and he was famous for enchanting emperors and empresses by knowing exactly what to say to please them. This often got Corsa into trouble!

One day, Corsa was traveling to Val Royeaux where he was to press his silver-tongued words into Empress Necessiteuse's ear. As he walked and rehearsed, a mighty storm blew in. Rain washed away the path, and Corsa became hopelessly lost. Chill set into his bones, so he took shelter in a cave.

But the cave was home to a big brown bear! Corsa drew his longbow, but the bear seized it. "I was just about to go out for dinner," said the bear. "Nice of you to drop by!" He looked at Corsa and began to drool. "You shouldn't do that," replied Corsa. "I am old and stringy and not at all good to eat. Let me share your cave, and in the morning, I will gather honey and berries. You shall have a feast fit for kings!"

"Agreed," said the Bear, "but go no further into the cave. You won't like what you'll find there."

Corsa warmed himself by nestling into the bear's thick fur. The bear fell asleep, but Corsa was kept awake by what lay further in the darkness. Finally, he could no longer endure the mystery.

At the back of the cave, Corsa found a huge room. And in the middle of that room? An enormous dragon! "Mmm," said the dragon. "Food!"

"Wait, wait!" cried Corsa. "I am old and stringy and not at all good to eat. Let me leave, and I will bring you the bear."

"I think not," said the dragon. "That bear promised me breakfast!" And that was the end of the Jackal.

—*"The Tale of Corsa" from Bedtime Stories for Good Children, by Sister Marigold*

## **Mantle of the Champion**

Champion: an honor unique to the Free Marches. Other terms of reverence suffer the stains of their holders, the lingering baggage of office and entitlement. But champion is not an appointment that can be sought. It cannot be owned or willed, and the process by which it is bestowed is not argued through policy or guile. It is earned with blood and sweat and leadership in times of great turmoil. Always worthy, as their deeds are of true importance, a champion is greeted not by debate, but by nods of reverence.

The title was most recently granted in Tantervale, 8:82 Blessed, on the resolution of the bloody expansion of Nevarra. Their king, emboldened by the taking of Perendale and the quick yielding of Hasmal, thought the remainder of the Free Marches as easy claim. He who became the Champion. Cade Arvale of Rivain, did what Orlais had not: He stopped a nation in its tracks. There was blood and barter, but Tantervale is still free against all odds.

There is the contradiction of the honor. Champion is not itself a sign of approval. He or she can be respected or feared, their coming dreaded as much as desired. All that is common is that they have an effect and lives are changed.

Kirkwall now adds to the history of the title, a first for the city, on this 9:34 Dragon. The Qunari are repelled by the means respected or reviled, and it remains to be seen what follows for this Hawke, the Champion of Kirkwall.

—*From The Champion: History, Ancient and Current, excerpted by Philliam, a Bard!*

## **Puzzle Ring of the Fox**

In Orlais, they say there are ten of these rings, one for each finger, and that the Black Fox was never without a single one. Some claim each represented a conquest; others: that they were reminders of secrets he kept; still others: that they carried an inscription that, if all the rings were assembled as one, told the location of the Black Fox's stronghold.

Many nobles in Val Royeaux have claimed to own one or more of the rings, but nobody has ever found them all. Their secret, if there is one, is safe to this day.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Ring of the Ferryman**

Legend has it that prior to seizing powers as the first archon of the Tevinter Imperium, Darinius had a dream that he crossed a mighty river in a small ferry piloted by a man whose face was always in shadow. When he reached the other side, Darinus [sic] looked back and saw that the ferryman was himself.

When he took the throne, Darinius chose, as the seal of the archon, an image of a hooded ferryman. Every archon since has worn such a ring on the third finger of his right hand. A new ring is cast in gold for each archon with his name around the image relief. By tradition, upon his death, the ring is ceremonially crushed in front of the assembled magisters, so that no one may use the power of the archon until a new one is crowned.

But the tradition has been circumvented at least twice: a forgery can be substituted and ritually destroyed in place of the Ring of the Ferryman. This one bears the name of Archon Hadarius, but whether it's the true ring or the forgery is impossible to discern.

## **Sataareth**

Qunari are a people of metaphors, and for them, words have many meanings. Sataareth, the name given by the Arishok to this axe, means "that which upholds". It is the word for foundation, defender, and enforcer, all at once.

## **Shield of the Knight Herself**

A shield of impressive weight, to the point of being unwieldy if held by a weak hand. The crest is Dalish and old Orlesian, and the direct and deliberate styling can be a reference to only one person: the legendary Ser Aveline, the first woman to gain Orlesian knighthood.

Abandoned as a baby, Aveline was raised by the Dalish and grew into a skilled warrior. Her elven parents encouraged Aveline to demonstrate her skill among her human kin, but women were not allowed to enter Orlesian knighthood or compete in tournaments. She entered anyway, her features obscured by armor. Aveline defeated everyone she faced.

Her final victory came to a brutal end when Kaleva, a knight in service to the Emperor, tripped Aveline out of frustration, knocking the helm from her head. Realizing that his honor had been bested by a woman, Kaleva demanded that the competition be nullified. Jeered by the crowd, he lashed out and killed the fallen Aveline.

Prince Freyan had also faced Aveline in the tournament and saw her death as a great injustice. When Freyan became emperor in 7:44 Storm, he formally recognized her skill by abolishing the practices that had excluded her. She was posthumously knighted, and while women are still a rarity in the Orlesian knighthood, those who enter revere Ser Aveline as their patron.

Ser Aveline's career was short—it's simply impossible for her to have held all the equipment that has been attributed to her over the years. But this shield is still of exceptional quality, and Aveline may find it's attribution to her namesake of interest.

## **Shield of the Resolute**

The Shield of the Resolute was once worn by Knight-Commander Reiner of Starkhaven. Reiner's father crafted this shield for him when Reiner was recruited to the templar order. It was plain and unadorned when it first left the anvil, a simple shield for a smith's son.

Reiner proved himself on a mission to rescue several mages from a demon. Upon seeing the creature, the other templars fell back in fear. Only Reiner held position, his father's shield in front of him. He killed the demon and saved both the mages and his fellow templars.

Reiner's heroism earned him respect. His superiors, his colleagues, and the mages of Starkhaven's Circle saw him a fair and honorable templar. He was knight-commander by thirty-five.

Reiner's shield was modified over the years and enchanted at least twice. By the time Reiner passed the shield on to his successor, it no longer looked as it did when Reiner first strapped it to his arm; it had become a shield worthy of a knight-commander.

## **The Spiral Eye**

Kirkwall has been a tinderbox since becoming the center of templar power in eastern Thedas. Of the hundreds of mages that live in the Gallows, it is perhaps telling that the most well known are its apostates.

Ceridweth was one such infamous apostate. She lived during the latter half of the Storm Age and was known for hunting priests and templars that abused their charges excessively. Ceridweth was also known as the Watcher and the Spiral Eye, so named for the spiral glyph she marked near her victims.

Templar records show that Ceridweth was captured and made Tranquil in 7:90 Storm. Many refuse to believe this, so her legend lives on.

—*From Kirkwall: The City of Chains, by Brother Genitivi, 9:24 Dragon*

## **Staff of Violation**

Old friend,

First Enchanter Casimira was no blood mage! Hogwash! Your story of her investing dark arts into the staff is just that: a fable.

Casimira was, in fact, the first leader of Kirkwall's Circle of Magi. She was saddled with the great task of transforming a decrepit, crumbling prison into a proper home for mages transferred to her from all over Thedas. Some of those mages were apostates, men and women one step away from being rendered Tranquil, and it was her unfortunate task to keep order.

How many battles did she fight in those early days? How much blood was spilled on these grounds? Casimira had to be a hard woman, but she did it to keep the templars from declaring the Right of Annulment and killing us all.

And your other rumor that she was arrested by the first knight-commander? I am telling you it isn't so. I have studied the records, and the truth of the matter is that Casimira was taken by a demon and slain before she could endanger the tower. The templars admired her strength in holding the demon back long enough for them to act. It was a noble sacrifice, and Casimira's staff was kept by the first enchanters to commemorate this. It saddens me that people choose to dwell on its form rather than the lesson it signifies.

—*A letter by First Enchanter Orsino, 9:26 Dragon*

## **Stonehammer's Gift**

Many scholars claim the Tevinter Imperium owes their rise to power as much to the dwarves as they do to magic. The dwarves brought currency and commerce to humanity—as well as entertainment.

The Proving, the dwarven name for gladiatorial arena matches, became popular in Imperial society in 1200 Ancient. This led to the construction of the Grand Proving arena, a structure that still stands two thousand years later.

King Endrin Stonehammer attended the first match held at the Grand Proving. He was taken with the sport and awarded enchanted armor to the victor.

The armor was lost during the Imperium's great civil war in 575 Ancient. There are rumors that Stonehammer's Gift (or portions thereof) has since surfaced outside of Tevinter, most prominently during the Fourth Blight's Battle of Ayesleigh where the armor was reportedly worn by the fabled Champion of Starkhaven.

—*From Tales of the Imperium, by Sister Dulcinea, 9:20 Dragon*

## **Sundering**

In the legends of the Ash Warriors, nothing is more hallowed than Sundering, the battle mace of Luthias Dwarfson.

Legend says the mace was not crafted by hand, but instead hatched from an egg high in the mountains and then carried by birds to Luthias as a wedding gift from the Lady of the Skies.

When Luthias dies, dwarves arrived to carry him to Orzammar to be buried as one of their own with the Stone. Sundering was to lie at his side, but the mace could not be found. Stories say the birds reclaimed it and will deliver it to another hero in time.

—*From Alamarri Myths and Legends, by Sister Petrine, Chantry Scholar*

## **Talisman of Saarebas**

A simple shape on a leather cord. The uneven polish is not a failure of workmanship; rather the result of exacting and repeated study by powerful hands.

Black glimmers curl just beneath a surface that should be solid, and there are glimpses of a core that seems to be carved from a piece of horn. Gaze for more than a moment and it seems to stir something in an uncommonly dark corner of the mind, coaxing out a familiar, primal emotion: want. It is impossible to say whether Saarebas intended this as reinforcement or restriction. At the moment, it simply is.

This secret thing was never meant for the eyes of another.

## **Templar's Ceremonial Cumberbund**

When a templar takes his vows and enters the service of Andraste, he is presented with a suit of ceremonial armor to be worn when in the presence of the grand cleric. Every piece of the armor is covered in the iconography of blessed Andraste.

The cumberbund is wide, made of interlocking steel plates inlaid with gold, and adorned with two hundred and eight embossed stars along the edging: one for each day Andraste sung to the Maker to deliver her people. The center plate depicts, in bas relief, the burning Sword of Mercy. Beside it is a shield, representing the disciple Havard. On the other side is ring split in half, which symbolizes Maferath. The buckle is formed like a sun, representing the Maker. On the steel inner face of each plate, a line of the Chant of Light is written.

The last is an interesting touch. Concealed artistic flair or an overt cheat sheet at mass?

—*An excerpt from The Chantry: An Introspective, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Tranquility**

Orana was brought to the Circle of Magi in Kirkwall at the age of five. Her mentors had high hopes for the child, seeing her talent for magic. Unfortunately, the poor child was plagued by nightmares that only worsened after her move to the Gallows.

Orana became afraid of falling asleep. She would lie stiffly in bed, her eyes wide open. Without sleep, she grew thin and wan, and her studies began to suffer.

Orana began to experience waking dreams. Shadows flitted in corners, and she swore she heard voices calling her name. She knew demons could take advantage of her vulnerable state, and at the tender age of eleven, she requested to be made Tranquil. The first enchanter complied.



With her connection to the Fade severed, Orana was again able to sleep. Her health returned, and she was at peace with her decision. She continued her education at the Circle and excelled in enchanting and runecrafting.

Orana saw the Rite of Tranquility as a gift, although many mocked her for this view. Later in life, she created an amulet to remind her of the Rite. She named it Tranquility. The Tranquility Amulet soothes the mind and imparts a general sense of well-being to its wearer.

## **Urzara's Tooth**

In 7:28 Storm, a high dragon rampaged through the northern Free Marches, destroying villages and killing over a hundred people. Following in the dragon's wake was a group of wild-eyed fanatics who worshipped the dragon they called Urzara.

The cultists believed Urzara would soon claim the Maker's throne, being the child of the Old God Urthemiel. To prepare for the dragon's ascension to true godhood, the cultists burned down village chantries and forced those they came upon to bow down to their crude stone idol of the dragon.

Followed by her cult, the dragon returned to her mountainside home near the mouth of the Minanter River. The Marchers, afraid the dragon and her cult might one day return, assembled a small army of militiamen. The men suffered heavy losses but succeeded in killing the dragon. When Urzara fell, many cultists threw themselves into the Minanter and died.

The cult leader was captured and taken to Tantervale where he was publicly emasculated, disemboweled, and burned. His symbol of power, a talisman carved from Urzara's mighty tooth, was awarded to the man who struck the killing blow on the dragon.

## **The Vague Blade**

What does it do? Well, who can say?  
It changes form from day to day.  
Of unknown metal and magic keen,  
A finer blade there's never been.  
My foe once exclaimed as he was flayed,  
"I've never seen so vague a blade!"

— *From Legendary Blades of Thedas, by Lord Roderick Gutenschwantz*

## **Valdasine**

In the ancient days before the darkspawn, when dwarven cities wound through the roots of all the earth, House Valdasine single-handedly kept the empire supplied with lyrium.

One day the mining family shut the doors of their thaig. They spoke not to their noble patrons, nor their king, and not even a visiting Paragon. Days passed in silence before the doors to Valdasine Thaig opened. Anxious partners discovered it empty. Not one soul remained—no bodies and no sign of what had happened.

House Valdasine only left a staff of strange metal behind. It looked like lyrium and chilled one's heart like a remembered sorrow. The king sealed the staff inside the thaig, and no dwarf ever ventured there again.

— *As recounted by Shaper Merta*

## **Vestments of Sacrifice**

The Vestments of Sacrifice is a replica of the robe worn by Grey Warden Neriah, a mage who fought in the Second Blight's final battle in Starkhaven. According to legend, she threw herself in front of a darkspawn emissary to protect her lover, Corin. Neriah's sacrifice saved Corin's life, which was instrumental in ending the Blight for it was Corin's blade that struck the Archdemon Zazikel down.

The original robe was displayed at the Circle of Magi in Antiva for many years, and I count myself among the lucky to have seen Neriah's robe before it was destroyed in a fire. I constructed this replica from my notes and sketches, and it is as accurate a copy as one could achieve. I have even gone to great lengths to recreate the enchantments placed on the original robes.

The recreation of this garment brings me great joy and fulfillment. I hope it brings the same to one of your order. Please accept this gift, humbly presented, as a token of appreciation for all the Grey Wardens have done for Thedas.

*—Excerpt of a letter from First Enchanter Haramund of Starkhaven to Warden-Commander Dernheim of Weisshaupt*

## **Vir Atish'an**

There is never a shortage of hunters. The Vir Tanadhal, The Way of Three Trees, has lured many to Andruil's side. The Vir Atish'an, The Way of Peace, is a harder path to tread, and few are called to hear Sylaise's wisdom. Those who hear that call learn the arts of the healer and the mender.

*—As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

# **PLACES**

## **The Anderfels**

**Same as in DAO**

The Anderfels are a land of shocking extremes. It is the most desolate place in all the world, for two Blights have left great expanses of the steppes so completely devoid of life that corpses cannot even decay there—no insect or grub will ever reach them.

It is a land filled with wonders like the Merdaine, with its gigantic white statue of Our Lady carved into its face, her hands outstretched and bearing an eternal flame, or Weisshaupt Fortress, with its walls of living rock towering over the desolate plains below.

The Anders, too, are a people of extremes: The most devout priests and the most deadly soldiers, the poorest nation in the world and the most feared.

*—From In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Bone Pit**

Sire,

I interviewed the surviving slave this morning. She was horror-struck, but managed to tell me her chilling story.

The Overseer lined seventeen slaves up, one behind the other, at the lip of the quarry. The second slave in line was ordered to push the man in front over the edge. The third slave pushed the second, the fourth the third, and on it went.

Workers in the quarry heard the screams, the crack of bone against rock, and then the survivor's anguished cries as the Overseer's dragonlings feasted on the sixteen helpless bodies splayed upon the quarry's basin. The woman who told me this story was the seventeenth in line, spared only because no one stood behind her.

Sire, I recommend we stop this ugly practice. Effective as it may be in motivating workers, it's also bringing our mine notoriety as a death trap. Stories of the "bone pit" swirl throughout Kirkwall. The Veil is thin enough here, and above that pit it is practically ready to sunder. We risk more than simple rebellion should the overseer be allowed to continue.

—*A letter from Prefex Santarius, 35 Ancient*

Prefex Santarius,

The output of the Maharian Quarry is up almost a third this season, and the Overseer has received a commendation from the archon himself. You will speak of your findings to no one.

—*A response from Magister Quillan, 35 Ancient*

## **The City of Kirkwall**

Kirkwall once lived on the edge of the Tevinter Imperium and was home to nearly a million slaves. Stolen from elven lands or shipped from across the sea, all slaves fed the Imperium's unquenchable thirst for expansion. They worked in massive quarries and sweltering foundries that produced stone and steel for the Empire.

The city's complicated past is not easy to forget, history having earmarked many corners of the stone city. A ship approaching the harbor spots the city's namesake: an imposing black wall. It is visible for miles, and carved into the cliff side are a pantheon of vile guardians representing the Old Gods. Over the years, the Chantry has effaced many of these profane sentinels, but it will take many more years to erase them all.

Also carved into the cliff is a channel that permits ships into the city's interior. Flanking the channel are two massive bronze statues—the Twins of Kirkwall. The statues have a practical use. Kirkwall sits next to the narrowest point of the Waking Sea, and a massive chain net can be erected between the statues and the lighthouse, closing off the only narrow navigable lane. This stranglehold on sea traffic is jealously guarded by the ever-changing rulers of the city as the net trolls taxes, tolls, and extortions in from the sea.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Geography of Thedas**

**Same as in DAO**

Thedas is bounded to the east by the Amaranthine Ocean, to the west by Tirashan Forest and the Hunterhorn Mountains, to the south by the snowy wastes that lie beyond the Orkney Mountains, and to the north by Donark Forest.

The word "Thedas" is Tevinter in origin, originally used to refer to lands that bordered the Imperium. As the Imperium lost its stranglehold on conquered nations, more and more lands became Thedas, until finally people applied the name to the entire continent.

The northern part of Thedas is divided amongst the Anderfels, the Tevinter Imperium, Antiva, and Rivain, with the islands held by the Qunari just off the coast. Central Thedas consists of the Free Marches, Nevarra and Orlais, with Ferelden to the south.

What lies beyond the snowy wastes is a mystery. The freezing temperatures and barren land have kept even the most intrepid cartographers at bay. Similarly, the western reaches of the Anderfels have never been fully explored, even by the Anders themselves. We do not know if the dry steppes are shadowed by mountains, or if they extend all the way to a nameless sea.

There must be other lands, continents or islands, perhaps across the Amaranthine or north of Par Vollen, for the Qunari arrived in Thedas from somewhere, but beyond that deduction, we know nothing.

*--From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

### **Kirkwall - Darktown**

Darktown was once a mine controlled by the Tevinter Imperium. Once exhausted, the mineshafts were extended under the city to dispose of sewage from Kirkwall's overcrowded population of slaves.

Unsurprisingly, the tunnels became a refuge for those fleeing captivity. A similar trend continues today. The "Undercity," as some call it, is home to the diseased, the insane, to criminals, and even the dead—unwanted corpses are often discarded here by murderers and lazy undertakers.

Darktown's slums makes Lowtown look pleasant in comparison. The foul miasma known as chokedamp clogs and swells in every corner of the Darktown, creating a poisonous mist. Its sewers are a dangerous place. The walls are damp, slick, and coated with phosphorescent lichen. The sewer is a maze, and one foolish enough to enter is not likely to be heard from again.

*—From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **Kirkwall - Hightown**

At the height of the Tevinter Imperium's slave trade, Kirkwall's elite prospered beyond dreams of avarice. Hightown was built for the wealthiest slavers, its glitzy mansions rising atop a great wall of rock that borders, on one side, the Waking Sea. Lowtown cowered on its other side until Kirkwall's slaves rose to plunder and destroy Hightown's riches.

Today, Hightown's prominent buildings are the Keep, home to the ruling viscount, and the chantry, home to the grand cleric and the city's religious center. Both are converted estates that once housed wealthy magisters, rebuilt and converted after the uprising.

*—From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **Kirkwall - Lowtown**

Lowtown sits in a massive cauldron-shaped pit that was once Kirkwall's first quarry. The district was constructed by slaves who carved the city and its harbor out of the rock.

Today, Lowtown is a labyrinth of shantytowns, corridors, and hexagonal courtyards—"hexes" in the local parlance. Lowtown's poorest live in caves hewn out of the cliff face. The district is shoddily built and bears scars caused by collapsing walls. Foundry smoke smothers the area. Only a cold winter storm clears the air, but the icy wind howling over the mouths of old mineshafts hardly counts as relief.

Occasionally, these Darktown shafts erupt with gouts of foul air known as chokedamp. It's not uncommon to find whole slums silently suffocated, frozen in the midst of everyday activity.

The walls surrounding Lowtown are highest by the harbor. Its busiest street leads up to Hightown, where the wealthiest Kirkwallers perch. When one stands in Lowtown, all one sees other than the rocky walls is Hightown. It glitters overhead, always in sight, yet always beyond reach.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **Kirkwall - The Elven Alienage**

Lowtown is home to a squalid elven alienage. Here, like in most Thedas alienages, elves are packed into tiny rundown apartments and effectively segregated from the human population.

Kirkwall's alienage is even more dilapidated than the rest of Lowtown, but the elves go to great lengths keeping the place looking bright and festive. The vhenadahl ("Tree of the People") standing in the middle of the alienage is a symbol for elven pride and shared cultural identity, and it is lovingly cared for.

It's difficult to say if the elves would continue confining themselves to the alienage if they were given the chance to mingle. They may not admit it, but some feel that living among their kind is far better than living with humans, no matter how terrible alienage life may be.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **Kirkwall - The Gallows**

Statues of tortured slaves fill the Gallows courtyard, a ghastly memento of Kirkwall's history. Fifteen-hundred years ago, Kirkwall was the Tevinter Imperium's largest quarry, feeding the construction of the Imperial Highway.

The Imperium's hunger for expansion led to legions of slaves forced into working the quarry. When the empire's construction phase ended, Kirkwall slid naturally into its new role as the capital of the slave trade—the Gallows at its heart.

The statues are not monuments to the suffering of slaves. Every inch and angle of the courtyard was designed by magisters bent on breaking the spirit of newcomers. Executions here took place daily, sometimes hourly, and corpses were hung from gibbets throughout the yard. New slaves trudging in from the docks saw what awaited them.

When Our Lady turned her armies against the Imperium, the slaves of Kirkwall revolted and claimed the city for themselves. The Gallows stood empty for two hundred years, not to be reopened until the crowning of Divine Justinia I. The Gallows transformed the city again when the abandoned prison tower became the home of Kirkwall's Circle.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

### **The Korcari Wilds**

**Same as in DAO**

It is said that in the midst of the Black Age, when werewolves stalked the lands of Ferelden in numbers that kept every farmholder indoors and a hound on every doorstep, a powerful arl of the Alamarri peoples stood and declared that he would put an end to the threat. His arling stood on the border of the dark forest on the southern border of the Ferelden Valley, and he claimed that the werewolves used the forest to launch their midnight assaults on humanity.

For 20 years, this arl led an army of warriors and hounds deep into the forest. In his hunt for the werewolves, he slew not only every wolf he came upon, but also every member of the Chasind wilder folk. Any one of them, he said, could harbor a demon inside and thus be a werewolf in disguise. For 20 years, the forest rang with screams, and the rivers ran red.

The tales say that an old Chasind woman found her sons all dead at the arl's blades. She pulled one of those very blades from one son's heart and plunged it into her own chest, cursing the arl's name as she did so. Where her blood touched the ground, a mist began to rise. It spread and spread until it was everywhere in the forest. The arl's army became lost, and it is said that they died there. Others say they wander still. The ruins of his arling stand to this day, filled with the ghosts of women waiting eternally for their husbands to return.

The forest of the legend is, of course, the Korcari Wilds. There are as many legends about the great southern forest as there are shadows, or so the saying goes. The Chasind wilder folk have made their home there since mankind first came to these lands, and the wildlands spread as far into the south as anyone has ventured. Beyond the mists are vast tracts of snow, white-capped mountains, and entire fields of ice. It is a land too cold for mankind to survive, yet the Chasind eke out an existence even there, and they tell of horrors beyond the Wilds that the lowland folk could not begin to comprehend.

To most, Ferelden simply ends with the Korcari Wilds: There is nothing beyond. The Wilds is a land of great trees, wet marshes and dangerous monsters. What more need be said?

--From Land of the Wilders, by Mother Ailis, Chantry scholar, 9:18 Dragon.

## **Nevarra**

**Same as in DAO**

The fourth time I attempted to cross the border into Nevarra from Orlais and was turned back by Chevaliers, I decided to take the more roundabout path: a ship back to Ferelden, and then another to Nevarra. The outcome was more than worth the trouble.

The whole country is filled with artistry, from the statues of heroes that litter the streets in even the meanest villages to the glittering golden College of Magi in Cumberland. Perhaps nowhere is more astonishing than the vast necropolis outside Nevarra City. Unlike most other followers of Andraste, the Nevarrans do not burn their dead. Instead, they carefully preserve the bodies and seal them in elaborate tombs. Some of the wealthiest Nevarrans begin construction of their own tombs while quite young, and these become incredible palaces, complete with gardens, bathhouses, and ballrooms, utterly silent, kept only for the dead.

—From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi

## **The Orlesian Empire**

**Same as in DAO**

There are many lords and ladies in Val Royeaux.

And I mean this literally. Once, the system of noble titles in Orlais was labyrinthine: There were barons and baronnes and baronets and sur-barons and a horde of others, each with its own origins and its own nuances of comparison. The Orlesian aristocracy is ancient and much given to competition. All the nobility play the Grand Game, as it is known, whether they wish to or not. It is a game of reputation and patronage, where moves are made with rumors and scandal is the chief weapon. No gentle game, this. More blood has been drawn as a result of the Grand Game than any war the Orlesians have fought. Of this, I am assured by almost every gentleman here.

As far as titles went, everything changed with the coming of Emperor Drakon, who established the Orlesian Empire as it exists now, and who created the Chantry. There is no more venerated figure in Orlais; in Val Royeaux, the statue of Drakon stands as tall as the statue of Andraste. Drakon determined that the Grand Game was tearing Orlais apart, so he abolished all titles besides his own, and lord, and lady.

I am told, with some twittering amusement, that this action did not end the Grand Game as Drakon had intended. Now the lords and ladies collected unofficial titles rather than official ones, such as "the exalted patron of Tassus Klay" or "uncle to the champion of Tremmes." It is a headache to remember such titles, and one winces to think of the poor doormen at the balls who must rattle them off as each guest enters the room.

The aristocracy is different from Ferelden in other ways, as well. The Orlesians' right to rule stems directly from the Maker. There exists neither the concept of rule by merit nor the slightest notion of rebellion. If one is not noble, one aspires to be-or at the least aspires to be in the good graces of a noble, and is ever watching for a way to enter the patronage of those better placed in the Grand Game.

And then there are the masks. And the cosmetics: I have not seen so much paint since the kennels at Highever. But that is another story.

*--From Beyond the Frostbacks, by Bann Teoric of West Hill, 9:20 Dragon*

## **Par Vollen: The Occupied North**

**Same as in DAO**

In the 30th year of the Steel Age, the first Qunari ships were sighted off the coast of Par Vollen in the far north, marking the beginning of a new age of warfare.

History calls this the First Qunari War, but it was mostly a one-sided bloodbath, with the Qunari advancing far into the mainland. Qunari warriors in glittering steel armor carved through armies with ease. Their cannons, the likes of which our ancestors had never seen, reduced city walls to rubble in a matter of seconds.

Stories of Qunari occupation vary greatly. It is said they dismantled families and sent captives to "learning camps" for indoctrination into their religion. Those who refused to cooperate disappeared to mines or construction camps.

For every tale of suffering, however, there is another of enlightenment deriving from something called the "Qun." This is either a philosophical code or a written text that governs all aspects of Qunari life, perhaps both. One converted Seheran reported pity for those who refused to embrace the Qun, as if the conquerors had led him to a sort of self-discovery. "For all my life, I followed the Maker wherever his path led me," he wrote, "but in the Qun I have found the means to travel my own path."

It has been said that the most complete way to wipe out a people is not with blades but with books. Thankfully, a world that had repelled four Blights would not easily bow to a foreign aggressor. And so the Exalted Marches began.

The greatest advantage of the Chantry-led forces was the Circle of Magi. For all their technology, the Qunari appeared to harbor great hatred for magic. Faced with cannons, the Chantry responded with lightning and balls of fire.

The Qunari armies lacked the sheer numbers of humanity. So many were slain at Marnas Pell, on both sides, that the Veil is said to be permanently sundered, the ruins still plagued by restless corpses. But each year, the Chantry pushed further and further into the Qunari lines, although local converts to the Qun proved difficult to return to Andraste's teachings.

By the end of the Storm Age, the Qunari were truly pushed back. Rivain was the only human land that retained the Qunari religion after being freed, and its rulers attempted to barter a peace. Most human lands signed the Llomerryn Accord, excepting the Tevinter Imperium. It is a shaky peace that has lasted to this day.

—*From The Exalted Marches: An Examination of Chantry Warfare, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Primeval Thaig**

Your Majesty,

It's difficult getting a straight answer out of the scavenger. These sods get themselves so blighted they can't think straight, much less keep spit in their mouths. He says, however, that he's gone down into parts of the Deep Roads that are so old that our people forgot them long before the Blight even happened.

He spoke of great statues and temples--temples! He spoke of things that could have only been made of magic and of impossible ruins untouched by darkspawn. He described creatures the likes of which we've never seen.

None of it's possible, of course. I've conferred with the Shaper and he says the Memories date back to the founding of the first thaig--what could have come before that? Yes, we're unable to explore these depths the scavenger spoke of because of the darkspawn, but surely the Memories would speak of such places if they existed.

Yet in this scavenger's belongings, amidst all the filth, there was a single idol. It was clearly of dwarven make, but not resembling any Paragon on record. The idol was dressed in a manner I've never seen. The Shaper of Memories also could not identify it or the substance from which it was made. The thought that the Memories might be wrong is... unsettling.

— *Excerpt from a report sealed in the Orzammar royal archives by order of King Annalar Geldinblade in 8:48 Blessed.*

## **Rivain**

**Same as in DAO**

Nowhere in my travels, not in the heart of the Imperium nor the streets of Orzammar, have I felt so much an outsider as in Rivain.

The Chant of Light never truly reached the ears of these people. The years they spent under the thumb of the Qunari left most of the country zealous followers of the Qun. But resistance to the Chant goes deeper than the Qunari War. The Rivaini refuse to be parted from their seers, wise women who are in fact hedge mages, communicating with spirits and actually allowing themselves to become possessed. The Chantry prohibition against such magical practices violates millennia of local tradition.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Sundermount**

Kirkwall is guarded by mountains to its north, the tallest of which is Sundermount. The mountain has a fearsome reputation. Legend says it was the site of the final battle between the Tevinter Imperium of old and the ancient empire of elves that perished with Arlathan. Both sides unleashed horrors into the waking world, and Fade creatures prowl the heights to this very day, unaware that the war for which they were summoned is long since over.

There is a tale in the Free Marches that Blessed Andraste, upon reaching Kirkwall with her armies, sojourned up the slopes of Sundermount alone. She stayed there three days. When she returned, she wept as if her heart were broken.



I stayed two months in Kirkwall, and despite my best efforts, I never found a guide willing to take me up the mountain.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Tevinter Imperium**

For good or ill, the Imperium has put its stamp on Thedas forever.

The old Imperial Highway is still in use across most of Thedas. The ruins of Tevinter fortresses and centers of magical study still litter our landscape, long after the glory of the Imperium dimmed. But the influence of that ancient empire goes deeper than this. Without Tevinter, there would have been no Blights, no Andraste, no Chantry. Every aspect of our world would be altered.

The might and majesty of the Imperium may have faded, but it still makes its presence known, even in the most distant corners of Thedas. Every child has been brought up on stories of Tevinter as it is now: a decadent nation, ruled by the archon and his court of magisters — great, and no doubt corrupt, mage-lords. Their Chantry a mockery of our own, their Black Divine a man chosen from the ranks of the Minrathous Circle of Magi. The Maker's most hallowed law, "Magic exists to serve man, and never to rule over him," perverted. Mages in the Imperium say their most sacred duty is to serve man, and they serve best by wielding political power.

And the worst, that which Blessed Andraste must weep to see: All of it is built on a foundation of slavery. While most nations forbid the buying and selling of slaves within their own borders, nearly everyone ships her people to the Imperium for sale, skirting the prohibitions against such atrocities, and feeding the Imperium's endless hunger for bodies: To fight the Qunari, to work the mines and quarries, to build the palaces of the magisters, to sweep the crumbling streets and turn the middens and serve at the whim of their mage overseers.

—*From Black City, Black Divine: A Study of the Tevinter Imperium, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Wounded Coast**

One of the few roads leading into Kirkwall passes through a dangerous area known as the Wounded Coast. The road winds close to the cliff edge that looms over waters with many a precipitous drop to the churning waves below. There's many a local legend involving travelers falling, or jumping, or having been flung from those heights.

From the cliffs, the road leads through jagged hills that line the pass like sharp teeth. Bandits use these hills as cover from which to ambush caravans. There's more to fear here than bandits, of course. Once one leaves the hills, you come upon a maze of sharp canyons, the hunting grounds for many fierce creatures. It is a place of secrets dating back to the golden age of the Tevinter Imperium, where Ancient relics and statues crumble in time with the rocks.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

# **LORE**

## **Adventures of the Black Fox**

**Same as in DAO**

Born Lord Remi Vascal in 8:63 Blessed, the Black Fox was a dashing thief and rogue who went on to inspire so many tales of his exploits that it is nearly impossible to determine today which are true and which are merely fabricated legend. Despite coming from nobility, he has become something of a hero of the common people.

His initial exploits involved ridiculing the tyrannical and powerful lord of Val Chevin. Wearing a mask, he would appear in public and disrupt the lord's plans to the point that the lord angrily put a huge bounty on the life of "this cunning fox" (the origin of the nickname, which stuck). That the primary bounty hunter who took the job, Karolis, ended up becoming Remi's lifelong partner in crime (only after nearly killing him several times) is one of the most popular tales told in taverns today. The story is often exaggerated to make Remi appear initially buffoonish, until Karolis becomes so furious at the Black Fox's inexplicable ability to survive that the cunning Remi gains the upper hand, which impresses Karolis so much that the bounty hunter joins him.

After years of terrorizing the lord's men and foiling his tax collectors (a favorite pastime of Remi's, according to the Orlesian commoners), Remi was supposedly betrayed by his lover Servana de Montfort (in some versions of the tale a mage of the Circle, no less) and was captured. After more than a year of torture, Remi was rescued from prison by his compatriots (including a repentant Servana), and together they escaped Orlais. In this period of Remi's adventures, he appears almost everywhere in Thedas: As his legend grew, more innkeepers and merchants were happy to claim that the Black Fox had visited their village or establishment and performed some legendary feat. If the tales are to be believed, Remi led the lord's men on a merry chase. He became embroiled in political intrigue in Nevarra, was hunted by the Antivan Crows, and then kidnapped by a powerful mage in Tevinter. In each situation, Remi escaped death at the last moment, foiled the evil-doer, and improved life for the poor and downtrodden. Then, inevitably, he rejoined his band of adventurers and moved on to the next land. His companions Karolis and Servana, the wise dwarf Bolek, and the tempestuous knight Ser Clementis have each spawned their own individual legends over the years.

The stories all agree that, at some point, the Black Fox disappeared: He and his fellow adventurers voyaged into the heart of the Arlathan Forest seeking the sunken city of the elves and never returned. Many more are the tales that expand on what ultimately happened to them in that forest and postulate on how they could someday be rescued.

-- *From the Adventures of the Black Fox, by Gaston Gerrault, 9:11 Dragon.*

## **Alienage Culture**

**Same as in DAO**

There have been alienages for as long as elves and shems have lived in the same lands. They say that Val Royeaux has ten thousand elves living in a space no bigger than Denerim's market. Their walls are supposedly so high that daylight doesn't reach the vhenadahl until midday.

But don't be so anxious to start tearing down the walls and picking fights with the guards. They keep out more than they keep in. We don't have to live here, you know. Sometimes a family gets a good break, and they buy a house in the docks, or the outskirts of town. If they're lucky, they come back to the alienage after the looters have burned their house down. The unlucky ones just go to the paupers' field.

Here, we're among family. We look out for each other. Here, we do what we can to remember the old ways. The flat-ears who have gone out there, they're stuck. They'll never be human, and they've gone and thrown away being elven, too. So where does that leave them? Nowhere.

--*Sarethia, hahren of the Highever alienage*

## **Ambrosia**

Felcidus Aria—commonly known as the Silent Plains Rose—is, to this day, the only plant found growing on the Silent Plains, which were tainted by the Blight a thousand years ago. As mentioned in the section on rare flowering plants, Felcidus Aria is not technically a rose, though its flowers do exude a sweet, rose-like scent.

The flower is rare, and is in danger of becoming extinct because of its value in the creation of ambrosia, which is distilled from the roots of the plant. Dozens of these plants go into the making of just one vial. Some say that the wives of the most powerful Tevinter magisters once used ambrosia to perfume their baths in a vulgar display of wealth.

—*An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium, by Ines Arancia, Botanist*

## **The Amell Family**

It's truly sad what happened to the Amells, isn't it? I still remember Grandmother talking about the balls that Lord Aristide used to hold at their estate and the Antivan violin players and dancers from Afsaana. No expense was spared and no one would dare miss it, lest someone think they weren't worthy of an invitation.

And then poor Revka had the child. Magical talent, running in one of Kirkwall's most prominent families? The templars had considered Lord Aristide to be viscount after Threnhold's arrest. Can you imagine the scandal had he been chosen? They whisked the child away to the Circle, and the Amells simply had no luck after that. Leandra ran off with a Fereldan mage and then Damion was accused of smuggling. Poor Lord Fausten almost bankrupted his family trying to get the charges dropped, but I hear Viscount Marlowe simply wanted to get the Amells out of the picture. And it worked, too, didn't it? By the time Lord Fausten got sick, there was only young Gamlen left and a mountain of debt.

I spoke to Dulci just the other day, and apparently Gamlen is now living in some Lowtown shack—sounds like the sort of character you'd cross a street to avoid! And let's not even talk about the estate.

Mother says we should remember the Amells because that sort of thing can happen to any of us. You know the old saying: "A Marcher's fortune rises and falls with the tide." If you ask me, this is just another misfortune that magic brings to honest folk. Andraste help that poor family, whatever lies in store for them.

—*Excerpt from a letter written by Lady Amelie de Montford*

## **Andraste: Bride of the Maker**

**Same as in DAO**

There was once a tiny fishing village on the Waking Sea that was set upon by the Tevinter Imperium, which enslaved the villagers to be sold in the markets of Minrathous, leaving behind only the old and the infirm. One of the captives was the child Andraste.

She was raised in slavery in a foreign land. She escaped, then made the long and treacherous journey back to her homeland alone. She rose from nothing to be the wife of an Alamarri warlord.

Each day she sang to the gods, asking them to help her people who remained slaves in Tevinter. The false gods of the mountains and the winds did not answer her, but the true god did.

The Maker spoke. He showed her all the works of His hands: the Fade, the world, and all the creatures therein. He showed her how men had forgotten Him, lavishing devotion upon mute idols and demons, and how He had left them to their fate. But her voice had reached Him, and so captivated Him that He offered her a place at His side, that she might rule all of creation.

But Andraste would not forsake her people.

She begged the Maker to return, to save His children from the cruelty of the Imperium. Reluctantly, the Maker agreed to give man another chance.

Andraste went back to her husband, Maferath, and told him all that the Maker had revealed to her. Together, they rallied the Alamarri and marched forth against the mage-lords of the Imperium, and the Maker was with them.

The Maker's sword was creation itself: fire and flood, famine and earthquake. Everywhere they went, Andraste sang to the people of the Maker, and they heard her. The ranks of Andraste's followers grew until they were a vast tide washing over the Imperium. And when Maferath saw that the people loved Andraste and not him, a worm grew within his heart, gnawing upon it.

At last, the armies of Andraste and Maferath stood before the very gates of Minrathous, but Andraste was not with them.

For Maferath had schemed in secret to hand Andraste over to the Tevinter. For this, the Archon would give Maferath all the lands to the south of the Waking Sea.

And so, before all the armies of the Alamarri and of Tevinter, Andraste was tied to a stake and burned while her earthly husband turned his armies aside and did nothing, for his heart had been devoured. But as he watched the pyre, the Archon softened. He took pity on Andraste, and drew his sword, and granted her the mercy of a quick death.

The Maker wept for His Beloved, cursed Maferath, cursed mankind for their betrayal, and turned once again from creation, taking only Andraste with him. And Our Lady sits still at his side, where she still urges Him to take pity on His children.

—*From The Sermons of Justinia II*

## **Arlathan: Part One**

## **Same as in DAO**

Before the ages were named or numbered, our people were glorious and eternal and never-changing. Like the great oak tree, they were constant in their traditions, strong in their roots, and ever reaching for the sky.

They felt no need to rush when life was endless. They worshiped their gods for months at a time. Decisions came after decades of debate, and an introduction could last for years. From time to time, our ancestors would drift into centuries-long slumber, but this was not death, for we know they wandered the Fade in dreams.

In those ages, our people called all the land Elvhenan, which in the old Elven language means "place of our people." And at the center of the world stood the great city of Arlathan, a place of knowledge and debate, where the best of the ancient elves would go to trade knowledge, greet old friends, and settle disputes that had gone on for millennia.

But while our ancestors were caught up in the forever cycle of ages, drifting through life at what we today would consider an intolerable pace, the world outside the lush forests and ancient trees was changing.

The humans first arrived from Par Vollen to the north. Called shemlen, or "quicklings," by the ancients, the humans were pitiful creatures whose lives blinked by in an instant. When they first met the elves, the humans were brash and warlike, quick to anger and quicker to fight, with no patience for the unhurried pace of elven diplomacy.

But the humans brought worse things than war with them. Our ancestors proved susceptible to human diseases, and for the first time in history, elves died of natural causes. What's more, those elves who spent time bartering and negotiating with humans found themselves aging, tainted by the humans' brash and impatient lives. Many believed that the ancient gods had judged them unworthy of their long lives and cast them down among the quicklings. Our ancestors came to look upon the humans as parasites, which I understand is similar to the way the humans see our people in the cities. The ancient elves immediately moved to close Elvhenan off from the humans, for fear that this quickening effect would crumble the civilization.

—*The Fall of Arlathan, as told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **Arlathan: Part Two**

**Same as in DAO**

You ask what happened to Arlathan? Sadly, we do not know. Even those of us who keep the ancient lore have no record of what truly happened. What we have are accounts of the days before the fall, and a fable of the whims of the gods.

The human world was changing even as the elves slept. Clans and tribes gave way to a powerful empire called Tevinter, which—and for what reason we do not know—moved to conquer Elvhenan. When they breached the great city of Arlathan, our people, fearful of disease and loss of immortality, chose to flee rather than fight. With magic, demons, and even dragons at their behest, the Tevinter Imperium marched easily through Arlathan, destroying homes and galleries and amphitheaters that had stood for ages. Our people were corralled as slaves, and human contact quickened their veins until every captured elf turned mortal. The elves called to their ancient gods, but there was no answer.

As to why the gods didn't answer, our people left only a legend. They say that Fen'Harel, the Dread Wolf and Lord of Tricksters, approached the ancient gods of good and evil and proposed a truce. The gods of good would remove themselves to heaven, and the lords of evil would exile themselves to the abyss, neither group ever again to enter the other's lands. But the gods did not know that Fen'Harel had planned to betray them, and by the time they realized the Dread Wolf's treachery, they were sealed in their respective realms, never again to interact with the mortal world. It is a fable, to be sure, but those elves who travel the Beyond claim that Fen'Harel still roams the world of dreams, keeping watch over the gods lest they escape from their prisons.

Whatever the case, Arlathan had fallen to the very humans our people had once considered mere pests. It is said that the Tevinter magisters used their great destructive power to force the very ground to swallow Arlathan whole, destroying eons of collected knowledge, culture, and art. The whole of elven lore left only to memory.

—*The Fall of Arlathan, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons**

**Same as in DAO**

It is challenging enough for the casual observer to tell the difference between the Fade and the creatures that live within it, let alone between one type of spirit and another. In truth, there is little that distinguishes them, even for the most astute mages. Since spirits are not physical entities and are therefore not restricted to recognizable forms (or even having a form at all), one can never tell for certain what is alive and what is merely part of the scenery. (It is therefore advisable for the inexperienced researcher to greet all objects he encounters.)

Typically, we misuse the term "spirit" to refer only to the benign, or at least less malevolent, creatures of the Fade, but in truth, all the denizens of the realm beyond the Veil are spirits. As the Chant of Light notes, everything within the Fade is a mimicry of our world. (A poor imitation, for the spirits do not remotely understand what they are copying. It is no surprise that much of the Fade appears like a manuscript translated from Tevinter into Orlesian and back again by drunken initiates.)

In general, spirits are not complex. Or, rather, they are not complex as we understand such things. Each one seizes upon a single facet of human experience: Rage, hunger, compassion, hope, etc. This one idea becomes their identity. We classify as demons those spirits who identify themselves with darker human emotions and ideas.

The most common and weakest form of demon one encounters in the Fade is the rage demon. They are much like perpetually boiling kettles, for they exist only to vent hatred, but rarely have an object to hate. Somewhat above these are the hunger demons, who do little but eat or attempt to eat everything they encounter, including other demons (this is rarely successful). Then there are the sloth demons. These are the first intelligent creatures one typically finds in the Fade. They are dangerous only on those rare occasions that they can be induced to get up and do harm. Desire demons are more clever, and far more powerful, using all forms of bribery to induce mortals into their realms: Wealth, love, vengeance, whatever lies closest to your heart. The most powerful demons yet encountered are the pride demons, perhaps because they, among all their kind, most resemble men.

--*From Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons, by Enchanter Mirdromel.*

## **Blood Magic: The Forbidden School**

**Same as in DAO**

Foul and corrupt are you  
Who have taken My gift  
And turned it against My children.  
—Transfigurations 18:10.

The ancient Tevinters did not originally consider blood magic a school of its own. Rather, they saw it as a means to achieve greater power in any school of magic. The name, of course, refers to the fact that magic of this type uses life, specifically in the form of blood, instead of mana. It was common practice, at one time, for a magister to keep a number of slaves on hand so that, should he undertake the working of a spell that was physically beyond his abilities, he could use the blood of his slaves to bolster the casting.

Over time, however, the Imperium discovered types of spells that could only be worked by blood. Although lyrium will allow a mage to send his conscious mind into the Fade, blood would allow him to find the sleeping minds of others, view their dreams, and even influence or dominate their thoughts. Just as treacherous, blood magic allows the Veil to be opened completely so that demons may physically pass through it into our world.

The rise of the Chant of Light and the subsequent fall of the old Imperium has led to blood magic being all but stamped out—as it should be, for it poses nearly as great a danger to those who would practice it as to the world at large.

—*From The Four Schools: A Treatise, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## **Thedas Calendar**

**Same as in DAO**

For most good folk, the details of our calendar have little purpose. It is useful only for telling them when the Summerday festival will be held, when the snows are expected to begin, and when the harvest must be complete. The naming of the years are a matter for historians and taxmen, and few if pressed could even tell you the reason that our current Age is named after dragons.

It is 9:30 Dragon Age, the thirtieth year of the ninth Age since the crowning of the Chantry's first Divine.

Each Age is exactly 100 years, with the next Age's name chosen in the 99th year. The scholars in Val Royeaux advise the Chantry of portents seen in that 99th year, and Chantry authorities pore over the research for months before the Divine announces the name of the imminent Age. The name is said to be an omen of what is to come, of what the people of Thedas will face for the next hundred years.

The current Age was not meant to be the Dragon Age. Throughout the last months of the Blessed Age, the Chantry was preparing to declare the Sun Age, named for the symbol of the Orlesian Empire, which at that time sprawled over much of the south of Thedas and controlled both Ferelden and what is now Nevarra. It was to be a celebration of Orlesian imperial glory.

But as the rebellion in Ferelden reached a head and the Battle of River Dane was about to begin, a peculiar event occurred: a rampage, the rising of a dreaded high dragon. Dragons had been thought practically extinct since the days of the Nevarran dragon hunts, and they say that to see this great beast rise from the Frostbacks was both majestic and terrifying. As the rampage began and the high dragon decimated the countryside in its search for food, the elderly Divine Faustine II abruptly declared the Dragon Age.

Some say the Divine was declaring support for Orlais in the battle against Ferelden, since the dragon is an element of the Dufayel family heraldry of King Meghren, the so-called Usurper King of Ferelden. Be that as it may, the high dragon's rampage turned towards the Orlesian side of the Frostback Mountains, killing hundreds and sending thousands more fleeing to the northern coast. The Fereldan rebels won the Battle of River Dane, ultimately securing their independence.

Many thus think that the Dragon Age will come to represent a time of violent and dramatic change for all of Thedas. It remains to be seen.

*—From The Studious Theologian, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar, 9:25 Dragon.*

## **The Cardinal Rules of Magic**

**Same as in DAO**

You must not be under the misimpression that magic is all-powerful. There are limits, and not even the greatest mages may overcome them.

No one, for instance, has found any means of traveling-either over great distances or small ones-beyond putting one foot in front of the other. The immutable nature of the physical world prevents this. So no, you may not simply pop over to Minrathous to borrow a cup of sugar, nor may you magic the essay you "forgot" in the apprentice dormitory to your desk. You will simply have to be prepared.

Similarly, even when you send your mind into the Fade, your body remains behind. Only once has this barrier been overcome, and reputedly the spell required two-thirds of the lyrium in the Tevinter Imperium as well as the lifeblood of several hundred slaves. The results were utterly disastrous.

Finally, life is finite. A truly great healer may bring someone back from the very precipice of death, when breath and heartbeat have ceased but the spirit still clings to life. But once the spirit has fled the body, it cannot be recalled. That is no failing of your skills or power, it is simple reality.

--From The Lectures of First Enchanter Wenselus.

## **The Carta**

The casteless dwarves of Orzammar have few prospects. Consigned to live in a crumbling ruin on the social and economic fringes of the mighty dwarven capital, most resort to begging, prostitution, or crime.

Just as all rivers eventually join the sea, all casteless who turn to crime eventually become part of the Carta. The Hero of Ferelden decimated the ranks of this ancient gang while rallying the dwarves to join in the battle against the Archdemon Urthemiel. Unable to recover the power they once had in Orzammar, they turned their attention "topside," using groups of surface-dwelling dwarves to smuggle weapons, lyrium, surface luxuries, people, and other goods between Orzammar and human lands.

Despite the flow of business, its members are still desperate and violent. With no strong leader to rein in their excesses, they have little sense of dwarven honor, and freely break their word, double-cross allies, and renege on deals.

—*From The Stone and Her Children: Dwarves of the Dragon Age, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Chantry Hierarchy**

## **Same as in DAO**

The Divine is the titular head of the Chantry, although since the schism split the Imperial Chantry into its own faction there are now in fact two Divines at any one time. One Divine, informally called the White Divine, is a woman housed in the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux. The other, known as the Black Divine, is a man housed in the Argent Spire in Minrathous.

Neither Divine recognizes the existence of the other, and the informal names are considered sacrilegious. No matter the gender, a Divine is addressed as "Most Holy" or "Your Perfection."

Beneath the rank of Divine is the grand cleric. Each grand cleric presides over numerous chantries and represents the highest religious authority for their region. They travel to Val Royeaux when the College of Clerics convenes, but otherwise remain where they are assigned. All grand clerics are addressed as "Your Grace."

Beneath the grand cleric is the mother (or, in the Imperial Chantry, the father). If a mother is in charge of a particular chantry, "revered" is appended to her title. These are the priests responsible for administering to the spiritual well-being of their flock. A mother or revered mother is addressed as "Your Reverence."

Brothers and sisters form the rank and file of the Chantry and consist of three main groups: affirmed, initiates, and clerics. Affirmed are the lay-brethren of the Chantry, those regular folk who have turned to the Chantry for succor. Often they are people who have led a difficult or irreligious life and have chosen to go into seclusion, or even orphans and similar unfortunates who were raised into Chantry life. The affirmed take care of the chantry and are in turn afforded a life of quiet contemplation, no questions asked.

Only those folk who take vows become initiates. These are men and women in training, whether in academic knowledge or the martial skills of a warrior. All initiates receive an academic education, although only those who seek to become templars learn how to fight in addition.



Clerics are the true academics of the Chantry, those men and women who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of knowledge. They are often found in chantry archives, sages presiding over libraries of books and arcane knowledge. The most senior of these clerics, placed in charge of such archives, are given the title "elder," although such a rank is still beneath that of mother. All other brothers and sisters are addressed simply by noting their title before their name, such as "Brother Genitivi."

—*From a guide for ambassadors from Rivain.*

## **The City Elves**

**Same as in DAO**

When the holy Exalted March of the Dales resulted in the dissolution of the elven kingdom, leaving a great many elves homeless once again, the Divine Renata I declared that all lands loyal to the Chantry must give the elves refuge within their own walls. Considering the atrocities committed by the elves at Red Crossing, this was a great testament to the Chantry's charity. There was one condition, however--the elves were to lay aside their pagan gods and live under the rule of the Chantry.

Some of the elves refused our goodwill. They banded together to form the wandering Dalish elves, keeping their old elven ways--and their hatred of humans--alive. To this day, Dalish elves still terrorize those of us who stray too close to their camps. Most of the elves, however, saw that it was wisest to live under the protection of humans.

And so we took the elves into our cities and tried to integrate them. We invited them into our own homes and gave them jobs as servants and farmhands. Here, in Denerim, the elves even have their own quarter, governed by an elven keeper. Most have proven to be productive members of society. Still, a small segment of the elven community remains dissatisfied. These troublemakers and malcontents roam the streets causing mayhem, rebelling against authority and making a general nuisance of themselves.

--*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Coterie**

Kirkwall is built on a solid foundation of greed and human suffering, and its underworld is a place where everything is for sale and everyone is fair game.

There are many criminal empires within the city, some of which have been around since the Imperium used Kirkwall as a hub in the slave trade. Alliances, spying, manipulation, betrayal, and open warfare is all commonplace in the never-ending struggle for power.

The Coterie is a thieves' guild that has been around for almost a century, but until recently was never a major player in the underworld. Some twenty years ago, the strongest of the local criminal empires was an ancient guild known as the Sabrathan, but its leader was betrayed from within, and during the turmoil the Coterie made a successful grab for power.

Since then, they've sunk their claws into almost every level of Kirkwall, including the city guard, the Dwarven Merchants Guild, and some of the most influential citizens in the city. It's safe to say that the Coterie gets a slice of every pie, and very little goes on in Kirkwall that escapes their notice.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## The Dalish Elves

Same as in DAO

I took the road north from Val Royeaux toward Nevarra with a merchant caravan. A scant two days past the Orlesian border, we were beset by bandits. They struck without warning from the cover of the trees, hammering our wagons with arrows, killing most of the caravan guards instantly. The few who survived the arrow storm drew their blades and charged into the trees after our attackers. We heard screams muffled by the forest, and then nothing more of those men.

After a long silence, the bandits appeared. Elves covered in tattoos and dressed in hides, they looted all the supplies and valuables they could carry from the merchants and disappeared back into the trees.

These, I was informed later, were the Dalish, the wild elves who lurk in the wilderness on the fringes of settled lands, preying upon travelers and isolated farmers. These wild elves have reverted to the worship of their false gods and are rumored to practice their own form of magic, rejecting all human society.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## Darkspawn

Same as in DAO

Those who had sought to claim  
Heaven by violence destroyed it. What was  
Golden and pure turned black.  
Those who had once been mage-lords,  
The brightest of their age,  
Were no longer men, but monsters.  
--*Threnodies 12:1.*

Sin was the midwife that ushered the darkspawn into this world. The magisters fell from the Golden City, and their fate encompassed all our world's. For they were not alone.

No one knows where the darkspawn come from. A dark mockery of men, in the darkest places they thrive, growing in numbers as a plague of locusts will. In raids, they will often take captives, dragging their victims alive into the Deep Roads, but most evidence suggests that these are eaten. Like spiders, it seems darkspawn prefer their food still breathing. Perhaps they are simply spawned by the darkness. Certainly, we know that evil has no trouble perpetuating itself.

The last Blight was in the Age of Towers, striking once again at the heart of Tevinter, spreading south into Orlais and east into the Free Marches. The plagues spread as far as Ferelden, but the withering and twisting of the land stopped well beyond our borders. Here, darkspawn have never been more than the stuff of legends. In the northern lands, however, particularly Tevinter and the Anderfels, they say darkspawn haunt the hinterlands, preying on outlying farmers and isolated villages, a constant threat.

--*From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## Death of a Templar

Same as in DAO

The dry, dusty earth swallows up salty drops that splatter its surface. A tiny insect pauses, sensing the vibrations, and scurries off, leaving behind its invisible energy. As the drops fall, the dark circles merge together, expressing a mirror to their creator.

The primal emotions of bloodlust and sorrow blend into a lethal cocktail that breaks the strongest of men. The jurisdiction of strength must be left to the spirit, not arm nor chest. Only the wisest turn to His inner sanctuary to partition the mind from an all-consuming madness. Seductive voices whispering promise of glory waiting down the weaker path of the flesh, bringing a death far worse than that of hot lead or steel. These blank, hollow promises will echo the unfathomable eternally.

Living comfortably amongst material possessions, it is easy to misunderstand the true meaning of uncontrollable hate. Failing to understand the power of fighting against pure, unfaltering beliefs, against foes that listen only to their soul. Uncontrollable hate. Influenced and thus removed from innocence. The scar is permanent and internal.

The rain, now red, feeds the debt owed for actions passed. Seeking further into the earth, as the mind draws slower. What was it that drew him, himself to this situation? The mind ebbs and parts to a lingering memory of true innocence. He entered war as a newborn enters the world, unknowing of both the horrors and light of the Maker that will save him.

The sound of metal sliding along leather comes from above him. From the second he was born, to his soon-to-be dying breath, his mind was processing and analyzing knowledge and experiences. It is true that he thought he could be wise in his own eyes, but only the most humble recognizes that he knows very little. Bias, speculation and all the false pretenses make way to the sound of the sweeping steal, and then finally, his soul, as ready as his eyes dry from this final understanding, enters His promise of its purist form.

-- *From Death of a Templar, by Ser Andrew, Knight of Andraste and Templar Archivist, 9:4 Dragon.*

## Deathroot

Deathroot has been used in magic and potion making for centuries. It's a fragile-looking plant with a thin stalk and purple flowers, which fruits once a year developing bright red fleshy pods that cause disorientation and dizziness if ingested.

There are two varieties. The more common Arcanist Deathroot was first found by Archon Hadrianus when he discovered it growing on several dead slaves. The other, Lunatic's Deathroot, is most closely associated with the story of the courtesan Melusine, who sought revenge on a powerful magister and his family. She harvested the plant, baked it into small pies for the magister's banquet, and presented them to the magister at a banquet. All the guests were seized by terrifying hallucinations after eating the pies and tore each other to pieces.

—*An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium, by Ines Arancia, botanist*

## Deep Mushroom

"Deep mushroom" refers to the entire group of fungi that grows underground in caves and many parts of the dwarven Deep Roads. Collection can be a dangerous task, as the Deep Roads are often infested with darkspawn. Because of this, dwarven merchants often recruit "casteless" hirelings for the job, and pay them a meager percentage of what they earn selling the mushrooms to surfacers.

The most common varieties used in the herbalist's trade are the Blightcap, Ghoul's Mushroom, and Brimstone Mushroom, almost all of which tend to carry the darkspawn's corruption. While they cannot transmit the disease, this trait often makes them quite poisonous. Deep mushrooms should only be handled by experienced herbalists and should never be consumed without first being adequately cleaned and prepared. Careless consumption has been known to cause insanity, severe abdominal cramping, and even death.

—*An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium, by Ines Arancia, botanist*

## Deep Roads

Same as in DAO

There isn't a dwarf alive who remembers the Deep Roads as they once were. They were the network of tunnels that joined the thaigs together. To be honest, it isn't even right to give them such a simple term as "tunnels": They are works of art, with centuries of planning demonstrated in the geometry of their walls, with the statues of the Paragons that watch over travelers, with the flow of lava that keeps the Deep Roads lit and warm. The cloudgazers up on the surface talk of the Imperial Highway built by the magisters of old, a raised walkway that crossed thousands of miles, something that could only have been built by magic. Perhaps it is comparable to the Deep Roads, although we dwarves didn't need magic.

I suppose it doesn't matter any more. The darkspawn rule the Deep Roads now. When Orzammar sealed off the entrances to the Deep Roads, abandoning everything that lay out there, we handed over the kingdom-that-was to those black bastards forever. To think that there are genlocks crawling over Bownammar now, tearing down our statues and defiling our greatest works! Corruption covers everything we built out there. Every dwarf who goes out and comes back says that it gets worse with each passing year, the foulness spread a little further.

And the cloudgazers think the darkspawn are gone just because they aren't spilling out onto the surface? Huh. One day, when Orzammar is gone for good, they'll find out differently. Those darkspawn won't have anywhere else to go but up, and they'll do it. The surface folk will have themselves a Blight that will never end.

—*Transcript of a conversation with a member of the dwarven Mining Caste, 8:90 Blessed*

## Demonic Possession

Same as in DAO

Why do demons seek to possess the living?

History claims they are malevolent spirits, the first children of the Maker, angry at their creator for turning from them and jealous of those creations he considered superior. They stare across the Veil at the living and do not understand what they see, yet they know they crave it. They desire life, they pull the living across the Veil when they sleep and prey on their psyche with nightmares. Whenever they can, they cross the Veil into our world to possess it outright.

We know that any demon will seek to possess a mage, and upon doing so will create an abomination. Most of the world does not know, however, that the strength of an abomination depends entirely on the power of the demon that possesses the mage. This is true, in fact, of all possessed creatures. One demon is not the same as any other.

Demons can, for instance, be classified. Enchanter Brahm's categorization of demons into that portion of the psyche they primarily prey upon has held since the Tower Age.

According to Brahm, the weakest and most common of demons are those of rage. They are the least intelligent and most prone to violent outbursts against the living. They expend their energies quickly, the most powerful of them exhibiting great strength and occasionally the ability to generate fire.

Next are the demons of hunger. In a living host they become cannibals and vampires, and within the dead they feed upon the living. Theirs are the powers of draining, both of life force and of mana.

Next are the demons of sloth, the first on Brahm's scale that are capable of true intelligence. In its true form, this demon is known as a shade, a thing which is nearly indistinct and invisible, for such is sloth's nature. It hides and stalks, unaware, and when confronted, it sows fatigue and apathy.

Demons of desire are amongst the most powerful, and are the ones most likely to seek out the living and actively trick them into a deal. These demons will exploit anything that can be coveted—wealth, power, lust—and they will always end up getting far more than they give. A desire demon's province is that of illusions and mind control.

Strongest of all demons are those of pride. These are the most feared creatures to loose upon the world: Masters of magic and in possession of vast intellect, they are the true schemers. It is they who seek most strongly to possess mages, and will bring other demons across the Veil in numbers to achieve their own ends—although what that might be has never been discovered. A greater pride demon, brought across the veil, would threaten the entire world.

*--From The Maker's First Children, by Bader, Senior Enchanter of Ostwick, 8:12 Blessed.*

## **Dragon's Blood**

Collecting dragon's blood is extremely difficult, even for the most accomplished dragon hunter. First, one must locate the increasingly rare creatures. Second, one must bleed it. However, I believe that at the moment of death, the blood loses something special—a certain fiery essence, perhaps. Of course, bleeding a live dragon is quite tricky.

Dragon's blood has wide variety of uses, both magical and culinary. It's an important component of rune-crafting and those like my great-grandfather enjoy a sprinkling of the powdered stuff to their food at the dinner table.

*—From Discovering Dragon's Blood: Potions, Tinctures, and Spicy Sauces, by Ferdinand Pentaghost*

## **Elfroot**

Elfroot was first used by the elves of Arlathan, hence the name. The root gave their medicines particular efficacy, so when the Imperium conquered the elves, the magisters adopted its use and its popularity spread to all corners of the empire.

Elfroot is a hardy plant with large green leaves that grows wild in many places. It's so common that it tends to show up in most gardens and fields, almost like a weed. Unlike a weed, however, most people appreciate having access to the wonderful little plant. The roots can be used with very little preparation. Rubbing some of the juice on a wound, for example, will speed up healing and numb pain. And chewing on a slice of root treats minor ailments like indigestion, flatulence, and hoarse throats.

There are several varieties, but the most useful for herbalists are the Bitter, Gossamer, and Royal Elfroots.

*—An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium by Ines Arancia, botanist*

## **Embrium**

Embriums are flowers from the orchid family. Its therapeutic qualities were actually discovered because of the embrium's exceptional beauty.

The beloved daughter of Lord Ignace Poulenc of Orlais fell victim to a terrible sickness of the lungs, which her healers were unable to cure. Thinking the girl would soon perish, her parents surrounded her bed with brightly colored flowers, hoping that they would bring some warmth and cheer in her last days. Oddly enough, the girl began to recover from the illness, and grew stronger each day. Her parents were baffled, but overjoyed. The healers eventually learned that the fragrance of one of the flowers eased the child's breathing. The flower was an embrium, and later became known as the Salubrious Embrium.

The other variant that has certain magical properties is known as Dark Embrium.

—*An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium by Ines Arancia, botanist*

## The Enigma of Kirkwall

Ancient Tevinter lore is hard to come by, but there's history to be had here in Kirkwall, the city once home to the Imperium's slave trade.

What answers does Kirkwall hold? Why look here instead of Perivantium or Vol Dorma? The Imperium does not give up its secrets easily. Even with the magisters centuries dead, our journey is perilous. Here on the dock of the Gallows, we renew our vows. And should we fail, search for the markings of the Band of Three.

—A tattered letter found under a cobblestone. It has curious markings and is signed, "The Band of Three"

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The viscount is suspicious, but the bribe was sufficient to gain access to the restricted section of the archives. The money would have been better spent elsewhere, the archives being almost devoid of Imperium-era records.

When the slaves revolted, they hunted magisters and burned the city—at least the parts that could be burned. One account says that the streets were littered with piles of scrolls and books set aflame.

Is our quest futile? Did the slaves destroy the answer? As Maferath's armies toppled the Imperium, they sent three magisters and their legions here. They never arrived. But why march here of all places? What were they coming for?

—Behind a panel with curious markings, signed, "The Band of Three"

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It is as we thought. The quarries of Kirkwall were found after the city was sacked by the Imperium and after they started constructing the city. The Imperium found the mineral wealth, not the indigenous people. The histories give conflicting accounts on who lived here before the Imperium. Some say the Alamarri. Some say the Daefads. We do know it was a barbarian people who had little need of the metals in the hills.

So why did the Imperium come here in such force? It is hard to disprove Brother Mikhel's theory that the natural harbor would be important for their armies, but magisters ruled, not common men. What barrier would a simple sea pose to them? The wars with the Alamarri wouldn't start until centuries later.

Each clue we find only leads to more questions, but we will not give up.

—Underneath a pile of small boulders carved with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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In the back alleys of Lowtown you can find extraordinary things. Priceless tomes of knowledge can be bought with a handful of gold: The Chant of Archon Lovais, a whole chapter of the Midnight Compendium. Some of these books were thought lost forever!

And these are no forgeries. I've verified their authenticity myself. The fences have no inkling that what they're selling has value. Where did these books come from?

After several failed attempts, I got my answer underneath the city. There is a hive of hidden passages in Kirkwall's sewers. Now and then a lucky "sewer rat" comes across an unlooted chamber, and then a cache of ancient Tevinter relics spreads through the black market. We must search below the city.

—Underneath a cobblestone with curious markings, faintly glowing. It is signed, "The Band of Three"

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A maze of caves, sewers, and hidden passages! We found three Tevinter chambers already looted, but today (tonight?) we found one closed. It was a small cell containing a few trinkets and a common tome, but it symbolizes hope. The magisters had hundreds of mages deep below Kirkwall. They lived and researched here, far from the scrutiny of common men.

Many ancient cities specialized in arcane research, but why did Kirkwall hide its efforts here? Why go to such great pains to keep it out of sight? Were they a cabal of renegade magisters? Or was this a special project of the archon?

—Hidden in a small fissure near curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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A master mason made a comment that set my mind afire. She said that of all the cities she's worked in, Kirkwall was the most difficult, and that the city is almost literally a maze. Recollecting my first years in Kirkwall, I have to agree. Getting lost was commonplace. The city was a sprawling mess.

The mason showed me a plan of the city, and my heart skipped a beat. There were patterns in the intersections, back alleys, and boulevards. Some magisters believed in the power of symbols or shapes. In the oldest parts of the city, one can make out the outlines of glyphs in the very streets! What manner of magic is this?

—Underneath a cobblestone with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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Ironically, the Chantry has the best records on the Imperium occupation that we've found—none of the forbidden texts, which have undoubtedly been destroyed, but many administrative records. In their cold, numbered rows, misery is told. Thousands of slaves passed through the Gallows to work the mines or to be shipped elsewhere.

The list of elven children is numbing: "three maimed, two mute, and four serviceable." These numbers don't add up. For every thousand slaves that came to Kirkwall, a hundred disappeared. I checked the tax rolls, as well, and the discrepancy exists there, too, if one has the wit to see it: 203 slaves went missing in the Imperium's 312th year! That's just one year. Other records showed similar discrepancies. Over centuries, practically a whole civilization of slaves simply disappeared.

—Hidden inside the cover of a book with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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After pursuing another dead end, we were attacked by maleficarum. I fear V. will not make it. The fences must have tipped them off. Are they cultists trying to protect the answer? Are they after it themselves? Or was it a random attack?

The mages of Kirkwall have a more troubled history than those in other Circles. A greater percentage of them do not survive the Harrowing, and a greater percentage turn to blood magic—almost double that of Starkhaven or Ostwick. Is there a secret fraternity delving into the Tevinter secrets of this city?

Either way, we must be more careful, lest we become the Band of One. Or None.

—Hidden under a cobblestone with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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Access has not been easy, and I fear my disguise will not bear great scrutiny. But I saw the records the templars say do not exist. The blood of countless slaves was spilled beneath the city in sacrifice. Whole buildings were built upon lakes of blood. The sewers have grooves where blood would flow, all leading down. The scale is hard to fathom.

A blood mage can channel great power from a simple cut. At least a thousand unfortunates died here every year for centuries. For what ungodly purpose would one need so much power?

I must retreat now before I am uncovered. But the answer is close.

—Behind a panel with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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It is well known that the Veil is thin in Kirkwall, small wonder given the suffering in the city. But we've discovered the magisters were deliberately thinning it even further. Beneath the city, demons can contact even normal men. Did they seek the Black City to compound the madness of their previous efforts? Or was it something else? We've found a chamber where the Veil is at its thinnest, long-since looted, but the power is still there. Tonight we will go there. Pray for us. Pray for us all.

—Hidden behind a rock with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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A recent trove was uncovered. This one was big, perhaps the archon's visitation chambers.

And a flood of tomes is on the market. Even the simple fences know something is amiss—they've raised their prices at the frenzy of collectors. One said he sold a copy of the Fell Grimoire! I doubt he would lie; how could he know that tome is a mere legend?

If that is real, then what of the Forgotten Ones? This journey has taken us to many strange places, and made us re-evaluate many former truths. Where will it end?

—Hidden under a cobblestone with curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"

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We went to the center of it all. F. is dead and I am alone and injured. I must go back and put an end to it. The maddening thing is there is still no answer. But the Forgotten One, or demon or whatever it is, must be destroyed. I fear one may already be unbound.

I foreswear my oaths. The magister's lore must be burned and the ashes scattered. No good can come of it. And Maker help us if someone does answer what we could not.

—Hidden near curious markings and signed, "The Band of Three"



## The Fade

Same as in DAO

The study of the Fade is as old as humankind. For so long as men have dreamed, we have walked its twisting paths, sometimes catching a glimpse of the city at its heart. Always as close as our own thoughts, but impossibly separated from our world.

The Tevinter Imperium once spent vast fortunes of gold, lyrium, and human slaves in an effort to map the terrain of the Fade, an ultimately futile endeavor. Although portions of it belong to powerful spirits, all of the Fade is in constant flux. The Imperium succeeded in finding the disparate and ever-shifting realms of a dozen demon lords, as well as cataloging a few hundred types of spirits, before they were forced to abandon the project.

The relationship of dreamers to the Fade is complex. Even when entering the Fade through the use of lyrium, mortals are not able to control or affect it. The spirits who dwell there, however, can, and as the Chantry teaches us, the great flaw of the spirits is that they have neither imagination nor ambition. They create what they see through their sleeping visitors, building elaborate copies of our cities, people, and events, which, like the reflections in a mirror, ultimately lack context or life of their own. Even the most powerful demons merely plagiarize the worst thoughts and fears of mortals, and build their realms with no other ambition than to taste life.

—*From Tranquility and the Role of the Fade in Human Culture, by First Enchanter Josephus.*

## Felandaris

The name felandaris is elven, meaning "demon weed," which is fitting for this rare plant because it grows only in places where the Veil is thin. Felandaris is easily identified. It's a twisted, wicked-looking shrub with long, thorny shoots, and no leaves: a skeletal hand, reaching out from an unmarked grave. Many swear the plant radiates a palpable aura of malevolence, so it comes as no surprise that it unnerves many a junior herbalist.

—*An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium by Ines Arancia, botanist*

## Forbidden Knowledge

### Tarohne's Book of Blood

Was Dabbon Hait one mage? Or a full cabal? I found another reference to Xebenkeck in his Black Journal:

"The blood feeds, the blood nourishes.  
In blood, the call is heard. In blood, the deal is made.  
My master bathed in a river of blood,  
Then the Great Xebenkeck came!"

### Tarohne's Beginning

In 4:2 Black is the oldest account of the Forbidden Ones, though most mages consider them a hoax. But someone had to make that first deal, that first contact with the other side. From the unknown mage's account:

"The first of the magus cast themselves deep in the Fade in search of answers and power, always power. They found the forbidden ones — Xebenkeck, Imshael, Gaxkang the Unbound, and The Formless One. Many conversations were had and much of the fabric of the world revealed. And thus the magic of blood was born."

Even those who consider this folly dare not utter these names.

### Tarohne's Lessons

Everything you learned was a lie. Andraste was a deluded fool. The Maker is a hoax. There is far more evidence of the Forbidden Ones and demons than has been gathered over a thousand years of a fictitious god.

Demons are not enemies—they are tools to be used. Extract what secrets you can and teach others. Some of us will die, some will be corrupted. But each victory is another pieces of the truth we uncover.

### **Tarohne's Beginnings II**

Inside the grimoire's pages were such secrets. A mage's rightful place is not under the heel of the templars. We are masters of the elements. We call forth the spirits themselves. As far as we have advanced, the ancient Tevinter mages knew so much more... and even they were only starting their journey to understand the nature of our world.

We were never meant to walk among mortal men. We were meant to command them.

### **Tarohne's Prophecies**

The Fell Grimoire holds the names of power. It holds the key to their summoning. Xebenkeck will return. He will feast on the blood of a thousand of my enemies. It is inevitable!

### **Excerpt from The Last Letters of Tarohne**

I have copied the grimoire and hidden it. It must live on. It is the signpost of The Path, and The Path never dies. I have set guardians along it, but you must overcome them. Read the signs, my brothers and sisters. For even if my enemies destroy me, together we cannot fail. There are secrets undreamt of deep in the Fade. Therein lies our destiny—our salvation.

### **The Founding of the Chantry**

**Same as in DAO**

Kordilius Drakon, king of the city-state of Orlais, was a man of uncommon ambition. In the year -15 Ancient, the young king began construction of a great temple dedicated to the Maker, and declared that by its completion he would not only have united the warring city-states of the south, he would have brought Andrastian belief to the world.

In -3 Ancient, the temple was completed. There, in its heart, Drakon knelt before the eternal flame of Andraste and was crowned ruler of the Empire of Orlais. His first act as Emperor: To declare the Chantry as the established Andrastian religion of the Empire.

It took three years and several hundred votes before Olessa of Montsimnard was elected to lead the new Chantry. Upon her coronation as Divine, she took the name Justinia, in honor of the disciple who recorded Andraste's songs. In that moment, the ancient era ended and the Divine Age began.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

### **Glitterdust**

Glitterdust is the powdered form of a rock found along the Wounded Coast. When explorers brought the sparkling rock to the markets of the Free Marches, it became immediately popular among wealthy ladies who crushed it and applied the powder to their faces. The added brightness and lustre to the skin, however, soon paled in comparison to the developing rash and coughing fits. As it turned out, glitterdust is dangerous if ingested or inhaled. It's also extremely flammable, as several ladies discovered after powdering their hair while standing next to a candle. Unfortunately, this resulted in a dozen deaths by conflagration. These days, glitterdust is used sparingly, and only by experienced alchemists. The most common form of the substance is Volatile Glitterdust. If gathered from caves where darkspawn dwell, the rock produces a powder known as Tainted Glitterdust.

## **The Grey Wardens**

**Same as in DAO**

The first Blight had already raged for 90 years. The world was in chaos. A god had risen, twisted and corrupted. The remaining gods of Tevinter were silent, withdrawn. What writing we have recovered from those times is filled with despair, for everyone believed, from the greatest archons to the lowliest slaves, that the world was coming to an end.

At Weisshaupt fortress in the desolate Anderfels, a meeting transpired. Soldiers of the Imperium, seasoned veterans who had known nothing their entire lifetimes except hopeless war, came together. When they left Weisshaupt, they had renounced their oaths to the Imperium. They were soldiers no longer: They were the Grey Wardens.

The Wardens began an aggressive campaign against the Blight, striking back against the darkspawn, reclaiming lands given up for lost. The Blight was far from over, but their victories brought notice, and soon they received aid from every nation in Thedas.

They grew in number as well as reputation. Finally, in the year 992 of the Tevinter Imperium, upon the Silent Plains, they met the archdemon Dumat in battle. A third of all the armies of northern Thedas were lost to the fighting, but Dumat fell and the darkspawn fled back underground.

Even that was not the end.

The Imperium once revered seven gods: Dumat, Zazikel, Toth, Andoral, Razikale, Lusacan, and Urthemiel. Four have risen as archdemons. The Grey Wardens have kept watch through the ages, well aware that peace is fleeting, and that their war continues until the last of the dragon-gods is gone.

*--From Ferelden: Folklore and History, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

## **Hierarchy of the Circle**

**Same as in DAO**

It is no simple matter, safeguarding ordinary men from mages, and mages from themselves. Each Circle tower must have some measure of self-government, for it is ever the Maker's will that men be given the power to take responsibility for our own actions: To sin and fail, as well as to achieve the highest grace and glory on our own strength.

You, who will be tasked with the protection of the Circle, must be aware of its workings. The first enchanter is the heart of any tower. He will determine the course his Circle will take, he will choose which apprentices may be tested and made full mages, and you will work most closely with him.

Assisting the first enchanter will be the senior enchanters, a small council of the most trusted and experienced magi in the tower. From this group, the next first enchanter is always chosen. Beneath the council are the enchanters. These are the teachers and mentors of the tower, and you must get to know them in order to keep your finger on the pulse of the Circle, for the enchanters will always know what is happening among the children.

All those who have passed their Harrowing but have not taken apprentices are mages. This is where most trouble in a Circle lies, in the idleness and inexperience of youth. The untested apprentices are the most numerous denizens of any tower, but they more often pose threats to themselves, due to their lack of training, than to anyone else.

*--Knight-Commander Serain of the Chantry templars, in a letter to his successor.*

## History of Kirkwall: Chapter 1

It's difficult for many to comprehend today, but there was a time when Kirkwall was believed to be the very edge of the world.

It was Emerius then, named after its founder Magister Emerius Krayvan, and it was but one outpost on the very fringe of the Tevinter Imperium. There the magister's serfs worked at the quarries for the jet stone needed for the mighty temples of Minrathous. After a slave rebellion nearly burned the temple to the ground in the great city, it was determined that a center for slave trade would need to be established well away from the more civilized parts of the Imperium. (Though account may be exaggerated, since the notorious Archon Vanarius Issar narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of an elven slave at the time.)

Because the new slave outpost would become wealthy beyond imagining, competition among prospects reportedly took over twenty years to resolve, resulting in great bloodshed in the frontier, well away from the archon's eyes. Magister took arms against magister, mostly in the form of small armies of serfs and mercenaries. Over half the slaves in existence allegedly died in these battles before Emerius was finally chosen, thanks to the marriage of Krayvan's son to the archon's daughter.

Within a mere decade, the mighty fortress was erected on the cliff where Kirkwall now stands. Over one million slaves passed through its gates before the Imperium eventually fell, an unimaginable number by today's standards. The Krayvan family itself became patrons of the next three archons and was one of the driving forces behind the extension of the Imperial Highway into the Ferelden Valley, a move that would cost them considerable political influence after the resistance of the Alamarri tribes. During its height, Emerius was a jewel to rival the mightiest of the Imperial cities and the greatest center of civilization outside Tevinter.

—*From Kirkwall: the City of Chains, by Brother Genitivi, 9:24 Dragon*

## History of Kirkwall: Chapter 2

As the Imperium's borders slowly receded after the devastation of the First Blight and the subsequently barbarian invasion, many outposts in the area known today as the Free Marches, were cut off from centers of power. Numerous warlords tried consolidating the region into a single kingdom, but resistance prevailed. Emerius held out for almost a century until it fell to a slave revolt in 25 Ancient. It was not the first such revolt Emerius suffered, but it was the last.

It started when an Alamarri slave named Radun began earning popularity and power by pushing for better conditions. Radun's growing influence prevented the magisters from touching him, but eventually they had him poisoned. Furious, a group of Radun's supporters stormed the Gallows and were massacred, and so began a bloody yearlong rebellion.

The city burned, and wealthy Hightown was sacked. The magisters hung before cheering crowds. Emerius assumed the new name of Kirkwall, "kirk" meaning "black," after its jet stone cliffs. The new city plunged into anarchy for over a decade, and its defenses fell into ruin. Kirkwall has been conquered many times since, the city's own independence suffering since the freeing of its slaves.

—*From Kirkwall: the City of Chains, by Brother Genitivi, 9:24 Dragon*

## History of Kirkwall: Chapter 3

The Qunari first thundered into Kirkwall in 7:56 Storm during last of the New Exalted Marches.

The collected nations of Thedas were attempting to drive the Qunari from the northern mainland once and for all. Qunari armies were on the retreat, but in a desperate gamble, their fleet circled around the Amaranthine coast and landed a great force near the Marcher city of Ostwick. Their plan was to overwhelm the Marcher cities of Starkhaven and Kirkwall, Starkhaven to block the roads leading north, and Kirkwall to block ships on the Waking Sea coming from Orlais, all in an effort to deny supplies to the Thedas armies assaulting Rivain. The attack on Starkhaven eventually failed, but Kirkwall was attacked in a daring night raid where the Qunari used their leashed saarebas mages in an unprecedented display of sorcery. The walls were torn down and the city was taken, and for the next four years, Kirkwall endured the most brutal occupation in its history.

Writings from that time are scarce. It was not until after the city was freed that the Qunari's deeds came to light: children taken from families, forced conversion to the Qunari religion, and brutal labor camps. It's ironic that the old slave quarters of Lowtown, still intact after centuries, provided the perfect means for the Qunari to control the city's people. When the famous Orlesian chevalier, Ser Michel Lafaille, rode into the city after finally defeating the Qunari defenders, he wrote, "Kirkwall is full of people with empty eyes that have had all independent thought driven from them." When Lafaille was appointed the city's first viscount by the emperor in 7:60 Storm, he made it his mission to undo the religious conditioning. The Lafaille bloodline remained popular enough that when the city finally rebelled against Orlesian rule in 8:05 Blessed, "viscount" remained the enduring title for Kirkwall's rulers despite its origin.

—*From Kirkwall: the City of Chains, by Brother Genitivi, 9:24 Dragon*

## **History of Kirkwall: Chapter 4**

The Threnhold family assumed its foreboding control of the city at the very onset of the Dragon Age, less than a week after Maric Theirin retook the Ferelden throne from Orlais.

Since this was followed by a civil war in Antiva (the much-maligned "Three Queens" era) and a coup in the Tevinter Imperium, many thought the Dragon Age would bring devastating change. Perhaps this was a hasty estimate, but it was true for Kirkwall. Viscount Chivalry Threnhold was a vicious thug who took power through a campaign of intimidation, and his son Perrin who succeeded him in 9:14 Dragon Age was even worse.

Taxes were crippling and Perrin Threnhold used the ancient chains extending from "the Twins" standing at Kirkwall's harbor - unused since the New Exalted Marches - to block sea traffic and charge exorbitant fees from Orlesian ships. The Empire threatened invasion following the closure of the Waking Sea passage, and for the first time, the Chantry used the templars to pressure the viscount. Until that point, the templars had done nothing to counter the Threnholds even though, as the largest armed force in Kirkwall, they could have. Knight-Commander Guylian's only written comment was in a letter to Divine Beatrix III: "It is not our place to interfere in political affairs. We are here to safeguard the city against magic, not against itself." The divine, as a friend to the emperor, clearly had other ideas.

In response, Viscount Perrin hired a mercenary army, forcing a showdown with the templars. They stormed the Gallows and hung Knight-Commander Guylian, igniting a series of battles that ended with Perrin's arrest and the last of his family's rule. The templars were hailed as heroes, and even though they wished to remain out of Kirkwall's affairs, it was now forced upon them. Knight-Commander Meredith appointed Lord Marlowe Dumar as the new viscount in 9:21 Dragon and she has remained influential in the city's rule ever since.

—*From Kirkwall: the City of Chains, by Brother Genitivi, 9:24 Dragon*

## **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 1 - The Imperium in flames**

**Same as in DAO**

The first Blight devastated the Tevinter Imperium. Not only had the darkspawn ravaged the countryside, but Tevinter citizens had to face the fact that their own gods had turned against them. Dumat, the Old God once known as the Dragon of Silence, had risen to silence the world, and despite the frenzied pleas for help, the other Old Gods did nothing. The people of the Imperium began to question their faith, murdering priests and burning temples to punish their gods for not returning to help.

In those days, even after the devastation of the first Blight, the Imperium stretched across the known world. Fringed with barbarian tribes, the Imperium was well prepared for invasions and attacks from without. Fitting, then, that the story of its downfall begins from within.

The people of the far northern and eastern reaches of the Imperium rose up against their powerful overlords in rebellion. The Tevinter magisters summoned demons to put down these small rebellions, leaving corpses to burn as examples to all who would dare revolt. The Imperium began to tear itself apart from within, throngs of angry and disillusioned citizens doing what centuries of opposing armies could not. But the magisters were confident in their power, and they could not imagine surviving a Blight only to be destroyed by their own subjects.

Even after the Blight, Tevinter commanded an army larger than that of any other organized nation in Thedas, but that army was scattered and its morale dwindling. The ruin of Tevinter was such that the Alamarri barbarians, who had spread their clans and holds over the wilderness of the Ferelden Valley at the far southeast edge of the Imperium, saw weakness in their enemy, and, after an age of oppression, embarked on a campaign not only to free their own lands, but to bring down mighty Tevinter as well.

The leaders of that blessed campaign were the great barbarian warlord, Maferath, and his wife, Andraste. Their dreams and ambitions would change the world forever.

--From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.

## **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 2 - A prophet born**

**Same as in DAO**

When the prophet Andraste and her husband Maferath arrived at the head of their barbarian horde, southern Tevinter was thrown into chaos. The Imperium had defended against invasions in the past, but now they stood without the protection of their gods, with their army in tatters and their country devastated by the Blight. Many felt that the timing of the invasion was yet another of the Maker's miracles in Andraste's campaign to spread His divine word.

Andraste was more than simply the wife of a warlord, after all--she was also the betrothed of the Maker. Enraptured by the melodic sound of her voice as she sang to the heavens for guidance, the Maker Himself appeared to Andraste and proposed that she come with Him, leaving behind the flawed world of humanity. In her wisdom, Andraste pleaded with the Maker to return to His people and create paradise in the world of men. The Maker agreed, but only if all of the world would turn away from the worship of false gods and accept the Maker's divine commandments.

Armed with the knowledge of the one true god, Andraste began the Exalted Marches into the weakened Imperium. One of the Maker's commandments, that magic should serve man rather than rule over him, was as honey to the souls of the downtrodden of Tevinter, who lived under the thumbs of the magisters.

Word of Andraste's Exalted March, of her miracles and military successes, spread far and wide. Those in the Imperium who felt the Old Gods had abandoned them eagerly listened to the words of the Maker. Those throngs of restless citizens that destroyed temples now did so in the name of the Maker and His prophet, Andraste. As Maferath's armies conquered the lands of southern Tevinter, so did Andraste's words conquer hearts.

It is said that the Maker smiled on the world at the Battle of Valarian Fields, in which the forces of Maferath challenged and defeated the greatest army Tevinter could muster. The southern reaches of the mighty Imperium now lay at the mercy of barbarians. Faith in the Maker, bolstered by such miracles, threatened to shake the foundations of the Imperium apart.

Of course, the human heart is more powerful than the greatest weapon, and when wounded, it is capable of the blackest of deeds.

--From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.

### **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 3 - On the betrayal of Andraste Same as in DAO**

It is said that at the Battle of Valarian Fields, Maferath stood and looked out over his armies. He had conquered the southern reaches of the greatest empire the world had ever known and built splintered barbarian clans into a force to be feared. With pride in his heart, he turned to congratulate his men and found that they had turned from him.

Maferath fell to the evil of jealousy. After all that he had done, his wife was the one to receive all the glory. He saw his wife's power and influence, and tired of his place as second husband, below the Maker. His heart swelled with fury. If he had conquered just to have his wife wrested from him by a forgotten god and a legion of faith-hungry rabble, then perhaps this war was not worth the trouble.

Here, history and the Chant of Light come apart. History tells us that Maferath looked north into the central Imperium and saw nothing but more war against a rapidly regrouping army, and he despaired. The Chant of Light holds that Maferath chafed with jealousy of the Maker, and jealousy of the glory that Andraste received although it was he who led the armies.

Maferath traveled to the Imperial capital of Minrathous to speak with the Archon Hessarian. There he offered up his wife to the Imperium in return for a truce that would end hostilities once and for all. The archon, eager to put down the voice of the prophet that stirred his own people against him, agreed. Maferath led Andraste into an ambush where she was captured by Imperial agents, putting an end to her Exalted March.

Crowds of loyalists stood in the central square of Minrathous to watch Andraste's execution. By command of the archon, she was burned at the stake in what the Imperium believed to be the most painful punishment imaginable. According to the Chantry, however, Andraste was instead purified and made whole by the flames, ascending to life at her Maker's side. By all accounts, there was only silence where they expected screams. At the sight of the prophet burning, the crowds were filled with a profound guilt, as if they had participated in a great blasphemy. So moving was the moment that the archon himself drew his sword and thrust it into the prophet's heart, ending her torment and leaving those assembled to consider the weight of what they had seen.

Whereas the execution of Andraste was meant to be a symbol of defeat for the faith of the Maker, in truth it all but sealed the fate of the worship of the Old Gods and paved the way for the spread of the Maker's chant.

--From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.

## **The History of the Chantry: Chapter 4 - On the birth of the Chantry    Same as in DAO**

The crowds present at the death of Andraste were right to feel despair. It is believed that the prophet's execution angered the Maker, and He turned His back on humanity once more, leaving the people of Thedas to suffer in the dark.

In these dark times, mankind scrambled for a light, any light. Some found comfort in demonic cults that promised power and riches in return for worship. Others prayed to the Old Gods for forgiveness, begging the great dragons to return to the world. Still others fell so low as to worship the darkspawn, forming vile cults dedicated to the exaltation of evil in its purest form. It is said that the world wept as its people begged for a savior who would not come.

Andraste's followers, however, did not abandon her teachings when she died. The Cult of Andraste rescued her sacred ashes from the courtyard in Minrathous after her execution, stealing them away to a secret temple. The location of that temple has long been lost, but the ashes of Andraste served as a symbol of the enduring nature of the faith in the Maker, that humanity could earn the Maker's forgiveness despite its grievous insult to Him.

With time, the Cult of Andraste spread and grew, and the Chant of Light took form. Sing this chant in the four corners of Thedas, it was said, and the world would gain the Maker's attention at last. As the Chant of Light spread, the Cult of Andraste became known as the Andrastian Chantry. Those who converted to the Chantry's beliefs found it their mission to spread Andraste's word.

There were many converts, including powerful people in the Imperium and in the city-states of what is now Orlais. Such was the power of the Maker's word that the young King Drakon undertook a series of Exalted Marches meant to unite the city-states and create an empire solely dedicated to the Maker's will. The Orlesian Empire became the seat of the Chantry's power, the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux the source of the movement that birthed the organized Chantry as we know it today. Drakon, by then Emperor Drakon I, created the Circle of Magi, the Order of Templars and the holy office of the Divine. Many within the Chantry revere him nearly as equal with Andraste herself.

The modern Chantry is a thing of faith and beauty, but it is also a house of necessity, protecting Thedas from powerful forces that would do it harm. Where the Grey Wardens protect the world from the Blights, the Chantry protects mankind from itself. Most of all, the Chantry works to earn the Maker's forgiveness, so that one day He will return and transform the world into the paradise it was always meant to be.

--From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar.

### **History of the Circle**

**Same as in DAO**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that nothing is more successful at inspiring a person to mischief as being told not to do something. Unfortunately, the Chantry of the Divine Age had some trouble with obvious truths. Although it did not outlaw magic-quite the contrary, as the Chantry relied upon magic to kindle the eternal flame which burns in every brazier in every chantry-it relegated mages to lighting candles and lamps. Perhaps occasional dusting of rafters and eaves.

I will give my readers a moment to contemplate how well such a role satisfied the mages of the time.

It surprised absolutely no one when the mages of Val Royeaux, in protest, snuffed the sacred flames of the cathedral and barricaded themselves inside the choir loft. No one, that is, but Divine Ambrosia II, who was outraged and attempted to order an Exalted March upon her own cathedral. Even her most devout Templars discouraged that idea. For 21 days, the fires remained unlit while negotiations were conducted, legend tells us, by shouting back and forth from the loft.



The mages went cheerily into exile in a remote fortress outside of the capital, where they would be kept under the watchful eye of the Templars and a council of their own elder magi. Outside of normal society, and outside of the Chantry, the mages would form their own closed society, the Circle, separated for the first time in human history.

*--From Of Fires, Circles, and Templars: A History of Magic in the Chantry, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar.*

### **An Honest Answer Regarding Apostates**

A mage who does not receive the teachings of the Circle and who does not have the words of Andraste in her heart is an apostate, and a danger to us all. Without the guidance of the holy Chantry, a mage may foolishly dabble in the darker arts—blood magic, or demon summoning, thus becoming maleficarum. And a mage's mind will ever be a doorway to spirits of the Fade; without proper instruction, this doorway remains open and unsecured. If a demon should come through this doorway and possess a mage, an abomination is created. Abominations know only madness. They cannot be reasoned with and will slaughter man, woman and child without thought. Whole cities have fallen to these creatures. Thousands have died at their hands.

The Chantry and her templars have a duty to ensure that this does not happen.

If I knew a better way to deal with magic, I would seize upon it immediately. You say we should let the mages guard themselves. I tell you that this is no solution. Look at the Tevinter Imperium. Their magisters do not know restraint. Without Chantry oversight the magisters abuse their power. Those without magic are trampled underfoot and forced to serve. Slaves are slaughtered by the hundreds to feed the magisters' hunger for power. Even some mages are not spared, for in mages as in all humans, there exists a spectrum—on one end, the very powerful, on the other, those that can barely light a candle. The Empire cares only for the strongest, and those who do not compare favorably are thrown to the wolves.

Imagine your children growing up in such a world. If a mage asked it of you, you would have to give him your daughter, not knowing what his plans for her might be. You could not resist him, and neither could she. Without our templars and without the Circle, the common man would have no defense against magic. We must deny the mages certain freedoms for the common good. I wish there was another way. I tell the apprentices this is a test of their faith, that it is the will of the Maker. Many understand that we do what we do for their own good.

*—Excerpt of a letter from Grand Cleric Francesca of Starkhaven to Lord Guthrie Abholz.*

### **The Imperial Chantry**

**Same as in DAO**

There are those who would tell you that the Chantry is the same everywhere as it is here, that the Divine in Val Royeaux reigns supreme in the eyes of the Maker and that this fact is unquestioned throughout Thedas.

Do not believe it.

The Maker's second commandment, "Magic must serve man, not rule over him," never held the same meaning within the ancient Tevinter Imperium as it did elsewhere. The Chantry there interpreted the rule as meaning that mages should never control the minds of other men, and that otherwise their magic should benefit the rulers of men as much as possible. When the clerics of Tevinter altered the Chant of Light to reflect this interpretation of the commandment, the Divine in Val Royeaux ordered the clerics to revert to the original Chant. They refused, claiming corruption within Val Royeaux, an argument that grew until, in 4:87 [sic] Towers, the Chantry in Tevinter elected its own "legitimate and uncorrupted" Divine Valhail—who was not only male, but also happened to be one of the most prominent members of the Tevinter Circle of the Magi. This "Black Divine" was reviled outside Tevinter, his existence an offense to the Chantry in Val Royeaux.

After four Exalted Marches to dislodge these "rebels," all that the Chantry in Val Royeaux accomplished was to cement the separation. While most aspects of the Imperial Chantry's teachings are the same, prohibitions against magic have been weakened, and male priests have become more prevalent. The Circle of the Magi today rules Tevinter directly, ever since the Archon Nomaran was elected in 7:34 Storm directly from the ranks of the enchanters, to great applause from the public. He dispensed with the old rules forbidding mages from taking part in politics, and within a century, the true rulers within the various imperial houses—the mages—took their places openly within the government. The Imperial Divine is now always drawn from the ranks of the first enchanters and operates as Divine and Grand Enchanter both.

This is utter heresy to any member of the Chantry outside of Tevinter, a return to the days of the magisters, which brought the Blights down upon us. But it exists, and even though we have left the Tevinter Imperium to the mercies of the dread Qunari, still they have endured. Further confrontation between the Black Divine and our so-called "White Divine" is inevitable.

—*From Edicts of the Black Divine, by Father David of Qarinus, 8:11 Blessed*

### **The Kirkwall City Guard**

It is with pride that I, your viscount, grant the authority of law and civil enforcement upon the guardsmen of an independent Kirkwall.

No more will we defer to the will of foreign troops or draw a holy order into tasks unbefitting their mandate. These proud men and women will be of the people and will enforce the laws we have elected for a civil and ordered society. And should the specter of invasion return, the noble guardsmen will conscript from the population, for who better to amass the people's will than the constables of law charged with its inspection?

This is a great day, fair Kirkwall, and I am honored to appoint the first guard-captain. Long may he serve the will of a free people.

—*From "Orlesian Legacy: How Institutions of the Oppressors Linger," the speeches of Viscount Michel Lafaille, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

### **The Llomerry Accords**

50 years. That's how long it took the Imperium to drive out the Qunari occupation. But the rest of Northern Thedas was not so lucky.

Both Divines, white and black, declared Exalted Marches and for the only time since the Schism of the Chantry, they worked together. A century-long siege resulted, with the giant Qunari entrenched in Antiva and Rivain, and all of Thedas throwing armies against them.

The war drained the resources of every nation in Thedas, leaving most on the brink of collapse. For the giants, it did not appear to be the damage to their armada or the loss of their soldiers, but the terrible toll upon the Rivaini population that prompted their retreat. When the Third New Exalted March had all but massacred the people of Kont-aar without even chipping the Qunari occupying force, the giants finally withdrew.

The treaty that put an official end to the Qunari Wars was signed on the politically neutral island of Llomerryn off the southern coast of Rivain. 150 years after the assault on the mainland began, the Qunari left our shores. They received the northern archipelago in exchange for cessation of hostilities against all the nations on the accord. Only Tevinter refused to sign, and so the war continues to rage in the Imperium to the present day.

It's worth noting, however, that the Kingdom of Rivain immediately violated the treaty. Twice. Once, when the humans of northern Rivain—nearly all practitioners of the Qun and therefore by definition, "Qunari"—refused to leave their homes and go in exile to the islands. And again, when the Rivain Chantry and nationalist forces, unable to convert its people back to the worship of the Maker, tried a purge by the sword, slaughtering countless unarmed people and burying them in mass graves. It's a fortunate mystery that the leaders in Kont-aar did not alert their allies in the Northern Passage, or we'd still be fighting the giants now.

—*From The Exalted Marches: An Examination of Chantry Warfare, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Lyrium**

Lyrium is the king of metals. Beneath our feet, it sings. When properly refined, it is a smooth, slightly iridescent, silvery liquid. In the hands of the dwarven Smith Caste, it is mixed with steel to produce indestructible armor and blades that hold an edge for centuries. In the hands of the Shaperate, it becomes a repository for living memories. And some scholars maintain this as evidence that lyrium is, itself, alive.

It finds its most lucrative application in the hands of the Formari, who use it in conjunctions with baser metals like gold, silverite, veridium, or even iron to produce enchantments. Though mages, of course, consume it in a diluted form to bolster their abilities, this is not recommended. Overindulgence in lyrium can have disastrous consequences, particularly in more concentrated amounts. It is not advisable, for instance, that any reader handle raw lyrium, which in many cases can kill on contact.

—*An excerpt from An Alchemical Primer of Metallurgy: Volume One by Lord Cerastes of Marnas Pell.*

## **The Mage Underground**

To Knight-Commander Meredith, re. the so-called "Mage Underground"

Every Circle in Thedas suffers from individual mages who rebel and attempt to flee. These apostates are usually found and returned to the Circle or mercifully killed if they have fallen to demonic temptation. Until now, I have never served anywhere that the populace does not fully cooperate in hunting these rebels.

Here in Kirkwall, citizens actually help rebel mages escape. Escaped apostates have survived their freedom long enough to form the "the mage underground," a network that feeds and shelters escapees and even transports apostates into remote areas of the Free Marches and beyond our easy reach.

As of late, the movement has grown bolder, sending raiding parties into the Gallows in an attempt to break out mages who lack the skills or willpower to escape on their own. This is a grave concern. My recommendation is to fight back, both physically and in turning the minds and hearts of their supporters against them.

—*Knight-Captain Cullen*

## **The Maker**

**Same as in DAO**

There was no word  
For heaven or for earth, for sea or sky.  
All that existed was silence.  
Then the Voice of the Maker rang out,  
The first Word,  
And His Word became all that might be:  
Dream and idea, hope and fear,  
Endless possibilities.  
And from it made his firstborn.  
And he said to them:  
In My image I forge you,  
To you I give dominion  
Over all that exists.  
By your will  
May all things be done.

Then in the center of heaven  
He called forth  
A city with towers of gold,  
streets with music for cobblestones,  
And banners which flew without wind.  
There, He dwelled, waiting  
To see the wonders  
His children would create.

The children of the Maker gathered  
Before his golden throne  
And sang hymns of praise unending.  
But their songs  
Were the songs of the cobblestones.  
They shone with the golden light  
Reflected from the Maker's throne.  
They held forth the banners  
That flew on their own.

And the Voice of the Maker shook the Fade  
Saying: In My image I have wrought  
My firstborn. You have been given dominion  
Over all that exists. By your will  
All things are done.  
Yet you do nothing.

The realm I have given you  
Is formless, ever-changing.

And He knew he had wrought amiss.  
So the Maker turned from his firstborn  
And took from the Fade  
A measure of its living flesh  
And placed it apart from the Spirits, and spoke to it, saying:  
Here, I decree  
Opposition in all things:  
For earth, sky  
For winter, summer  
For darkness, Light.  
By My Will alone is Balance sundered  
And the world given new life.

And no longer was it formless, ever-changing,  
But held fast, immutable,  
With Words for heaven and for earth, sea and sky.  
At last did the Maker  
From the living world  
Make men. Immutable, as the substance of the earth,  
With souls made of dream and idea, hope and fear,  
Endless possibilities.

Then the Maker said:  
To you, my second-born, I grant this gift:  
In your heart shall burn  
An unquenchable flame  
All-consuming, and never satisfied.  
From the Fade I crafted you,  
And to the Fade you shall return  
Each night in dreams  
That you may always remember me.

And then the Maker sealed the gates  
Of the Golden City  
And there, He dwelled, waiting  
To see the wonders  
His children would create.

--*Threnodies 5:1-8*

### **The Maker's First Children**

### **Same as in DAO**

The Maker's first creations were the spirits, glorious beings that populated the many spires of the Golden City, and the Chant of Light says that they revered the Maker with unquestioning devotion. The Maker, however, was dissatisfied. Although the spirits were like Him in that they could manipulate the ether and create from it, they did not do so. They had no urge to create, and even when instructed to do so possessed no imagination to give their creations ingenuity or life.

The Maker realized His own folly: He had created the spirits to resemble him in all but the one and most important way: they did not have the spark of the divine within them. He expelled all the spirits out of the Golden City and into the Fade and proceeded to His next creation: life.

The Maker created the world and the living things upon it, separated from the Fade by the Veil. His new children would be unable to shape the world around them and thus they would need to struggle to survive. In return for their struggle, the Maker gave them the spark of the divine, a soul, and He watched with pleasure as His creations flourished and showed all the ingenuity that He had hoped for.

The spirits grew jealous of the living and coaxed from them into the Fade when they slept. The spirits wished to know more of life, hoping to find a way to regain the Maker's favor. Through the eyes of the living, they experienced new concepts: love, fear, pain, and hope. The spirits re-shaped the Fade to resemble the lives and concepts they saw, each spirit desperately trying to bring the most dreamers to their own realms so they could vicariously possess a spark of the divine through them.

As the spirits grew in power, however, some of them became contemptuous of the living. These were the spirits that saw the darkest parts of the dreamers. Their lands were places of torment and horror, and they knew that the living were strongly drawn to places that mirrored those dark parts of themselves. These spirits questioned the Maker's wisdom and proclaimed the living inferior. They learned from the darkness they saw and became the first demons.

Rage, hunger, sloth, desire, pride: These are the dark parts of the soul that give demons their power, the hooks they use to claw their way into the world of the living. It was demons that whispered into the minds of men, convincing them to turn from the Maker and worship false gods. They seek to possess all life as their due, forging kingdoms of nightmare in the Fade in the hopes of one day storming the walls of heaven itself.

And the Maker despaired once again, for He had given the power of creation to his new children- and in return they had created sin.

-- *From The Maker's First Children, By Bader, Senior Enchanter of Ostwick, 8:12 Blessed.*

## **The Commandments of the Maker**

**Same as in DAO**

These truths the Maker has revealed to me:

As there is but one world,

One life, one death, there is

But one god, and He is our Maker.

They are sinners, who have given their love

To false gods.

Magic exists to serve man, and never to rule over him.

Foul and corrupt are they

Who have taken His gift

And turned it against His children.

They shall be named Maleficar, accursed ones.

They shall find no rest in this world

Or beyond.

All men are the Work of our Maker's Hands,

From the lowest slaves

To the highest kings.  
Those who bring harm  
Without provocation to the least of His children  
Are hated and accursed by the Maker.

Those who bear false witness  
And work to deceive others, know this:  
There is but one Truth.  
All things are known to our Maker  
And He shall judge their lies.

All things in this world are finite.  
What one man gains, another has lost.  
Those who steal from their brothers and sisters  
Do harm to their livelihood and to their peace of mind.  
Our Maker sees this with a heavy heart.

*--Transfigurations 1:1-5*

### **Maleficarum**

**Same as in DAO**

It has been asked, "What are maleficarum? How shall we know them?" I have been asked by this question as you. You have come to me for the wisdom of the Maker, but none have seen the Maker's heart save Beloved Andraste. And so I have done as all mortals must, and looked to the words of His prophet for answers. And there, I found respite from a troubled mind.

For she has said to us, "Magic exists to serve man, and never to rule over him." Therefore, I say to you, they who work magic which dominates the minds and hearts of others, they have transgressed the Makers law.

Also, Our Lady said to us, "Those who bring harm without provocation to the least of His children are hated and accursed by the Maker." And so it is made clear to me, as it should be to us all: That magic which fuels itself by harming others, by the letting of blood, is hated by the Maker.

Those mages who honor the Maker and keep his laws we welcome as our brothers and sisters. Those who reject the laws of the Maker and the words of His prophet are apostate. They shall be cast out, and given no place among us.

*--From The Sermons of Justinia I.*

### **Mana and the Use of Magic**

**Same as in DAO**

Mana is that which defines a mage. It is potential that dwells within a person but does not always manifest itself. All men are connected to the Fade; we go there to dream. But only those with this potential may draw upon its power.

Mana is, then, a measurement of one's ability to draw power from the Fade, and it is this power that is expended in magic.

As in all other things, it has limits. Just as a man has the strength to lift only so much weight and no more, a mage cannot work more magic at one time than his mana allows. If he wishes to work magic that would be beyond his strength, a mage must bolster his mana with lyrium. Without lyrium, it is possible for the reckless to expend their own life-force in the working of magic, and occasionally, ambitious apprentices injure or even kill themselves by over-exertion.

## Orichalcum

Like lyrium, orichalcum is a metal most commonly encountered in liquid form. Unlike lyrium, however, orichalcum forms pools and must be drawn like water rather than mined.

Deep Orichalcum is the most common type of the metal, and is often found in places where opals are mined. The rarer Crystalline Orichalcum is found in small pools in the mountains. Folk wisdom says that a drop of orichalcum mixed with wine is a potent aphrodisiac, though it has a pungent smell similar to lye, so I could not bring myself to put this legend to the test.

—An excerpt from *An Alchemical Primer of Metallurgy: Volume One*, by Lord Cerastes of Marnas Pell

## The Qun

Long ago, the Ashkaari lived in a great city by the sea. Wealth and prosperity shone upon the city like sunlight, and still its people grumbled in discontent. The Ashkaari walked the streets of his home and saw that all around him were the signs of genius: triumphs of architecture, artistic masterpieces, the palaces of wealthy merchants, libraries, and concert halls. But he also saw signs of misery: the poor, sick, lost, frightened, and the hopeless. And the Ashkaari asked himself, "How can one people be both wise and ignorant, great and ruined, triumphant and despairing?"

So the Ashkaari left the land of his birth, seeking out other cities and nations, looking for a people who had found wisdom enough to end hopelessness and despair. He wandered for many years through empires filled with palaces and gardens, but in every nation of the wise, the great, the mighty, he found the forgotten, the abandoned, and the poor. Finally, he came to a vast desert, a wasteland of bare rock clawing at the empty sky, where he took shelter in the shadow of a towering rock, and resolved to meditate until he found his answer or perished.

Many days passed until one night, as he gazed out from the shadow of the rocks, he saw the lifeless desert awaken. A hundred thousand locusts hatched from the barren ground, and as one, they turned south, a single wave of moving earth. The Ashkaari rose and followed in their wake: a path of devastation miles wide, the once verdant land turned to waste. And the Ashkaari's eyes were opened.

Existence is a choice.

There is no chaos in the world, only complexity.

Knowledge of the complex is wisdom.

From wisdom of the world comes wisdom of the self.

Mastery of the self is mastery of the world. Loss of the self is the source of suffering.

Suffering is a choice, and we can refuse it.

It is in our own power to create the world, or destroy it.

And the Ashkaari went forth to his people.

—An excerpt from *The Qun*, Canto 1

## The Qunari

The people of the Qun are, perhaps, the least-understood group in Thedas. The Qunari Wars were brutal, but so was the Chantry Schism. So was the fall of the Imperium. Some of this misunderstanding is an accident of nature: The race we call "Qunari" are formidable. Nature has given them fierce horns and strange eyes, and the ignorant look on them and see monsters.



Some is an accident of language: Few among the Qun's people speak the common tongue, and fewer speak it well. In a culture that strives for mastery, to have only a passable degree of skill is humiliating indeed, and so they often keep quiet among foreigners, out of shame.

But much of it is a result of the culture itself. The Qunari view their whole society as a single creature: a living entity whose health and well-being is the responsibility of all. Each individual is only a tiny part of the whole, a drop of blood in its veins. Important not for itself, but for what it is to the whole creature. Because of this, the Qunari most outsiders meet belong to the army, which the Qun regards as if it were the physical body: arms, legs, eyes and ears, the things a creature needs in order to interact with the world. One cannot get to know a person solely by studying his hand or his foot, and so one cannot truly "meet" the Qunari until one has visited their cities. That is where their mind and soul dwell.

In Seheron and Par Vollen, one can truly see the Qunari in their entirety. There, the unification of the Qunari into a single being is most evident. Workers, whom the Qun calls the mind, produce everything the Qunari require. The soul, the priesthood, seeks a greater understanding of the self, the world, and exhorts the body and mind to continually strive for perfection. The body serves as the go-between for the mind, the soul, and the world. Everyone and everything has a place, decided by the Qun, in which they work for the good of the whole. It is a life of certainty, of equality, if not individuality.

—*From the writings of the seer of Kont-arr, 8:41 Blessed*

### **The Qunari - Asit tal-eb**

When the Ashkaari looked upon the destruction wrought by locusts,  
He saw at last the order in the world.

A plague must cause suffering for as long as it endures,  
Earthquakes must shatter the land.

They are bound by their being.

Asit tal-eb. It is to be.

For the world and the self are one.

Existence is a choice.

A self of suffering, brings only suffering to the world.

It is a choice, and we can refuse it.

—*An excerpt from The Qun, Canto 4*

### **The Qunari - Saarebas**

The Qun teaches that all living things have a place and a purpose, and only when they are in the correct place and in control of their self may they attain balance. When balance is lost, suffering follows. Mastery of the self is, therefore, the first and greatest duty.

Those born with magic are at a terrible disadvantage, for demons can always rob them of their self. Because of this, the Qunari name them saarebas, meaning "dangerous thing", and treat them with the utmost caution. Saarebas must be carefully controlled by someone else, an arvaarad, "one who holds back evil", because they cannot truly control themselves. The evil is not the mage, but the loss of the mage, the loss of the mage's self, and the suffering that inevitably follows.

The Qunari pity and honor the saarebas, for striving while under constant threat from within is truly selfless, which is the highest virtue of the Qun.

—*From the writings of the seer of Kont-aar, 8:41 Blessed*

## **The Raiders of the Waking Sea**

The Raiders of the Waking Sea—or simply, the Raiders—is the common name given to an association of Antivan pirates called the Felicisima Armada. These pirates were once little more than opportunists, based out of the coastal city of Llomerryn, that preyed on sea traffic. They were often targeted by Orlesian and Free Marcher cities that were bent on destroying the pirates once and for all. After each such effort, new pirates would appear to fill the vacuum.

During the New Exalted Marches, the nations of Thedas needed every ship they could muster against the massive power of the Qunari dreadnoughts. The Llomerryn pirates were faced with a difficult decision: they had to band together under one flag and fight with those they had previously preyed upon or face conversion and annihilation by the Qunari.

Thus the Armada was formed. The pirates brought their knowledge of stealth and trickery to bear, plaguing Qunari supply lines and even launching seaborne invasions against the Qunari coast. For a time it was said the Armada was the premier naval power of Thedas, and after the signing of the Llomerryn Accord, they maintained their association rather than disband as many had hoped.

Wealthy merchants now often pay the leaders of the Armada rather than risking their ships commandeered and their merchandise stolen and sold on the black market. The Armada is hardly unified, and bloody battles between Armada leaders are frequent, but when faced with an attack by outsiders, the group instantly puts aside their differences and closes ranks; the raiders have thus become far more of a threat in the last century than they ever were before.

There is many a legend told about how dashing and romantic life aboard a Raider vessel is, but don't believe it. They are scoundrels and smugglers all.

—*From The Dowager's Field Guide to Good Society, by Lady Alcylene*

## **The Right of Annulment**

**Same as in DAO**

In the 83rd year of the Glory Age, one of the mages of the Nevarran Circle was found practicing forbidden magic. The templars executed him swiftly, but this brewed discontent among the Navarra Circle. The mages mounted several magical attacks against the templars, vengeance for the executed mage, but the knight-commander was unable to track down which were responsible.

Three months later, the mages summoned a demon and turned it loose against their templar watchers. Demons, however, are not easily controlled. After killing the first wave of templars who tried to contain it, the demon took possession of one of its summoners. The resulting abomination slaughtered templars and mages both before escaping into the countryside.

The Grand Cleric sent a legion of templars to hunt the fugitive. They killed the abomination a year later, but by that time it had slain 70 people.

Divine Galatea, responding to the catastrophe in Navarra and hoping to prevent further incidents, granted all the grand clerics of the Chantry the power to purge a Circle entirely if they rule it irredeemable. This Right of Annulment has been performed 17 times in the last 700 years.

—*From Of Fires, Circles, and Templars: A History of Magic in the Chantry, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Seekers of Truth**

Ser Whitmore,

When I mentioned powers greater than the templars, I didn't mean the Chantry. Sure they command the templars, but that was not always so—the Inquisition once hunted heretics and cultists as well as mages, and their reign of terror ended only with the inception of the Circle of Magi. They became the Templar Order, for good or ill the watchers of the mages and the martial arm of the Chantry.

It was a mutually beneficial arrangement, but few know that the Chantry created yet another order to watch over the templars: the Seekers of Truth. I know little of them myself, but I can say the following things with certainty: they serve the Divine and they are feared. When a Seeker steps from the shadows, templars run for cover—because why would he come unless the templars somehow failed in their duties? Seekers are extremely effective investigating abuses within the Circle and hunting particularly evasive apostates. It's said they are immune to a blood mage's mind control and possess the ability to read minds or erase memories, but this is likely exaggeration.

So we return to my original dilemma. Who watches powers greater than that of the templars? One assumes it's the Divine, but how much could She know about their activities when their very existence is a mystery to most?

*—A letter from an unknown priest, found in the Grand Cathedral archives, 8:80 Blessed*

## **The Sermons of Divine Renata I**

**Same as in DAO**

The weakness of mortal will is the great failing of all the Maker's children. We trade our honor as it is were the cheapest of currency. We do not understand what integrity is or what it is truly worth. From this ignorance, original sin was born.

At some time, each of us has thought, "What does it matter if I keep hold of my integrity? I am but one mortal. I am powerless." How blind we all are! The virtue of a single slave destroyed the Tevinter Imperium. The dishonor of one man drove the Maker from our sight. I tell you truly, nothing but the integrity of our hearts will win the love of the Maker back to us. It is all the power we shall ever possess to change this world for good or ill.

*-- From a sermon on integrity.*

## **Silverite**

The lustrous, white-blue silverite has long been prized by the dwarves for use in jewelry, rune making, and weapon smithing, but on the surface, it is more commonly used by apothecaries and healers. Since the metal does not rust, many traditions believe it to be proof against poison.

There is a tale passed down among the people of the Anderfels: A knight returned home after many years of war, only to be struck by an adder. His wife immediately bound the wound with a medallion of silverite pressed against the bite like a poultice. By morning, the poison had left him. And the knight lived to an old age.

*—An excerpt from An Alchemical Primer of Metallurgy: Volume One, by Lord Cerastes of Marnas Pell*

## **Slavery in the Tevinter Imperium**

Slavery still thrives in Thedas, even if the trade has been outlawed. Who hasn't heard the tales of poverty-stricken elves lured into ships by the prospect of well-paying jobs in Antiva, only to find themselves clapped in leg-irons once at sea? And humans fall prey to this, too.

If they're lucky, they end up in Orlais, which has only "servants." Most nobles treat them decently because they are afraid of admitting the truth. Orlesians go to great lengths to maintain the fiction that slavery is illegal.

Of course, the greatest consumer of slave labor is the Tevinter Imperium, which would surely crumble if not for the endless supply of slaves from all over the continent. There, they are meat, chattel. They are beaten, used as fodder in the endless war against the Qunari, and even serve as components in dark magic rituals.

—*From Black City, Black Divine: A Study of the Tevinter Imperium, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Spindleweed**

It is an old country saying that spindleweed grows best for the sorrowful. Verdant spindleweed in a household's garden has often brought neighbors offering consolation, usually without even asking what might be wrong.

This originates from the plant's use as a seasoning for dishes meant to speed the recovery of the infirm. A person who grows much of it is likely caring for the fatally ill.

—*An excerpt from The Botanical Compendium by Ines Arancia, botanist*

## **A Study of the Fifth Blight, Vol. One**

While some of my contemporaries dispute whether the Fifth Blight was a true Blight or merely a large darkspawn resurgence, historians agree that it began in the swamps of the Korcari Wilds on the southeastern border of Ferelden in the year 9:30 Dragon.

King Cailan Theirin was swift in responding to the threat, gathering the royal army, every Grey Warden in his country, and sending a call for aid to the Ferelden nobility. The assembled armies laid a trap in the ruins of Ostagar, hoping to crush the force before it reached civilization. But they failed.

Darkspawn overran the defenders of Ostagar and decimated the king and his army. They continued their advance into Ferelden unopposed. Only two Grey Wardens managed to escape the slaughter. And somehow, they came into possession of ancient treaties, which compelled the races of men to join arms against the massing horde.

### *Broken Circle...*

*If the mages were recruited:* The surviving Wardens made their way to Kinloch Hold, home of the Ferelden Circle, and conscripted the mages.

*If the Templars were recruited:* The surviving Wardens made their way to Kinloch Hold, and assisted in annulling the Fereldan Circle of Magi, which had fallen to abominations. With the end of that tragic disaster, the Wardens conscripted the templars.

### *Nature of the Beast...*

*If the Dalish Elves were recruited:* In desperation to find more allies, the Wardens journeyed into the Brecilian Forest, seeking the Dalish. The elves, too, joined the growing army.

*If the Werewolves were recruited:* In desperation to find more allies, the Wardens journeyed into the Brecilian Forest, seeking the Dalish. The elves failed to uphold their treaty, but another answered in their place: Werewolves, straight out of Fereldan folktales, joined the growing army.

### *Supported Paragon and Fate of The Anvil of the Void...*

*If the Anvil of the Void is destroyed:* Into the Deep Roads the surviving Wardens went, searching for Paragon Branka in hopes she could settle the unrest in Orzammar and unite the dwarves in the battle against the Archdemon. Branka could not be located, but another Paragon was found: the legendary Caridin, who forged a crown that ended all question of succession.

*If Branka commits suicide:* Into the Deep Roads the survivors went, searching for Paragon Branka in hopes she could settle the unrest in Orzammar and unite the dwarves in the battle against the Archdemon. They found her, and she forged a crown that played a key role in sorting out the royal succession.

*If the Anvil of the Void was reclaimed:* Into the Deep Roads the surviving Wardens went, searching for Paragon Branka in hopes she could settle the unrest in Orzammar and unite the dwarves in the battle against the Archdemon. Not only did the Paragon settle the matter of royal succession, but she also reclaimed the lost secrets of golem manufacture. An army of stone and steel joined the war effort.

*Ruler of Orzammar...*

*If Prince Bhelen is crowned king:* Bhelen Aeducan was crowned king of Orzammar, and the dwarven armies marched for the surface.

*If Lord Harrowmont is crowned king:* Pyral Harrowmont was crowned king of Orzammar, and the dwarven armies marched for the surface.

Despite their successes, though, greater challenges were yet to come.

—*From A Study of the Fifth Blight, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **A Study of the Fifth Blight, Vol. Two**

The Wardens sought Arl Eamon, uncle of the late King Cailan, in the hopes of mustering troops from the Ferelden nobility. Upon arriving in Redcliffe they learned that the arl had fallen ill and was near death. His knights had gone in pursuit of the fabled Ashes of Andraste, Eamon's only hope for a cure, and the village surrounding the Keep was beset by a host of animated corpses. The Wardens found and stopped the demon behind the undead before joining the search for Eamon's cure.

*If the Warden stopped the undead and liberated Redcliffe:* The Wardens sought Arl Eamon, uncle of the late King Cailan, in the hopes of mustering troops from the Ferelden nobility. Upon arriving in Redcliffe they learned that the arl had fallen ill and was near death. His knights had gone in pursuit of the fabled Ashes of Andraste, Eamon's only hope for a cure, and the village surrounding the Keep was beset by a host of animated corpses. The Wardens found and stopped the demon behind the undead before joining the search for Eamon's cure.

*If the Warden left Redcliffe without lending their aid:* The Wardens sought Arl Eamon, uncle of the late King Cailan, in the hopes of mustering troops from the Ferelden nobility. But upon arriving in Redcliffe, they learned that the arl had fallen ill and was near death, his knights gone in pursuit of the fabled Ashes of Andraste, as his only hope for a cure. The Wardens immediately set out to join the search for the Ashes.

No one is certain if the Wardens actually located the final resting place of Our Lady Andraste, but whatever they found saved the arl of Redcliffe.

Upon his recovery, Eamon Guerrin called for a Landsmeet and he and the Wardens traveled to Denerim.

*If Loghain was conscripted into the Wardens and Anora and Alistair became King and Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes. He was sentenced to join the Grey Wardens to atone for his deeds. Furthermore, the Landsmeet bore witness to the betrothal of Queen Anora to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric.

*If Loghain was conscripted into the Wardens and Anora remained Queen with Warden Cousland as Prince-Consort:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes. He was sentenced to join the Grey Wardens to atone for his deeds. Furthermore, the Landsmeet bore witness to the betrothal of Queen Anora to Teyrn Bryce Cousland's youngest son, who was one of the two Grey Wardens to survive Ostagar.

*If Loghain was conscripted into the Wardens and Anora remained Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes. He was sentenced to join the Grey Wardens to atone for his deeds. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the vacant throne to Anora, widow of King Cailan.

*If Loghain was executed and Anora remained Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the vacant throne to Anora, widow of King Cailan.

*If Loghain was executed and Anora and Alistair became King and Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet bore witness to the betrothal of Queen Anora to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric.

*If Loghain was executed, Alistair became King and was married to Warden Cousland as Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the throne to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric, and bore witness to his betrothal to Teyrn Bryce Cousland's daughter.

*If Loghain was executed and Alistair became King:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the throne to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric.

The nobility then pledged their own armies in the battle against the Blight.

*If the Warden perished in the final battle:* The Archdemon clashed with the allied forces at the city of Denerim and was eventually slain, but at terrible cost. Much of the city lay in ruin and the Warden who rallied the armies—later known as the Hero of Ferelden—perished in battle.

*If the Dark Ritual was completed:* The Archdemon clashed with the allied forces at the city of Denerim and was eventually slain, but at terrible cost. Much of the city lay in ruin. The Warden who rallied the armies was named the Hero of Ferelden and accorded the highest honor.

The Fifth Blight ended before most of Thedas knew it had begun. But it left a terrible wound on Ferelden. The losses suffered at Ostagar and Denerim greatly compromised the security of the kingdom. Southern Ferelden from the Korcari Wilds to the edge of the Bannorn are, to this day, a wasteland. It's uncertain how far the ripples from this event shall travel, or what waves it has already stirred.

—*From A Study of the Fifth Blight, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## Surface Dwarves

In Orzammar, dwarven society is divided into rigid castes with houses that compete for power and prestige. But all that is discarded when a dwarf abandons the Stone for the surface. Under the open sky, everyone is equal. Or so the story goes.

The truth is that thousands of years of tradition are not so easily tossed aside. Even though surface dwarves are officially stripped of their caste, many maintain a hierarchy among themselves along the old caste lines. Formerly noble houses are accorded more respect than casteless brands who come up in search of opportunity. The poorest "noble" dwarf on the surface looks upon the rich "lower caste" dwarves with contempt.

Upper-class surface dwarf society is roughly divided into two camps: *kalnas*, who insist on maintaining caste and rank (typically those from the Noble or Merchant Caste families) and *ascendants*, who believe in leaving Orzammar's traditions underground and embracing life in the sunlit world.

Maintaining some tie to Orzammar was seen for generations as the only lifeline for surface dwarves. Bringing surface goods to their kin underground and *lyrium* and metals to the surface was not only the most lucrative means of making a living, but also a sort of sacred duty, as many surface dwarves willingly accepted exile and the loss of their caste to better serve their house or patron. In recent years, many surface dwarves, particularly *ascendants*, have branched out. They started banks, mercenary companies, and overland trade caravans. They became investors and speculators in purely surface trade. These new industries have proven tremendous sources of wealth, but are looked down upon by their more conservative kin.

For less-affluent surface dwarves, association with a powerful *kalna* can open many doors. They can get credit with dwarven merchants and are offered work opportunities by the powerful Dwarven Merchants' Guild more readily, sometimes, than more qualified but less-connected individuals.

—*From The Dowager's Field Guide to Good Society, by Lady Alcyone*

## Tal-Vashoth

Being lost in an ancient Tevinter ruin in northern Rivain is highly overrated.

And then I found myself beset by several bands of Qunari, apparently working in concert. I fled and managed to hide in a little village by the name of Vindaar. The people there, mostly humans and a few elves, were devout followers of the Qun.

It was the most organized village I ever laid eyes on. The houses were identical and arranged along perfectly orthogonal lines. The fields were well tended and apparently communal. But there were signs of damage everywhere, as if the town had suffered repeated sieges: buildings shattered, fields burned, and a great many empty houses. I spent the night in the home of Vindaar's matriarch, who introduced herself only as, "Seer". When I tried to regale my hostess with the tale of my Qunari assailants, I discovered something.

Qunari, Seer said, are people who follow the Qun. Her people. Those born into Qunari society who reject the Qun are called *Vashoth*, which means "gray ones". These gray ones must leave their homes, for they have no place among the Qunari. Sadly, many turn against the society that cast them out.

These outcasts call themselves Tal-Vashoth, "the true gray ones". Often, they have no skills to make an honest living, so they sell themselves into service, usually becoming mercenaries. Even the most inept fighter among the Qunari race possesses prodigious size and an intimidating visage. These, she informed me, were my attackers in the countryside, the same band that wreaked such havoc on Vindaar.

The Tal-Vashoth wage a bitter war against the Qun, the Qunari, and sometimes against order itself. They are no match for the Qunari army, so they generally strike at farms, travelers, and those who stray too far from Qunari protection. I was lucky to escape with my life.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## The Tale of Illoren

Same as in DAO

In the days after the rising of Zazikel, the dark ones covered every corner of the land. The archdemon drove all the nations of the world before him, shemlen and elvhen alike.

In the far north, where the hills wander the plains and the earth is eternally baked beneath the uncaring sun, the lands which the shemlen call Anderfels, a clan of our people lived, struggling to survive the Blight.

Illoren was their keeper. A hunter in his younger days, crafty as any wolf, he led his people always just ahead of the darkspawn who chased them. But the old hunter knew that even halla cannot run forever. They must turn and fight, or be run down.

At the foot of the Merdaine, the darkspawn cornered Illoren's clan. That night, the moon was strangled by clouds, the earth concealed by a dread mist that rose out of nowhere, so that the elvhen could not tell up from down. In the confusion, the darkspawn attacked.

But Illoren had prepared for them. All around the camp, the hunters had strewn dry grass, brush and brambles. When the sound of rustling footfalls began, Illoren and the other hahren called upon the old magic. They struck out with lightning, and though the bolts missed the darkspawn, they hit their target all the same. The sea of kindling lit, and not one of the dark creatures made it through the fire to reach Illoren's clan.

-- *From "The Tale of Illoren," written by Zathrian, as it has been passed down from keeper to keeper from generations.*

## Templars

Same as in DAO

Often portrayed as stoic and grim, the Order of Templars was created as the martial arm of the Chantry. Armed with the ability to dispel and resist magic in addition to their formidable combat talents, the templars are uniquely qualified to act as both a foil for apostates—mages who refuse to submit to the authority of the Circle—and a first line of defense against the dark powers of blood mages and abominations.

While mages often resent the templars as symbols of the Chantry's control over magic, the people of Thedas see them as saviors and holy warriors, champions of all that is good, armed with piety enough to protect the world from the ravages of foul magic. In reality, the Chantry's militant arm looks first for skilled warriors with unshakable faith in the Maker, with a flawless moral center as a secondary concern. Templars must carry out their duty with an emotional distance, and the Order of Templars prefers soldiers with religious fervor and absolute loyalty over paragons of virtue who might question orders when it comes time to make difficult choices.



The templars' power derives from the substance lyrium, a mineral believed to be the raw element of creation. While mages use lyrium in their arcane spells and rituals, templars ingest the primordial mineral to enhance their abilities to resist and dispel magic. Lyrium use is regulated by the Chantry, but some templars suffer from lyrium addiction, the effects of which include paranoia, obsession, and dementia. Templars knowingly submit themselves to this "treatment" in the service of the Order and the Maker.

It is this sense of ruthless piety that most frightens mages when they draw the templars' attention: When the templars are sent to eliminate a possible blood mage, there is no reasoning with them, and if the templars are prepared, the mage's magic is all but useless. Driven by their faith, the templars are one of the most feared and respected forces in Thedas.

—*From Patterns Within Form by Halden, First Enchanter of Starkhaven, 8:80 Blessed.*

## **Tevinter: The Magisters**

Before it became the Imperium, Tevinter was ruled by a dynasty of kings. And long before the Chantry there was a Circle of Magi: the society of mages in each city. The titles our modern Circles use—enchanter, senior enchanter, first enchanter—all originated here. But above the first enchanter, the Circles of Tevinter had another office: magister.

The magisters formed a council of the most powerful mages in the kingdom. They convened in Minrathous and held dominion over all magic in the land. When Darinius seized the throne in -1195 Ancient, the Court of the Magisters became the royal court, and "magister" was the only title of nobility recognized in Tevinter.

The Imperium today is a magocracy. Political power is solely in the hands of the magisters, who come only from the ranks of the Circle. Every young mage aspires to be a magister's apprentice because it's the best chance of ascending to the rank of magister themselves.

—*From Black City, Black Divine: A Study of the Tevinter Imperium, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **The Tranquil**

**Same as in DAO**

The Tranquil are the least understood but most visible members of the Circle. Every city of respectable size boasts a Circle of Magi shop, and every one of these shops is run by a Tranquil proprietor.

The name is a misnomer, for they are not tranquil at all; rather, they are like inanimate objects that speak. If a table wished to sell you an enchanted penknife, it could pass as one of these people. Their eyes are expressionless, their voices monotone. Incomparable craftsmen they might be, but they are hardly the sort of mages to put ordinary folk at ease.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi.*

## **Vallaslin: Blood Writing**

**Same as in DAO**

After my encounter with the Dalish elves on the road to Nevarra, I studied every book on the elves I could find. I sought out legends and myths and history and tried to make sense of it all. But there is only so much one can learn from books. I knew that in order to truly understand the Dalish, I would have to seek them out--a dreadful idea, in hindsight. In my defense, I was young--and also inebriated when the idea popped into my head. Unfortunately, even after I had regained some measure of sobriety, the idea still held appeal. It proved remarkably resistant to my attempts to ignore it.

I gave in after months of that nagging thought at the back of my head and set out to learn about the Dalish first-hand. I tramped through the forests bordering Orlais for weeks before I finally found--or was found by--a Dalish hunter. I stumbled into one of his traps and suddenly was hanging from a tree with a rope about my ankles.

So there I was, defenseless, upside down with my robe over my head, my underclothes on display. Descriptions of my predicament might elicit laughter these days, but trust me when I say it was a situation I would not wish on anyone. Thankfully, my ridiculous appearance may have caused my captor to stay his hand--what threat is a silly human with his pants showing?

And so he sat, made a small fire, and began to skin the deer he had caught. I soon mustered the courage to speak. I tried to assure him that I was not there to harm him--but he laughed at this and replied that if I were there to harm him, I had failed terribly. Eventually we got to talking, and when I say talking, I mean that I asked him questions, and occasionally he would deign to answer.

He told me that while some Dalish actively seek out human travelers to rob or frighten, most of his people would rather be left alone. He seemed to believe that punishing the humans for past actions only led to more violence. I asked him about the intricate tattoos on his face; he told me they were called vallaslin--"blood writing." His were symbols of Andruil the Huntress, one of the most highly revered elven goddesses. He said the Dalish mark themselves to stand out from humans and from those of their kin who have chosen to live under human rule. He said the vallaslin remind his people that they must never again surrender their beliefs.

When he finished skinning the deer, he cut me down. By the time I had righted myself and conquered the dizziness of all the blood rushing out of my head, he was gone.

I do not recommend that my readers seek out the Dalish for themselves. I was very lucky to have met the man that I did, and to have walked away from our meeting unscathed. Perhaps the Maker watches over those who seek knowledge with an open heart; I certainly would like to think so.

*--From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Veil**

## **Same as in DAO**

I detest this notion that the Veil is some manner of invisible "curtain" that separates the world of the living from the world of the spirits (whether it be called the Fade or the Beyond is a matter of racial politics I refuse to indulge in at the moment). There is no "this side" and "that side" when it comes to the Veil. One cannot think of it as a physical thing or a barrier or even a "shimmering wall of holy light" (thank you very much for that image, Your Perfection).

Think of the Veil, instead, as opening one's eyes.

Before you opened them, you saw our world as you see it now: static, solid, unchanging. Now that they are open, you see our world as the spirits see it: chaotic, ever-changing, a realm where the imagined and the remembered have as much substance as that which is real—more, in fact. A spirit sees everything as defined by will and memory, and this is why they are so very lost when they cross the Veil. In our world, imagination has no substance. Objects exist independently of how we remember them or what emotions we associate with them. Mages alone possess the power to change the world with their minds, and perhaps this forms the nature of a demon's attraction to them—who can say?

Regardless, the act of passing through the Veil is much more about changing one's perceptions than a physical transition. The Veil is an idea, it is the act of transition itself, and it is only the fact that both living beings and spirits find the transition difficult that gives the Veil any credence as a physical barrier at all.

—From *A Dissertation on the Fade as a Physical Manifestation*, by Mareno, Senior Enchanter of the Minrathous Circle of Magi, 6:55 Steel

### **Adder of Antiva**

**Signature Edition Unlockable**

These brightly painted bows are prized possessions among the Antivan pirates. A rain of arrows can clear the deck of an approaching ship and light fire to its sails.

### **Apostate's Courage**

**Signature Edition Unlockable**

Among the magi, some still whisper of Caleth the Renegade. Seeking freedom from beneath the templars' heel, he fled the Chantry with a cabal of his most loyal acolytes. They reached the mountains before the winter squalls and lived there as free men for one glorious season. The spring thaws brought a vast mercenary army, however, paid for and led by the Templar Order. Wanting to avoid bloodshed, Caleth and his acolytes surrendered peaceably and allowed themselves to be made Tranquil.

### **Might of the Sten**

**Signature Edition Unlockable**

This heavy Qunari sword is exquisitely balanced. Although no nicks mar the edge, the bloodstains on the leather grip suggest that it has seen its share of battle.

### **Ring of Resilience**

**Signature Edition Unlockable**

This faceted iron ring pulses with a mysterious energy. As the beating of your heart increases, so does the intensity of its glow.

### **Seeker's Bulwark**

**Signature Edition Unlockable**

Emblazoned with the symbols of the Chantry templars and greatly scarred from use, this large iron shield bears an unseen weight. It has been warding against magic, to better protect the Seekers who wield it in the pursuit of apostate mages.

## **CHARACTERS**

### **Alistair**

*If Alistair is the sole ruler of Ferelden...*

King Alistair Theirin was crowned the ruler of Ferelden after the end of the Fifth Blight, and is considered a hero among his people for having fought against the darkspawn as a Grey Warden.

He is one of the few known to have ever left the secretive order, never mind one who went on to rule a nation afterwards. Some in Ferelden claim that the Theirin line ended with the death of King Cailan and that the existence of an unknown bastard was a lie imposed upon the people to overthrow Queen Anora. As such, Alistair's rule has been plagued with trouble... both within his own lands as well as with neighboring Orlais. The Blight greatly weakened Ferelden, and many believe that a renewal of the long-standing rivalry between the two nations is inevitable.

*If Alistair and Anora agreed to marry and rule jointly...*

King Alistair Theirin was crowned ruler of Ferelden after the end of the Fifth Blight; his people consider him a hero for fighting against the darkspawn as a Grey Warden. Few Wardens have ever left the secretive order, and he is the only of those who went on to rule a nation; Queen Anora, daughter of the legendary Teyrn Loghain, rules at his side. Although Ferelden has prospered under their reign, it was greatly weakened by the Blight. Tensions with neighboring Orlais have been high, and many believe a renewal of their long-standing conflict is inevitable.

*If imported from a save where Alistair remains a Grey Warden...*

A hero of the recent Fifth Blight, the Grey Warden Alistair is credited alongside the Hero of Ferelden with slaying the Archdemon and sparing Thedas the ravages of the darkspawn. Rumor has it that he is an heir to the Fereldan throne, but that he turned it down in deference to Queen Anora, daughter to the traitorous Teyrn Loghain.

*If Alistair married and ruled together with the Hero of Ferelden...*

King Alistair Theirin was crowned ruler of his kingdom after the end of the Fifth Blight, with the legendary Hero of Ferelden reigning as his queen. Both former Grey Wardens are wildly popular in their homeland, though some claim Alistair is not of Theirin blood and that his bloodline as a king's bastard son is a lie imposed on Ferelden to depose Queen Anora. Thus, the royals' rule has been plagued with trouble, both within the kingdom as well as with neighboring Orlais. The Blight greatly weakened Ferelden, and many believe a renewal of the long-standing rivalry between the two nations is inevitable.

*If Alistair is exiled:*

Once a Grey Warden, and rumored to be the bastard son of King Maric of Ferelden, Alistair turned down the throne and abandoned his order at the height of the Fifth Blight in Ferelden. He has slipped into anonymity, living down his disgrace in a drunken stupor in the Free Marches.

## **Anders**

"Magic is a tool, same as a bow or sword. Would you cut off a child's hand to ensure he never wields one in anger?"

Anders has a rocky history with the Circle of Magi. Taken from his family when his talents first manifested, Anders was still a boy the first time he ran away from the Circle. Recaptured and returned dozens of times, Anders was still considered only a reckless scamp by First Enchanter Irving, who thought his easy temper and sense of humor made him no true threat. But during his final escape, Anders befriended the Warden Commander of Amaranthine and accepted an offer to become a Grey Warden.

Life as a Warden changed him, introducing him to the free Fade spirit called Justice, who slowly convinced Anders to turn his attention beyond his personal suffering. Infused with Justice's fervor, Anders offered to merge with the spirit in the name of mage freedom, starting them both down a dangerous path that turned the purity of Justice into the unthinking hatred of Vengeance.

## Anders - After the Deep Roads

In the past three years, Anders has become more reclusive, verging on paranoid. When not with the Champion, he spends his time among the Fereldan refugees in Darktown, healing their ills and counting on their loyalty to protect him from curious templars. After his friend Karl was made Tranquil, then killed, Anders was convinced that the Chantry's entire structure must be overturned to free mages completely from their control. He has joined a group of like-minded apostates who are slowly wearing away Kirkwall's Circle by helping other mages escape. The spirit of Vengeance inside him has manifested more strongly, making it nearly impossible for him to control himself when fighting templars.

## Anders - The Last Three Years

*If Ella was killed:* The past three years has seen Anders cross the edge from moodiness into open paranoia. Increasingly, his inner struggle against the spirit Vengeance has boiled over into his dealings with the rest of the world. It's clear he is losing this fight. More determined than ever to see the mages of Thedas freed, Anders has taken to spending long hours cloistered with ancient Tevinter texts, adding more layers to his already lofty plans for overthrowing the Chantry.

*If Ella lives:* After his attack on Ella, Anders lost interest in the cause of mage revolution. Convinced that he was no better than an abomination, Anders was determined to gain mastery over the spirit inside him... or die trying. It is increasingly apparent that he is losing this struggle. Prone to wild mood swings between deep melancholy and manic determination, Anders has again taken up the mantle of mage freedom - though it is unclear whether this decision came from Anders or Justice.

*If Hawke is in a romance with Anders:* Hawke's status as Champion has protected Anders from the attention of the templars, despite his increasing notoriety. Though they have lived openly together for some time, Anders remains uncomfortable in the spotlight Hawke's presence has cast him into. In private, though, he remains a tender and devoted lover; he has repeatedly declared that Hawke is the only reason he's retained any sanity at all.

## Aveline Vallen

“If it's family, you protect. Doesn't matter who it is, blood or not.”

Aveline was born in Orlais, but she never knew the country. Her father, Benoit du Lac, was a chevalier who lost his patron to the game of intrigue. He fled to Ferelden while Aveline was an infant, and though his holdings were meager, he was determined she would have the life he had lost: she would become a knight, no matter the cost. He eventually sold everything to sponsor Aveline into King Cailan's service.

Knightly skills seemed bred into Aveline's bones, but she had her doubts—starting with her namesake, Ser Aveline. The first female knight of Orlais was orphaned, mocked for her looks and murdered when she dared stand with men in tournament. Her glory lies in tragedy, but the living Aveline doesn't revere sacrifice: a principled death is still a death. Her father was proud of her, but she would never be the knight he wished for.

Aveline married Wesley Vallen while serving in the Fereldan army. They were kindred spirits and determined guardians. His death during the Blight scarred her—not just his loss, but that she failed to protect him. Aveline has healed in the past year, but she has yet to forgive herself. Accordingly, she is fiercely protective of the Hawkes and Hawke. They share a bond in loss, a connection she cherishes but will not allow to be repeated.

## **Aveline - After the Deep Roads**

*Outcome of The Way It Should Be...*

*If the quest was completed:*

Since the adventure in the Deep Roads, Aveline has settled into life as the captain of the guard. She has removed the stain of Captain Jeven's corruption and turned the guardsmen into effective enforcers of law and order.

*If the quest was not completed:*

Since the adventure in the Deep Roads, Aveline has redoubled her efforts in the city guard. The previous captain left suddenly, and while a Fereldan could not be promoted outright, Aveline's military experience made her an "adequate choice" for the captain of the guard in Seneschal Bran's estimation.

Becoming captain of the guard title should have brought Aveline stability, but she has instead found herself taxed by having so many people under her care. She is very protective of the people she commands, to the point of training each guardsman herself and personally reinforcing otherwise simple patrols. Injury rates are lower than ever before, but the guards are beginning to feel smothered.

Aveline is utterly dedicated to her job, leaving no time for anything beyond the occasional sidetrack with Hawke—even that is an excuse to watch over people she cares about. She is a guardian in every waking moment, and she doesn't seem to know how to put down the weight she carries.

## **Aveline - The Last Three Years**

*If Aveline marries Donnic...*

Thanks to the Champion's actions, Aveline and Donnic Hendyr were married a year ago in a simple ceremony on the Hawke estate. They honeymooned in Orlais, the only time that Aveline has visited the country of her namesake. The pair has since settled into a happy marriage. Although she remains his captain and he her guardsman, Aveline now strictly divides her personal and private life.

She is no less driven to keep her guardsmen safe, but Donnic provides another perspective, and she is now giving her guard the authority they need to truly serve Kirkwall. As a force for law and order, the guard has never been more respected. This brings its own challenges, however, as some among the templars would prefer that the guard be under their direct command.

*If Aveline doesn't marry Donnic...*

It is three years since the Qunari uprising, and Guard-Captain Aveline is as driven as ever. Her guards could give a Fereldan battalion a run for their coin, and she commands their undying respect; however, all would agree that she's the hardest captain they have ever served. Aveline takes that as a compliment, although it is not always intended as such. She knows it, but accepts it as necessary for the greater good, both theirs and that of Kirkwall.

Being captain of the guard is an all-consuming position that she wouldn't give up for the world, although some in the templars would prefer that her guard had a lesser presence in keeping order. At the least, they would prefer that Aveline be more accepting of their oversight. Her association with the Champion has helped dissuade them, but pressure is mounting.

## **Bartrand Tethras**

"Half of Kirkwall wants to be my best friend right now."

The history of noble House Tethras stretches back to the foundation of Orzammar. The memories say that three times, a child of House Tethras took the office of Assembly Steward. They held appointments in the Shaperate of Memories and the Shaperate of Golems. But no longer.

In the second year of the reign of King Endrin Aeducan, Lord Andvar Tethras was found guilty before the Assembly of willfully manipulating Proving matches in favor of his House. For this affront to the Ancestors, he and all his House were sentenced to exile on the surface. Andvar died a mere five years later, leaving behind his Lady Ilsa, ten-year-old Bartrand, and two-year-old Varric.

Exile, surface life, and the loss of her husband conspired against Lady Ilsa, who took to drink, leaving young Bartrand to manage what was left of House Tethras.

By the time he was fifteen, Bartrand had doubled his family's fortune. The disgrace of House Tethras fueled his ambition and his once-noble title gave him an instant place among the kalnas, the old money elite of the Dwarven Merchants Guild; he used it to build alliances and business ventures as if he were a member of the Orzammar Assembly.

By the time Lady Ilsa died, Bartrand had made the Tethras family one of the Guild's most influential, but wealth and power on the surface couldn't sate him. He began to court alliances with the wealthiest ascendant families, branching into banking and mercenary companies. Guild members mutter that nothing will satisfy Bartrand but a complete reconstruction of House Tethras' estate in Orzammar--down to the rivers of lava--built in Kirkwall.

## **Bethany Hawke**

*If Bethany dies in Lothering...*

Hawke's younger sister, Bethany, died during the family's flight from Lothering, leaving Hawke and Bethany's twin brother, Carver, as the only surviving children. Like Hawke, Bethany was an apostate mage in hiding from the Circle since childhood. Protecting Hawke and Bethany from the templars became the defining fact of the family's life, forcing them to move frequently and live well below their means in small hamlets in Lothering. Bethany was close to her eldest sibling and idolized and envied the way Hawke embraced magic, but she could never give up her resentment of being different and fear for what their future would hold.

*If Bethany survives Lothering...*

"I was just hoping it would be different here in Kirkwall. We're not running away. We're coming home."

Even growing up as an apostate has not dimmed Bethany's faith and sunny nature, though it has colored her view of the world. Bethany wishes above all else to be "normal." She appreciates the trouble her family took to keep her out of the Circle, but the running, hiding, and constant fear have taken their toll. Though she would never admit so to her mother--not after all she sacrificed to protect her--Bethany sometimes wonders whether she would be better off in the Circle. At least there she would be with other mages, confident she'd be serving the will of the Maker and not defying a millennium of religious teachings. Still, her first loyalty is to her family; despite her doubts, she gladly embraces her magic if it keeps them safe. She has a teasing rivalry with her twin, Carver, and greatly respects Hawke.

## **Bethany - After the Deep Roads**

*If Bethany was not taken into the Deep Roads Expedition:*

Bethany communicates often with her family since entering the Circle, and she is adjusting to her new life with ease. For the first time, she can study magic without watching over her shoulder. After passing her much-delayed Harrowing, she took a senior position within the Circle, teaching and mentoring the newest apprentices. Bethany is surprised at how many templars are honest Andrastians, who believe they serve the Maker and the people by keeping mages from using blood magic. However, this up-close look at the templars has also shown her the abuses that inevitably occur when one group of people is given life-and-death power over another. Bethany supports the Circle as it is, but this grows harder as Knight-Commander Meredith clamps down more tightly.

*If Bethany was taken into the Deep Roads Expedition with Anders present:*

Since joining the Grey Wardens, Bethany has had little contact with her family. Resentful that her sibling escaped the Deep Roads unscathed while she nearly died, Bethany communicates only with their mother, relaying little beyond the fact that she is alive and continues to travel with the Warden Stroud. Her responsibilities rarely bring her back to the Kirkwall area; she usually patrols deep into the Free Marches or across the border in Ferelden, the only member of the Hawke family to return to their homeland.

## **Carver Hawke**

*If Carver dies in Lothering...*

Carver grew up surrounded by magic he couldn't truly understand. He cared deeply for his family, but sometimes felt like the stupidest person in the room. Carver foundered in Lothering, caught between the gifts of his apostate sister, Bethany and the growing skill of his more focused sibling Hawke.

But even as Carver groused about his lot, he remained dedicated to protecting those he loved. He didn't think twice about sacrificing himself to save his mother during the flight from the darkspawn, and although Carver struggled to find his way in life, there is gratification in knowing his death had a purpose.

*If Carver survives Lothering...*

"A hundred ways to run, and we choose backward. Whatever you say, but chasing an old name isn't really starting over."

Strong and strapping, Carver is a skilled warrior set on proving himself, although it's not always clear who he is trying to impress. The son and sibling of mages, he grew up surrounded by magic he couldn't truly understand - and he feels like something was expected that he could never deliver. He cares deeply for his family, but sometimes feels like the stupidest person in the room.

Carver foundered in Lothering. He blamed his lack of direction on not wanting to draw attention to his family of apostates at home. After his father died, he started down a military path; however, the Blight and rout at Ostagar ended his career almost before it could start. While he knows that swift flight was the only reasonable course in the face of the darkspawn advance, he almost would rather have stood and fought. Doomed though the effort was, facing the horde had purpose - something Carver had been searching for.

## **Carver - After the Deep Roads**

*If Carver was not taken into the Deep Roads Expedition:*



Carver seldom contacts his family since joining the templars. He gives excuses of duty and training, but his words are those of a man still uncertain of his choice. He has little in common with others of the order, having come from a family so steeped in magic. And while he is certain that regulating the Circle is as much about protecting mages as it is controlling them, he has seen disturbing abuses of power. The purpose he has found in service is strained by the blind hate some of his superiors possess. There is good work to be done, but the path is more winding than he had imagined.

*If Carver was taken into the Deep Roads Expedition with Anders present:*

Carver rarely contacts his family since joining the Grey Wardens. His duties have taken him places even a soldier of Ferelden would never have seen. Despite his freedom and authority, Carver sees becoming a Warden as another decision that was out of his control - although the choice to be in harm's way was certainly his. If pressed, he would admit that his grudge is as much about familiarity as it is about family. Even between Blights, the Grey Warden oath is a heavy burden to bear - accepting it can be a long process.

### **Knight-Captain Cullen**

Knight-Captain Cullen was one of the few templars who survived the incident at the Circle of Magi in Ferelden. The possessed blood mage Uldred took over the tower, and in his madness, he filled it with summoned demons and abominations. Cullen was imprisoned, tortured, and forced to watch the slaughter of his fellow templars. The ordeal shook him, and he emerged from it convinced that even templars fail to see how dangerous mages can be.

After Cullen returned to his duties, it became clear that he would go to any lengths to enforce the Chantry's rule. His zeal troubled Knight-Commander Greagoir, who feared it unwise to let Cullen watch over the men and women he deemed responsible for his torment.

Greagoir sent Cullen to serve under Knight-Commander Meredith in Kirkwall, hoping time away would calm him, and Meredith found Cullen's view of mages similar to her own. Of her company, only Cullen had seen mages' potentially terrifying power firsthand, and she believed he could influence the other templars' views. Consequently, Cullen rose quickly through the ranks to become Knight-Captain and Meredith's second-in-command.

*If the Warden was a female mage in Dragon Age: Origins...*

For some time, a rumor has circulated in the Gallows that Knight-Captain Cullen once fell in love with a young mage from the Circle of Ferelden. The mage was recruited into the Grey Wardens and went on to become the Hero of Ferelden. This rumor seems to cause Cullen pain, though no one knows if it is the pain of lost, unrequited love, or if Cullen is shamed by having had feelings for a mage, of all things.

Knight-Commander Meredith maintains that the rumor is untrue and punishes anyone caught repeating it.

### **Fenris**

"Even those who live without chains are still bound: by fear, by tradition, by honor. Slaves dream of freedom, but I have found free men dream of it even more."

Fenris was a slave—a bodyguard to Magister Danarius of the Tevinter Imperium—until his escape several years ago. He speaks little of his past, saying only that he most recently came to Kirkwall from Tantervale in the north. The markings on his skin are akin to runecrafting: made of lyrium and ink, they suffuse Fenris's flesh with a power even he does not fully understand. The process of their creation was painful, and in unguarded moments, Fenris attempts to control the agony that lingers still. Even so, the markings enhance his fighting skill and have made him a unique and formidable warrior.

### **Fenris - After the Deep Roads**

Since the adventure into the Deep Roads, Fenris has remained in Kirkwall, maintaining a residence in Danarius's abandoned mansion. That it doesn't truly belong to him has aroused the interest of curious neighbors, and thus, the city guard. Aveline has so far deflected their inquiries on Fenris's behalf; however, she's told him in no uncertain terms that the situation will not remain that way forever.

Though seemingly unconcerned about the house, Fenris has become increasingly nervous over the last year. He doesn't know if he's actually free from pursuit, or if his former master is planning something even worse. He tries not to think about it, taking pleasure in having a home for the first time in his life, even though his contact with anyone outside of the jobs he takes as a mercenary is very limited.

### **Fenris - The Last Three Years**

*If Hawke is in rivalry with Fenris:*

Fenris has remained in his Hightown mansion for the past three years. However, he's become increasingly restless and occasionally notes that it may almost be time for him to move on. Danarius has never reappeared, and Fenris assumes that he is now free to do as he wishes... but what will that be? For now, he seems content to stay at Hawke's side for the sake of his old debt, although things are bound to change at some point.

*If Hawke is in friendship with Fenris:*

Three years ago, after confronting Hadriana, Fenris learned of his long-lost sister. He has spoken little of it, though it clearly still preys on his mind. He has not left Kirkwall to pursue the matter, remaining in Danarius's mansion even though it is common knowledge in Hightown that "a friend of the Champion" lives within. Fenris finds his high profile in the city both intriguing and alarming. Over the last year, he has spoken more than once of leaving Kirkwall for good; if not for the debt he owes to Hawke, he would likely already have moved on.

*If Hawke is in a romance with Fenris...*

As for the night Fenris and Hawke shared three years ago, he refuses to speak more of it. However, it's clear he has not forgotten, although any lingering feelings remain unresolved. Whether that will change remains to be seen.

### **Flemeth**

**Same as in DAO**

"You are required to do nothing, least of all believe."

Ages ago, legend says Bann Conobar took to wife a beautiful young woman who harbored a secret talent for magic: Flemeth of Highever. And for a time they lived happily, until the arrival of a young poet, Osen, who captured the lady's heart with his verse.

They turned to the Chasind tribes for help and hid from Conobar's wrath in the Wilds, until word came to them that Conobar lay dying: His last wish was to see Flemeth's face one final time.

The lovers returned, but it was a trap. Conobar killed Osen, and imprisoned Flemeth in the highest tower of the castle. In grief and rage, Flemeth worked a spell to summon a spirit into this world to wreak vengeance upon her husband. Vengeance, she received, but not as she planned. The spirit took possession of her, turning Flemeth into an abomination. A twisted, maddened creature, she slaughtered Conobar and all his men, and fled back into the Wilds.

For a hundred years, Flemeth plotted, stealing men from the Chasind to sire monstrous daughters: Horrific things that could kill a man with fear. These Korcari witches led an army of Chasind from the Wilds to strike at the Alamarri tribes. They were defeated by the hero Cormac, and all the witches burned, so they say, but even now the Wilders whisper that Flemeth lives on in the marsh, and she and her daughters steal those men who come too near.

Morrigan's mother saved the last Grey Wardens from death at the top of the Tower of Ishal, but just who, or what, Flemeth truly is, is a mystery.

## **Grand Cleric Elthina**

"We will never have peace unless we try to understand one another."

Revered Mother Elthina assumed the mantle of grand cleric almost twenty years ago; she is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the southern Free Marches (everything south of Starkhaven and the Minanter River). She has long been a calming presence in the city, renowned for her kindness and generosity. People frequently turn to her to mediate disputes-particularly those involving the powerful Templar Order, over whom she holds authority as the Chantry's ranking representative.

Some claim that Elthina's advanced age has rendered her ineffective, and that she allows Knight-Commander Meredith more leeway with each passing year. Some are calling on the new Divine, Justinia V, to appoint a replacement-but they do so quietly, for Elthina is by far the most beloved priest the city has ever known.

## **Hawke**

*If Hawke is a warrior or rogue...*

The son/daughter of Malcolm Hawke and Leandra Amell, Hawke has lived in many places throughout Ferelden. His/Her father and younger sister, Bethany, were apostate mages; thus, the family was constantly on the move, avoiding templar hunters. Ten years ago, the family settled in the village of Lothering, building a home on the outskirts and making a life where they wouldn't forever be on the run. Though Leandra worried constantly that the templars would one day catch up with them, Malcolm kept his abilities a secret and taught his daughter to do the same.

He died three years ago, leaving Hawke responsible for the welfare of his/her mother and younger siblings. When the Blight began, Hawke and Carver quickly enlisted in King Cailan's regiment. The horde spilling from the Korcari Wilds meant their home would be quickly overrun if the darkspawn were not defeated immediately. However, the Battle of Ostagar ended with the betrayal and death of King Cailan. Hawke and Carver barely escaped the chaos with their lives, and returned to Lothering to get their mother and Bethany out with only moments to spare...

*If Hawke is a mage...*

The son/daughter of Malcolm Hawke and Leandra Amell, Hawke has lived in many places throughout Ferelden. His/her father was a mage, and his gifts were passed onto both Hawke and Bethany, Malcolm's younger daughter. Malcolm refused to submit himself to the Chantry's rule; he kept his abilities a secret and taught his children/daughters to do the same. Therefore, the family was constantly on the move to avoid templar hunters. Ten years ago, the family settled in the village of Lothering, building a home on the outskirts and making a life where they wouldn't forever be on the run. Though Leandra worried constantly that the templars would one day catch up with them, Malcolm's teachings were sufficient to keep them safe.

He died three years ago, leaving Hawke responsible for the welfare of his/her mother and younger siblings. When the Blight began, Carver enlisted in King Cailan's regiment, saying the horde spilling from the Korcari Wilds meant their home would be quickly overrun if the darkspawn were not defeated immediately. Hawke remained in Lothering to safeguard the family. Carver appeared on their doorstep almost a month later, exhausted and injured. King Cailan had been betrayed and slain at Ostagar, and the horde was advancing on Lothering. Though Hawke and the others were making plans to leave, they fled their home before they were fully prepared... and it may still be too late.

## **The Hero of Ferelden**

### *Hero's Background...*

*Human Noble background:* The Hero of Ferelden was the younger son/the daughter of Bryce Cousland, Teyrn of Highever. When Arl Rendon Howe's forces attacked Castle Cousland and murdered most of the Cousland family, the Hero escaped to safety with Grey Warden Commander Duncan, who then recruited him/her into the order.

*Dalish Elf background:* The Hero of Ferelden once belonged to a clan of Dalish Elves. An encounter with a tainted magical mirror corrupted the Hero, and only the Grey Wardens held the cure. To save the Hero's life, the clan gave him/her up to Grey Warden Commander Duncan and the order.

*Dwarf Noble background:* The Hero of Ferelden was born to noble House Aeducan of Orzammar, the second son/the daughter of King Endrin Aeducan. After being charged with fratricide, the Hero was exiled to the Deep Roads. There, he/she met Grey Warden Commander Duncan, who then recruited him/her into the order.

*City Elf background:* The Hero of Ferelden grew up in Denerim's impoverished elven alienage. A bitter clash with a Denerim noble during the Hero's wedding resulted in the Hero facing arrest by the city guards. The Grey Warden Commander Duncan recruited the Hero, saving him/her from a certain death sentence.

*Mage background:* The Hero of Ferelden belonged to the Circle of Magi in Ferelden, and resided in the tower at Lake Calenhad for most of their life. First Enchanter Irving recommended the Hero to Grey Warden Commander Duncan; shortly after the Hero's Harrowing, Duncan recruited him/her into the order.

*Dwarf Commoner background:* The Hero of Ferelden was born casteless in the slums of Orzammar. He/She impersonated a man of Warrior Caste in Orzammar's Provings, a crime punishable by death. However, the Hero's showing in the arena impressed Grey Warden Commander Duncan so much that he recruited the Hero before he/she could be executed.

### *Outcome of The Final Battle...*

*If the Hero survives through performing the Dark Ritual:* The Hero fought and killed the Archdemon, and lived to tell the tale. With the Archdemon gone, the darkspawn ranks broke, and the horde was easily routed.

*If the Hero makes the ultimate sacrifice:* The Hero fought and killed the Archdemon, making the ultimate sacrifice and dying to save Ferelden. With the Archdemon gone, the darkspawn ranks broke, and the horde was easily routed.

*If either Alistair or Loghain makes the sacrifice:* The armies the Hero had raised killed the Archdemon. With the Archdemon gone, the darkspawn ranks broke, and the horde was easily routed.

*After the Blight...*

*If the Hero survived:* After ending the Blight, the Hero of Ferelden took up the mantle of Warden-Commander and began the task of rebuilding the order in Ferelden.

*If a Female Human Noble married Alistair and became Queen:* After ending the Blight, the Hero of Ferelden was wed to King Alistair and crowned queen of Ferelden. She and the king now rule the country together.

*If imported from a save where a Male Human Noble married Queen Anora:* After ending the Blight, the Hero of Ferelden was wed to Queen Anora — he now bears the title of prince-consort.

## **Isabela**

"I'm Isabela. Previously 'Captain' Isabela. Sadly, without my ship, the title rings a bit hollow."

Isabela is vague about her days as a sea captain, though it's obvious she was involved with piracy and smuggling. Shortly after the Blight ended, Isabela's ship was caught in a storm near the Wounded Coast. The vessel was destroyed, and Isabela feels lucky to have escaped with her life. Now she's stranded in the Free Marches, spending most of her time in the Hanged Man tavern.

Isabela also reveals that she was born in Rivain, but spent many years in Antiva. When asked about those years, she changes the subject.

## **Isabela - After the Deep Roads**

Isabela spent the the past several years trying to track down the relic that she lost in the shipwreck. She believes that it's still in Kirkwall, though why she thinks so is a mystery. Despite her insistence that she's keeping a low profile to avoid her old employer, Castillon, Isabela seems to go out of her way to cause trouble. Recently, one of her duels evolved into a bar brawl that then spilled out into Lowtown. Involving over twenty people, the fracas caused a great deal of damage to several merchant stalls.

Isabela spent the next two weeks in the brig. Guard-Captain Aveline allowed her release, but not before extracting a promise-that Isabela would not duel on public property again. Whether Isabela actually keeps this promise remains to be seen.

## **Isabela - The Last Three Years**

*If Hawke is in friendship with Isabela...*

Isabela's return during the Qunari crisis was surprising, most of all to Isabela, herself. She blamed Hawke for inspiring her to such foolishness, and seemed to regret exposing herself to danger. After the Arishok was killed, Isabela was seen in deep conversation with Hawke. The exchange ended as Isabela walked off, saying, "You're reading too much into it."

*If Hawke is in a romance with Isabela...*

Isabela's return during the Qunari crisis was surprising, most of all to Isabela, herself. She blamed Hawke for inspiring her to such foolishness, and seemed to regret exposing herself to danger. After the Arishok was killed, a tense exchange between Isabela and Hawke ended with Isabela leaving, saying, "I didn't do it for them. I did it for you. It was always about you."

*If Hawke is in rivalry with Isabela...*

When Isabela returned during the Qunari crisis, Tome of Koslun in hand, she knew she would have to answer to Hawke for her previous betrayal. After the Arishok was killed, Isabela was seen engaged in a heated argument with Hawke. It ended with Isabela storming off after letting loose a torrent of profanity.

That was the last anyone in Kirkwall saw of her for some time. Many believed that she had left the Free Marches for good. Then as abruptly as she had departed, Isabela appeared one day in her usual spot in the Hanged Man, drinking as though she had never been gone.

## **Viscount Marlowe Dumar**

What happened to Viscount Perrin Threnhold was a travesty. I served in the Keep, and my blood boils when I hear people call him a tyrant. He was a good man who tried his best to free Kirkwall from the control of those who use power for their own purposes. It's always been that way here, hasn't it? Long ago it was the Imperium. Then it was the Qunari, then the Orlesians, now the templars... when have we ever ruled ourselves? He tried to kick those templar bastards out and give us real freedom, and what did it get him?

Now the Chantry has chosen Lord Marlowe Dumar as his replacement. After weeks and weeks of arguing, after telling the nobility that they would be choosing their viscount, after everyone saying it was time to use a new title—why not "king"? Why keep using the name imposed by the Orlesians? And after all that, the Chantry chose him. I suppose I can see why—everyone thinks he has the spine of a jellyfish, and it does seem that way.

Truly, he has the templars on one side, the nobility on the other, and everyone expects him to solve all their problems—yet he has no power to actually accomplish it. He keeps the peace as best he can, and I think he does a good job even if no one else does. And he loves that sad little boy. I see the way young Saemus looks at his father, and I feel for him. Locked up in the Keep with no other children, watching his father be put down by every self-important windbag that walks into the great hall... it makes me miss the days of Perrin Threnhold, even if they were chaotic. We can only hope that one day Saemus gives this city the legacy it deserves.

*—Excerpt from a letter by an unknown servant, found in the Gallows vaults 9:28 Dragon*

## **Knight-Commander Meredith**

"I have sympathy for the mages. They bear a terrible curse—one that endangers not only themselves but innocents as well. We allow them freedom only at the risk of unleashing them upon the unwary."

Knight-Commander Meredith Stannard is a native of Kirkwall. An orphan who joined the Templar Order when quite young, she worked her way up the ranks with sheer determination. She is credited with removing the previous viscount, Perrin Threnhold, from his position after he attempted to have the templars expelled from the city in 9:21 Dragon. The acting knight-commander was arrested and executed, and Meredith led a group of templars into the heart of the Keep to capture Threnhold. He was tried and imprisoned three days later by Grand Cleric Elthina and died from poisoning two years later. Meredith was subsequently elevated to her current position.

Many say the templars fought only to preserve their own position in Kirkwall, not to oppose Threnhold's tyranny. Others believe Meredith has always held the moral high ground, even if not all approve of her methods. For now, she enjoys the grand cleric's full support and has free rein in Kirkwall as the commander of its most powerful military force.

## **Merrill**

"The stories tell us that all elvhen once had the gift; but like so many things, it was lost. It's a Keeper's job to remember, to restore what we can."

As each generation passes, magic becomes more rare among the Dalish. As the gift dies out, talented children are moved between clans so that every Keeper has a successor, and no clan is in danger of being left without guidance.

Merrill was born to the Alerion clan, which wandered the hills of Nevarra. She was the third child of the clan with the ancient gift born to her--when the next Arlathvenn (gathering of the clans) occurred, she was given to the Sabrae clan to be First to Keeper Marethari. Merrill was just four years old.

She spent most of her life in Ferelden and the Korcari Wilds until her clan was driven north by the Blight.

## **Merrill - After the Deep Roads**

"It's a Keeper's place to remember! Even the dangerous things."

Since her arrival in Kirkwall's elven alienage, Merrill has had difficulty adjusting. Her neighbors ignore her existence, and even the most determined socialites in Lowtown cross the street to avoid her. She also gets lost frequently, a matter that doesn't seem to be solving itself through time or familiarity with the city; on separate occasions, she has accidentally found herself in the viscount's bathing room, the chantry airing cupboard, and in the middle of a dog racing track in Darktown.

## **Merrill - The Last Three Years**

*If Hawke is in friendship or rivalry with Merrill...*

"Everything I do, everything I've ever done, was for the good of my people."

Merrill spends more and more of her time locked away in her house in the alienage with her mirror; she leaves only to buy food, which she does so rarely that Varric has taken to having produce delivered to her door. At least she no longer gets lost as she wanders the city.

*If Hawke is in a romance with Merrill...*

"If you hadn't come to Sundermount that day... I can't imagine where I'd be now."

Merrill moved into Hawke's Mansion in Hightown — and not as a servant, much to the horror of the neighbours. She further scandalized the neighborhood by wandering around with no shoes on, picking the flowers out of other people's gardens, and cooing cheerfully at their attack dogs. Several angry letters were sent to the Champion and the seneschal, but the situation remains unchanged.

She continues to return to her ramshackle house in the alienage, spending a great deal of time working on her mirror.

### **First Enchanter Orsino**

"You deny us our freedom so that you may sleep better at night, but I say it is a restless and undeserved slumber."

First Enchanter Orsino is an elf from the Free Marches city of Ansbarg who was brought to the Gallows when he was very young. Some claim he became the youngest first enchanter to hold the position in Kirkwall not by his own merit, but because nobody else wanted it. He would call that cynicism—someone must advocate for the mages, after all. Even if the job is thankless, the alternative would be for Kirkwall's mages to have no advocate whatsoever. For the past five years, Orsino has had constant—sometimes very public—disputes with Knight-Commander Meredith. The common belief amongst the populace is that he is a troublemaker... possibly a dangerous one.

### **Varric Tethras**

"I know everyone in this city worth knowing."

Varric was born three years after his father's exile from Orzammar, into the world of the Merchants Guild: the Ancestors never spoke and Paragons were the heroes in tall tales; the number of dances a kalna lady gave to a lowborn ascendant boy were more pivotal than the reign of kings.

While Bartrand ran the businesses and drove House Tethras ever higher up the social ladder, Varric looked after the family and their retainers. His mother, Lady Ilsa, suffered terribly from the trauma of her disgrace and exile, finding solace in liquor and smoke. It fell to her younger son to try to curb the worst of her drunken rages, to keep her from becoming a matter of public scandal, and to care for her when she fell ill from her excesses.

Though he is famous throughout the Merchants Guild for his stories, Varric speaks rarely of himself or his family. Most of Kirkwall knows him; everyone has bought him a drink at least once--for the sake of his fictions rather than his family connections.

### **Varric - After the Deep Roads**

"Bianca sends her regards."

Bartrand vanished after the Deep Roads expedition, and Varric had to divert his attention from searching for his wayward brother to keeping the now-abandoned family business from falling apart.

Varric now occupies his brother's seat in the Dwarven Merchants Guild – technically. He rarely attends Guild meetings and is hardly ever seen actually occupying the chair in their hall that belongs to House Tethras. He prefers to run the Tethras financial empire from his suite at the Hanged Man. And he never replies to his mail.



## Varric - The Last Three Years

"There's power in stories. That's all history is: the best tales. The ones that last. Might as well be mine."

*If Bartrand lives:* Varric saw Bartrand settled into a sanitarium just outside Kirkwall, run by the Chantry. He then took up the mantle of House Tethras officially;

*If Bartrand was killed:* The death of his elder brother forced Varric to take up the mantle of House Tethras officially;

however, according to the updated official Kirkwall and Merchants Guild documentation, the family businesses are run by nonexistent uncles, aunts, cousins, and household pets.

## Zevran Arainai

We are in danger, friend. Two of the seven Guildmasters are already in Zevran Arainai's pocket, and the Guildmaster of Rialto is dead. While no proof exists, we both know he was involved whether he claims the deed or not. They should have released him when they discovered he lived, "honor of the Antivan Crows" be damned. What option do we have now?

*If the Warden didn't romance Zevran:* After centuries of unity that have led us to rule a nation from the shadows and have placed kings and queens in our pockets, we are being torn apart from within by a single elf who didn't even succeed in his mission to kill the so-called Hero of Ferelden.

*If the Warden romanced Zevran:* After centuries of unity that have led us to rule a nation from the shadows and have placed kings and queens in our pockets, we are being torn apart from within by a single elf who didn't even succeed in his mission. How could anyone have guessed that the Grey Warden would become his lover and support his crusade? That Zevran would help defeat the Blight and become a hero within the Crows, even as we branded him anathema?

The Guildmasters dismissed Zevran's threat without considering just how many assassins were similarly disaffected. Too many of our numbers have been cheated out of their rightful tithes, driven into hiding, or intimidated into silence... and somehow, Zevran is finding them all. You report that he is not in Antiva, but that isn't always the case. He appears in a city until our operatives find him and chase him out into Rivain or the Free Marches—and then we never hear from them again. We have both spoken to the remaining Guildmasters, and they have denied us. They are blind, and it makes me think maybe Zevran is right. Perhaps it is time for a change.

-- *From a half-burned letter found in a Treviso warehouse, 9:35 Dragon.*

## LETTERS AND NOTES

### The Awiergan Scrolls: First Aspect

(The first scroll is marked with a Chasind chieftain's sigil.)

Mine dottir was taken by the caster, and mine legion met him. She was pried from his blood-scrawls, but some horror did inhabit him instead. Mine legion could not contain, and I ask for a seal, whatever the faith. Price be paid, Scholar.

(The second scroll is vellum with archaic script and phrasing, but the red ink remains somehow wet.)

Of binding a symptom, no vial can contain you.  
One of three, separated in prevention.  
Unbound, but caged, I must not follow.  
Truth will hold you, for that is what truth does.

(The second scroll ends with a crude map and a handprint in red, the little finger severed at the first knuckle.)

### **The Awiergan Scrolls: Second Aspect**

(Two scrolls. The first is a letter bearing the seal of a lesser Orlesian noble house.)

Our line is dead, but still walking. I know not if it is because of the old ways, but my three boys are now something other because of want. If He can be called on, I ask you, Scholar, do so, and the price is paid.

(The second scroll is vellum, with archaic script and phrasing, but the red ink remains somehow wet.)

Of binding a symptom, no vial can contain you.  
Two of three, three yourself, asunder.  
Caged, but still meddling, you will not goad me.  
Truth will hold you, or it is no longer true.

(The second scroll ends with a crude map, and a handprint in red, the little finger severed at the second knuckle.)

### **The Awiergan Scrolls: Third Aspect**

(The first scroll bears Rivaini markings.)

He was our hero against Par Vollen, and we were in awe. Perhaps it was our fault. There was a day when he changed and saw us as servants, not those he offered to serve. And then he was infested. We need a seal, Scholar, in the faith you choose. The price is paid.

(The second scroll is vellum with archaic script and phrasing, but the red ink remains somehow wet.)

Of binding a symptom, no vial can contain you.  
Three of three, you perverted a man elevated by others.  
I will not yield, even as I must turn to face you.  
Truth will hold you, or a new truth we will create.

(The second scroll ends with a crude map and a handprint in red, the little finger severed at the root.)

### **A Badly Copied Leaflet**

TAKE BACK OUR STREETS!

Fereldan refugees, Qunari soldiers... Who next? Tevinter slavers snatching children out of their beds?

THIS ENDS NOW!

Send a message that Kirkwallers WILL NOT ACCEPT THIS! We must band together to drive foreign waste from our doorstep. Reclaim the Free Marches FOR THE MARCHERS!

If you care about our future, join the Friends of Kirkwall! Reclaim our city!

### **Bill of Lading**

(A note is scrawled on the back of the bill.)

Bill of Lading  
Smetty's Fish Guttery  
Crate 1023

Gamlen,

I'm sure you're losing patience by now, but what is one small trip to the warehouse district after waiting twenty years to get your hands on this gem? Find the crate noted on this bill. Enjoy your search!

### **Blood Mage Dispatches**

We narrowly escaped Meredith's hounds. The city just isn't safe, Bancroft. We must get five out through the gates tonight and get to the caves. It's that, or risk capture and interrogation.

- "MS"

Casualties

The hounds nabbed Franke the Cobbler tonight; no one knows where he is now. Thom Beshcal and his wife were killed three days back. They're no longer just hunting us: they're hunting our friends and family. To the Void with the consequences! We must strike back while we still can.

- "A"

I can get two out tonight. A guide on the other side will take them to the refuge. Don't pick anyone with a cold; last time, a careless sneeze almost alerted the guard.

- Bancroft

Shipping Notice

We can't trust the raiders' promise of passage - the templar's bounty on us is far too tempting. Press on every contact you have! We must leave Kirkwall before the knight-commander does something drastic. Each night, more of our brethren make it to the coast.

If the hounds sniff out your current location, the other site we discussed is clear. Be prepared to leave at a moment's notice.

- Bancroft

### **Captain Reiner's Accounts**

Sold:

- 2 barrels of fish, Viscount's Keep
- 3 barrels of rum, Hanged Man
- 1 male human mage, Danzig (Undercity)
- 25 Rivaini furs, Helton's Clothiers

### **Capture Gamlen**

Bring Gamlen to the caverns where we first met. If he's not alive, you won't get a single copper.

### **A Crumpled Note**

Gamlen,

I found the Gem of Keroshek. If you want it, come to Darktown. Alone.

### **Dockside Redirect - Woodrow's Warehouse, East**

(This document is an order to redirect cargo to Woodrow's Warehouse to the east. It is endorsed with Harbormaster Liam's barely legible signature, along with a note from his assistant, Aden.)

Orlesian Port Authority Seal, here? Suggest we apply the "special" rate for this.

### **Emeric's Notes**

(Emeric's notes are a messy collection of half-baked thoughts written on scraps of paper. Only one seems to stand out.)

There's something about that Lowtown foundry where Mharen's trail ended. I've got a strange feeling about it.

### **A Letter from the Circle**

My dear friend,

I have obtained the books you requested. I'll leave them at our usual hiding spot. Please collect them as soon as possible. I would hate to see them in the wrong hands!

Your last letter was fascinating! You have proven me wrong, once again, by doing the impossible. I shouldn't have doubted your resolve, and I hope you will keep me apprised of further progress.

Your friend and colleague,

O

### **Meredith's Apology**

Messere DuPuis,

Please accept my humble apologies for recent events. The templar, Emeric, has been reprimanded for his wrongful accusations and for arousing suspicions within the city guard that led to the raid on your estate. I will see that he is restrained in future.

Sincerely yours,

Knight-Commander Meredith

### **Olivia's Letter to Thrask**

Father,

I know the sacrifices you've made to conceal my secret, but I am a child no longer. I cannot burden you my whole life, lest my secret destroy us both. I must live my own life as a woman... and as a mage. It is oddly freeing to write the word.

Farewell, Father. I hope one day you make peace between what you have been taught and what you have seen.

All my love,

Olivia

## **A Scribbled Note**

### **Entry 1**

Used quicklime to preserve her feet. Unsure whether texture of the skin is to my liking. Will try other methods.

### **Entry 2**

Mharen... it's a pretty name. I saw her hands. Long, slender fingers. Fair skin—the hands of a lifelong scholar. Oh, to lock my own clumsy fingers in hers again...

### **Entry 3**

Today is our anniversary. Had hoped to complete my work before now, but one piece is missing. I'm so sorry, love. Please wait a little longer. I haven't forgotten my promise.

When I see it, I'll know. I would know that face anywhere.

### **Entry 4**

It's close, now. My long wait is almost over.

Am I doing the right thing? It all seemed so clear to me, but now... what have I become? When did this happen? Someone will eventually try to stop me. I've left too many clues for them not to. When they come, should I try to stop them? Maybe the Maker took her from me because I deserved to lose her.

No. It's too late for me to stop, now. The Maker will need to stop me if he thinks I need to be stopped.

No one else.

## **Ser Alrik's Letter**

To Her Excellency, Divine Justinia,

I am well aware both you and Knight-Commander Meredith have rejected my proposal, but I beg you to reconsider. The mages in the Free Marches are past controlling, their numbers have doubled in three years, and they have found a way to plant their abominations in our ranks. They cannot be contained!

The Tranquil Solution is our answer. All mages at the age of majority must be made Tranquil. They'll coexist peacefully, retain their usefulness—a perfect strategy! It's simply the best way to ensure mages obey the laws of men and Maker.

I remain, as always, your obedient servant,  
Ser Otto Alrik

## **Templar Letter**

Ser Bardel,

I have told you a hundred times not to bother the knight-commander with your pathetic questions. She's a busy woman and has no time to nurse you through your crisis of conscience. You are under my command. If you take issues with my orders, you bring them to me, or I will see you stripped of your knighthood!

The mage Karl is dangerous and we must take steps to deal with him and any friends who are assisting his rebellion. I expect this done by next week. If I must see to it personally, I will also find out exactly why you failed to carry out your sacred duties.

The Maker has given us a divine task, Bardel. We cannot fail Him.

Ser Alrik

### **A Thank You Note**

Gascard,

Thank you kindly for your last shipment. It arrived in almost perfect condition. The requested payment is on its way. Please use the artifact with care. The creatures can be difficult to control, even for an experienced mage.

A pleasure doing business,  
Your friend

### **A Torn Note**

(A torn note found in a conspirator's pocket.)

...will not tell you again: it's not safe to bring new recruits to our meetings. Meredith has eyes everywhere. Bring anyone who claims to be against her to Gardibali's Warehouse at night. We must ensure their loyalty, lest Meredith discover us before we are ready to confront her...

### **A Reply from Starkhaven**

Messere DuPuis,

This is in regards to your inquiry into missing mages. I would like to remind you that the duty of seeking out missing mages, if there were any to begin with, would fall to the templars of Starkhaven, not a minor nobleman from Kirkwall.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that the Circle of the Magi, as a whole, does not welcome casual inquiries about the mages in its care.

Thank you,  
First Enchanter Raddick

### **Wallop Mallet**

Gamlén,

This gem is very pretty, I can understand your obsession with it. Remember the game, wallop? Find the place your wallop mallet came from. Your answers are there.

### **Grey Warden Letters**

Take the first boat from Amaranthine to Kirkwall, then proceed with all haste to Weisshaupt Fortress. If the roads prove too perilous or blocked, our agent in Kirkwall can assist. Find the dead drop located in an alleyway near the Lowtown foundries during daylight hours. Protect the letters at all costs.

*Warden-Commander of Ferelden*

*If Avernus was told to continue with his research ethically...*

The limitations put upon my research have greatly hampered progress. With just a few subjects, I could test certain critical hypotheses. However, the information sent about the Architect has proven invaluable to my efforts, and I am pleased to report limited success. As the Architect surmised, considerable untapped power exists within Grey Warden blood. When properly prepared, its effects can be remarkable.

But my research has also revealed some alarming implications, which I've attached in the old Acanthan cipher. I urge you to send this to the First Warden at once.

I will conduct further tests as long as I'm able. My documentation is very thorough—if time finally claims me, others may follow in my footsteps.

Avernus

*If Avernus could continue without restrictions...*

The last shipment was quite helpful for my research, Commander. If you could double the supply next time, it would prove most efficacious. Additionally, the information regarding the Architect has proven invaluable—we have made several breakthroughs recently. As the Architect surmised, considerable untapped power exists within Grey Warden blood. When properly prepared, its effects can be remarkable.

But my research has also revealed some alarming implications, which I've attached in the old Acanthan cipher. I urge you to send this to the First Warden at once.

I will conduct further tests as long as I'm able. My documentation is very thorough—if time finally claims me, others may follow in my footsteps.

Avernus

## **THE EXILED PRINCE**

### **The City of Starkhaven**

### **Places**

Starkhaven, the largest city in the Free Marches, sits on the bank of the great Minanter River. I remember my visit to the city quite clearly. I was taken up the river by barge—a cumbersome vessel that moved at a stately pace—and disembarked by the city's central square, an impressive space with marble fountains and surrounded by kingly estates.

Starkhaven's wealth was truly a sight to behold. A path paved in granite led up to the grandest building I've ever seen. My guide indicated that this was the residence of Starkhaven's ruler, Prince Vael.

We supped at the table of my guide's closest friend. I was presented with a variety of dishes from the region. One in particular stood out: fish and egg pie, Starkhaven's most famous dish. Three deboned fish, caught just that day, were cooked in a porcelain vessel with boiled eggs, dried fruit, spices, and thickened cream, all topped with a light crust. Superb!

*—From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Demon's Gift**

**Lore**

Before the First Blight, there lived an old man and woman. One day, a beautiful stranger came to their house, seeking shelter. The old man and woman gave her food to eat and a downy mattress to sleep upon. In return, she offered them a golden mirror that would grant three wishes.

Looking into the mirror, the woman frowned at her wrinkles and grey hair. "I wish I were young again," she said. Suddenly, the face of a lovely maiden stared back at her. The man angrily grabbed the mirror, saying, "You're so selfish! You could have given youth to us both! I wish you weren't so stupid."

At once, the woman was brilliant beyond measure and saw that her husband had never loved her; he tolerated her only because her age and ignorance made his own seem less by comparison.

Angry now, the old woman grabbed for the mirror—at the same time, they both said, "I hate you. I wish that you get exactly what you deserve!" With that, they were back together, both ugly and old, but now knowing exactly how much contempt they had for each other.

## **The Resolutionists**

**Lore**

Each Circle of Magi is home to various fraternities of enchanters that serve as social outlets for mages and ways for those of like mind to promote their philosophies on magic. The most marginal of these were always the Libertarians, who believed mages must take a more active role in the politics of Thedas. While publicly only advocating greater power for the Circles, many Libertarians secretly wished to split completely from the Chantry, as mages did in Tevinter. The Chantry allowed the group to continue in order to note potential troublemakers.

The Resolutionists changed all that. Splitting from the main Libertarian fraternity, the Resolutionists are open apostates who support freedom for mages at all costs. They engaged in acts of terror and sabotage against the Chantry throughout Thedas, and many are connected to Kirkwall's mage underground. They have declared that unless mages are freed to rule themselves, they will show every person in Thedas how little protection the Circle of Magi actually offers.

## **The Vael Family**

**Lore**

Before the Vaels came to power, Starkhaven was ruled in quick succession by a number of petty warlords; some were genuine bannorn, but others were little more than bandits. Tired of the constant petty raiding and warfare between Starkhaven and neighboring cities, the original Lord Vael organized a peaceful protest against "King Ironfist," the low-born, self-declared "King of Starkhaven." Hundreds of Starkhaven's most prominent citizens fasted for ten days and nights on the steps of the chantry, their numbers increasing every day. When his soldiers began deserting in droves at this example of piety, Ironfist surrendered his sword to the templars and left Starkhaven forever.

In gratitude, the people of Starkhaven demanded that Lord Vael be king; he refused, however, saying he had no right to that title. He was instead proclaimed prince of Starkhaven, and his family has ruled there ever since. They remain devout, dedicating at least one son or daughter per generation to become a cleric in the chantry.



## Divine Justinia V

## Characters

Formerly the Revered Mother Dorothea of Orlais, Divine Justinia V rose to power after the death of Divine Beatrix III in the year 9:34 of the Dragon Age. Little is known of Dorothea's background before she joined the Chantry as an initiate. Within the Grand Cathedral, rivals suggest that her reticence in discussing her past means she's hiding something; few of her flock, however, can imagine her as anyone other than a gentle mother of obvious faith.

When Beatrix III was felled by a massive stroke, she survived just long enough to put forth Dorothea's name as a candidate for her replacement. Grand Clerics from throughout Thedas flocked to Orlais for the Grand Consensus, a private meeting between the heads of all Chantries to select the next Divine.

Though ritual demanded the decision be unanimous, servants attending the Consensus whispered of heated debate over Dorothea's suitability. Her "worldly" background and demonstrated forgiveness for sinners were held against her; ultimately, however, the will of Beatrix III prevailed, and Dorothea began her reign as Justinia V.

## Empress Celene I of Orlais

## Characters

Empress Celene I is arguably the most powerful woman in Thedas. No other nation rivals Orlais in wealth or power, and Celene is Orlais personified.

Rumor and scandal surround the empress's rise to the throne, and it is difficult to separate truth from fiction. Celene is the daughter of the late Emperor Florian's youngest sister, and others in the family held stronger claims when Florian died. Court rumors at the time implied that Celene had her uncle assassinated then schemed against her older cousins to challenge their right to rule.

Regardless of how she came to the throne, Celene quickly proved that it was exactly where she belonged. The mad Florian's rule had brought the empire to the brink of collapse. Celene was its savior. Orlais has never been quite so peaceful or prosperous as it is now. The empress highly values education and learning and is an ardent patron of the arts. The aristocracy—in order to impress her—has followed suit, leading to a rebirth of Orlesian culture.

—*From Orlais: A Modern History*, by Revered Mother Laetitia

## Leliana

## Characters

*If the Warden didn't romance Leliana:* Many stories have been told of Leliana; some say she fought alongside the Hero of Ferelden against the Blight prior to serving at the right hand of the Divine. Even that is hearsay—the only thing known for certain is that the bard is often seen at the Divine's side in Val Royeaux. This has caused no small degree of alarm in the Chantry's inner circles: Does the Divine have a plan of her own? What might Leliana's part be? The truth remains to be seen.

*If the Warden romanced Leliana:* Leliana is a legendary adventuress in Thedas, a heroine of the Fifth Blight and reportedly the Hero of Ferelden's lover. Some stories say she yet remains at the Hero of Ferelden's side, but other tales from Val Royeaux say she'd been spotted in the company of Divine Justinia. Rumors within the Chantry claim the Divine has a plan of her own—one that involves Leliana as her personal agent—but few know what such a plan might entail. Given that Leliana is a master storyteller, it's not impossible that these rumors are of her own creation. The truth remains to be seen.

*If Leliana was killed by the Warden after the defiling of the Sacred Ashes of Andraste:* There are many tales of Leliana, Orlesian adventuress and bard, the most recent being that she fought against the Fifth Blight. Some even say she died at the hands of the Hero of Ferelden. How she could be alive—and reportedly acting as an agent of the Divine—is unknown. Perhaps the story of her death is exaggerated... or perhaps the supposed place of her demise, the altar of the fabled Urn of Sacred Ashes, is also the place of her rebirth. The truth remains to be seen.

*If Leliana wasn't recruited before the Destruction of Lotharing or left the Warden due to disapproval:* Many stories are told of Leliana; some say she fled the Blight in Ferelden only to serve as the right hand of Divine Justinia. The only fact known for certain is that the Orlesian bard is often seen at the Divine's side in Val Royeaux. This has caused no small degree of alarm in the Chantry's inner circles: Does the Divine have a plan of her own? What might Leliana's part be? The truth remains to be seen.

## **Sebastian Vael**

## **Characters**

"In the face of danger, sometimes the bravest thing is to stand back and trust that the Maker will see justice done."

Sebastian Vael is the only surviving son of the ruling family of Starkhaven, which was murdered in a violent coup d'etat. Sebastian cannot forget the irony that he still lives only because his family was so ashamed of his drinking and womanizing that they committed him to the Kirkwall Chantry against his will. After initially rejecting a priest's lifestyle, Sebastian was more surprised than anyone when he realized that his show of faith had turned real.

Since then, his belief in the Maker and His plan for Thedas have been unshakable. Embracing his new role, Sebastian took vows of poverty and chastity to become a sworn brother of the Chantry... until word of his family's deaths forced him to take up worldly concerns once again. Grand Cleric Elthina, Sebastian's mentor and friend, hopes to convince him to walk away from the struggle for Starkhaven and return to the good works of the Chantry.

## **Sebastian - After the Deep Roads**

## **Characters**

Sebastian has spent the past three years advancing his campaign to retake Starkhaven. He has been traveling extensively between Kirkwall and other Free Marches cities, attempting to recruit sufficient allies to build an army. With Hawke securing the Hawke family a place among Kirkwall's nobility, the two have crossed paths a few times, but an exiled prince like Sebastian has far better access than Hawke to the viscount and other heads of state. So far, though, few families have agreed to support Sebastian with actual troops, leaving him in the difficult position of trying to retake his city with no army.

## **Sebastian - The Last Three Years**

## **Characters**

After his confrontation with the desire demon Allure, Sebastian had a crisis of faith over breaking his priestly vows to pursue worldly power in Starkhaven. He questioned his own motives, worrying that he wanted to retake Starkhaven for his own personal power, not because it was the right thing to do. Trusting Starkhaven's fate to the Maker, he returned to the Chantry, but was turned away by Grand Cleric Elthina, who believed he had not yet committed fully to either course.

Though he has not renewed his vows or returned to his duties as a brother, Sebastian proved a faithful servant to the grand cleric over the past three years. As Kirkwall grows ever-more turbulent, the grand cleric relies on Sebastian to be her eyes and ears in the often-dangerous secular world. Whether he will again devote himself to the Chantry or return to Starkhaven is still anyone's guess, though Sebastian was heard saying he will not leave Kirkwall as long as both the Champion and the grand cleric need him.

## **Duty**

## **Letters and Notes**

To whomever elects to participate in the charitable deed of assisting the Vael family of Starkhaven

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His most worthy highness, Prince Sebastian Vael, has provided instructions for anyone brave and noble enough to attempt eradication of the rabble who dared attack his family. Three groups of Flint Company mercenaries have been sighted in the Kirkwall vicinity.

- \* One group makes camp not far from the elves of the Sundermount mountain range.
- \* The second has been seeking information on the Docks after nightfall.
- \* The third is far from the main road off the Wounded Coast; they are believed to have a small campsite well past any known landmarks.

A princely award awaits whoever finds and defeats all these rogues.

May the Maker guide you.

Chanter Taletha

## **Flora Harimann's Diary**

## **Letters and Notes**

### *First Day of Harvestmere*

Mother finally began her expansion to the estate today. She brought in two dozen men from the Imperium who I'm sure were slaves, and they've been excavating the hillside behind the house. The dirt is awful. And the noise! Must they shatter every rock in Kirkwall? It's been quiet since lunch, though, and Mother is behaving very strangely. She's now talking about stopping the expansion—just like that, with no explanation. She never tells me anything...

### *Tenth Day of Harvestmere*

Father is behaving so oddly. Today he pinched my buttocks! Just reached around the table and... I can't imagine what would make him do such a thing. And to the servant girls, as well! Some of the things he says would truly make a sailor blush. I told the maids to lock up the wine, but it hasn't made any difference so far. I'm going to the chantry tonight to pray for him.

### *Eleventh Day of Harvestmere*

What can be happening? First Father, now Brett. I can't talk to either of them anymore. I don't know what they're drinking, but they are lost in their own little worlds. And Mother doesn't care; should she even be here, all she talks about is Starkhaven and marrying me off to that idiot Goran Vael. What madness has come over this place?

## **THE BLACK EMPORIUM**

### **Andraste in Nude Repose - Invisible**

**Lore**

Can stone lie with purpose? Can it beckon with raw feminine command, yet shine with an inspiring virtue? That challenge was posed to sculptor Arwand de Glace, artisan and son of Empress Vougiene of Orlais. It was busywork and rhetoric in a time of excess, but answer he did—with the reserves of a nation and a passion unhealthy. His subject? Our Lady, though not as depicted in traditional statuary.

Arwand's mad ambition summoned the form of Andraste uninterrupted by the trappings of war and devoid of the vestments she assumed after death. It was living, commanding, obscene, yet inspired. To gaze upon it was to be enthralled, spiritually and physically. It was the latter that alarmed Chantry officials. They blanched at the thought of Our Lady being possessed of such a base appeal, even as they, too, were drawn.

The work could not be destroyed without threatening the balance between empire and hallowed, so a grave censorship was enacted under the guise of honoring. Enchanters were tasked with extending the ethereal that hides the Fade, drawing it around the form like a cloak. Our Lady remains in the stone and in this world, but mortal eyes are forever denied her treasure and glory. She is veiled in every sense.

As in all things, unintended consequences must vex those with pure intentions. Modesty would have been better served by a thickened sheet, drawn back when techniques were to be studied. As it is, the sculptor's skills are accessible only to an exploring touch, defining the shape by intimate caress. All manner of strange congress has stemmed from tempted hands and the innocent wish for clarity.

—*From Art and Shame: Forbidden Wonders of Faith by Foisine de Petitforet, translated by Philliam, a Bard!*

### **The Basket of Lost Socks**

**Lore**

In my career as first enchanter of the Circle of Ansborg, I have lost 208 socks of various and sundry description. Utterly. Without a trace. Ser Mallorick, the templar who supervises the Circle's laundry rooms, assures me that this is a common natural phenomenon.

Hogwash, I say! It is physically impossible for an article of the material world to vanish completely and leave no signs of its passage. The only rational explanation, therefore, must be that the disappearances are magical in origin. This, I hope, will be the definitive treatise on the subject.

I set upon my research with the following premise: Since it is a well-known fact that objects of worldly origin cannot travel between places on Thedas without crossing the intervening distance, then socks must originate in the Fade itself. They are emanations of some spirit projected into the waking world and whimsically recalled when the spirit desires.

I therefore devised a plan to observe my socks over a period of eight months; I hid within a sock-blind so that I might catch them unawares—both in the physical realm and in the Fade—and hopefully witness their natural behavior firsthand.

—*From The Interplay of Spirits in the Common Laundry Room, by First Enchanter Luidweg of Ansborg*

## **The Box of Screaming**

**Lore**

I received the box from a man I met in the Silent Plains. He spoke little and would not reveal his name. For reasons I shall not detail here, I had been kidnapped and left for dead in that gray, wind-blasted wasteland.

After days of walking, I was parched and close to death. I was about to dash my head on a rock to speed my passing when the man arrived. He possessed a waterskin containing ample water for a person traveling from our location to the Imperial Highway. From there, he said, I could find my way to Solas or Perivantium. He offered to give me the waterskin if I agreed to take three things from him: a glowing crystalline shard, a bronze sphere, and an iron-bound box with no hinges.

I asked the man if he wished to have these items delivered. He said that he merely wanted me to have them. It was an odd request, but I was too weak and too desperate to think much of it. And so I agreed. The man put the items into a leather sack, which he handed to me along with the water.

"What about you?" I asked. He said nothing, only pointed in the direction from which I had come. "There is nothing that way," I said. He merely smiled at me.

I found the Imperial Highway about a day later, and a caravan driver agreed to take me to Perivantium in exchange for the large glowing shard. In Perivantium, I bartered the bronze sphere for new clothes and room at the inn. That night I examined the iron-bound box and found no way to open it. I held it to my ear, and thought I heard slow, measured breathing coming from within. My mind was afire with curiosity, and I obtained from the innkeeper a large hammer, thinking to smash the thing open. The moment the hammer touched the box, it shrieked—the shrill sound pierced the depths of my soul.

I gave the box to the innkeeper in the morning and felt better for having rid myself of it.

*—A page ripped from a mysterious journal, on display in the Black Emporium*

## **Broken Dowsing Rods - No Refunds**

**Lore**

There have been several Chantry investigations to determine whether the dowsters' art is magical in nature, but nothing conclusive has ever been determined. In 3:86 Towers, Divine Joyous II declared that the practice of dowsing was freely permitted by the Chantry on the grounds that dowsters never attempted to use their skills for nefarious purposes.

A brief theological debate ensued over what sort of nefarious purposes a dowster might have; the worst possible dowsing-related crime suggested by Grand Cleric Willhemina of Hossberg was that they might go looking for poisonous worms which could be left in the chantry offertory. The Chantry agreed that this, while unacceptable, was a relatively mild threat.

*—From Of Fires, Circles, and Templars: A History of Magic in the Chantry by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Chest of Unanswered Invitations**

**Lore**

In a peculiar shop in Kirkwall, a large chest sits filled with letters and cards. Upon closer inspection, each is an invitation. Events of every possible description are represented: grand balls held in the palace at Val Royeaux, the wedding of the reigning king and queen of Nevarra, countless naming day parties, the Chantry's solstice celebrations for six consecutive years in Cumberland, five different versions of the invitation to the funeral of Ser Roland Ferrar dated five years apart.

Ship-naming ceremonies. Quickly-penned notes suggesting business lunches, one signed in blood. Several invitations to duels sent between the same two families in Antiva City over a period of forty years. Nineteen letters from members of the Dwarven Merchants Guild addressed to Varric Tethras of Kirkwall, asking him to attend critical guild meetings. One very fine embossed card, yellowing with age, from the Grand Cathedral inviting the King of Antiva to tea with Divine Theodosia II.

Given their current location, it seems unlikely any of these invitations were answered by their intended recipients, and less likely that they were ever received at all. Would anyone buy such things? I can hardly imagine.

*—From the letters of Brother Ferdinand Genitivi to Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Crate of Live Death Watch Beetles**

**Lore**

The loud tapping sound of the Death Watch Beetle is widely believed to foretell a death in the household. In Nevarra, the beetle is prized; households sometimes keep one in a small cage for good luck. However, the Rivaini, consider them to be an extremely ill omen, and kill the beetles on sight.

The strangest reaction to the Death Watch Beetle, however, happened in Val Royeaux in 8:62 Blessed. Upon the death of her husband after a long illness, Lady Ivaline Fernande took to the beetles, so much that she commissioned a dark silken gown patterned after its distinctive appearance, right down to the legs and wings. Her arrival at the royal court in this ensemble sent a stir throughout the empire. Within a week, every dowager in Orlais was wearing beetle brooches, beetle masks, and capes evoking beetle wings.

The sensation finally came to an end when the Widow of Lord Verchin appeared at a ball with live Death Watch Beetles in her hair. One fell onto the emperor while he was greeting Lady Verchin, and His Imperial Majesty's scream could clearly be heard on the outskirts of the city. The horrified emperor declared that never again were the creatures to appear in his sight.

*--From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **The Emergent Compendium**

**Lore**

Messere Darvies, you said that a scholar's life is not for everyone. Now I understand—I couldn't be more frustrated by the marvel I have sent you. Chief among its pre-Tevinter strangeness, the volumes are automatos: new entries appear of their own accord, with no scrivener's quill in sight. When a mage consultant says it's impossible, but your own eyes see it happen—and often—it's clearly a wonder.

But the content! Each new addition is single image created unseen, accompanied by a line of gibberish. And what boggles these imitari! Records of the mundane and the fantastic with no rhythm or weight. I have observed a dragon in flight, a man in regal robes but of a complexion I have never seen, countless peoples at the moment of death, and no end of devices I cannot fathom in the least. The only image remotely familiar was extremely so: mine own wife! But the babble of the legend gave no hint to the significance, and that volume has since vanished.

I cannot imagine the purpose, or the library that could hold what has surely been accumulated. It would be as though transcribing the individual birds of a flock twittering about you. A dozen images appeared as I wrote this, and by the time you hold this, they will be lost in a thousand more. To be granted the world at once both intimate and distant is almost unbearable. I know so much is there, but can never know it, myself. It makes one feel very small, indeed.

The newest pages:

-A newborn of Rivaini complexion subtitled "bE qIK"

-A hornless Qunari with tightly braided hair, subtitled "viqpbkle abfi vlskb beQ"

-My wife again! Subtitled "ilic x akxypre obe ,prqflz qplM"

-Two shadowed spheres among stars subtitled "aboofqp iboxE'kbC px bpmfizb kX"

—The notes of Scholar Bodaliere on The Emergent Compendium in the Original Tongue, author unknown

*(The phrases deciphered phrases for the curious: "Not He" "The envoy lied honestly" "Post coitus, her husband a fool" "An eclipse as Fen'Harel stirred")*

## The Hedge Witch

**Lore**

Saramish was an witch who lived in the Planasene Forest about a hundred years ago. She possessed only a modicum of magical power—enough to draw the templars' attention, but not nearly enough to defend herself from them. As the templars closed in on her, Saramish worked a spell of transformation. No one knows what her intentions were, but the outcome could not have been to her liking. All that was left of Saramish when her spell was complete was a mighty hedge, almost as tall as a man.

The hedge was uprooted and taken to the College of Enchanters in Cumberland, where the enchanters declared it harmless, and not too different from a common hawthorn. Since hawthorn bushes do not have the capacity for thought, it was decided that it would be impossible for Saramish to return to her true form. Out of pity for the poor woman, the "hedge witch" was planted outside the college.

It was later uprooted and sold to a private collector of curios, as the college's groundskeepers could no longer maintain the "hedge witch"—for while it required very little water or sunlight, the bush's aggressive growth made constant trimming a necessity.

—*Excerpt from Templar Tomfoolery: Saucy Little Tales from the Barracks compiled by Senior Enchanter Wentworth Higginbottom*

## The Pickled Apples of Arlathan

**Lore**

I expressed my incredulity to the shop's assistant, who coldly noted that he did not like my implication. He insisted that every article in the Black Emporium was genuine—no fakes, imitations, or cheap knock-offs.

I must have appeared unconvinced, for the assistant narrowed his eyes at me and disappeared into the bowels of the shop, returning several minutes later. He removed the jar of pickled apples from its display case, and proceeded to carefully, reverentially, remove the wax seal from the lid of the jar.

I watched with fascination as the jar was opened, and a single, rosy apple pulled from it. It looked as if it had been picked just that day, at the peak of ripeness. With a paring knife, the assistant cut the tiniest sliver of flesh from the apple and presented it to me.

The flavor of that one small sliver was astonishing. It was as close to a perfect apple as ever there was. I was experiencing the essence of every apple ever eaten, and that ever will be eaten. When it was over, the sense of loss that filled me was sharp enough to move me to tears.

The rest of the apple was returned to the jar, which was then resealed. I paid five sovereigns for that single taste, and I believe I got the better part of the bargain.

—*From the letters of Brother Ferdinand Genitivi to Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Statue of Blessed Brother Joffrey of Ghislain**

## **Lore**

In 4:25 Black, Lord Joffrey of Montfort left the life of a courtier behind, citing irreconcilable differences with Lady Chantal of Val Chevin. He traveled to a small abbey outside Ghislain and took orders as an initiate of the Chantry.

From his cell, Brother Joffrey penned innumerable meditations on the nature of sin and the forgiveness of trespasses, most of which he sent to Lady Chantal.

In 4:40 Black, the Chantry declared the first Exalted March to end the heresy in Tevinter. Brother Joffrey celebrated the occasion by writing a series of letters to the chantry in Minrathous, denouncing their scandalous behavior and urging them to better themselves. Although none of his letters were answered, Brother Joffrey was undeterred—he continued writing to the Minrathous Chantry, suggesting in the strongest possible terms that they apologize to the Divine at once, as she was really quite upset.

Upon his death in 4:52 Black, the brothers of the Ghislain abbey found Joffrey's humble cell stacked with copies of his letters from floor to ceiling. The Divine officially recognized his efforts on behalf of the Chantry in 4:57 Black, when his correspondence was moved into the archive of the Grand Cathedral.

The skeletal hand of Brother Joffrey, still clutching his pen, is kept in a reliquary in Ghislain abbey to this day. There are several documented cases of people being overwhelmed by a desire to apologize after touching it.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **Velvet Cailan**

## **Lore**

The Velvet Cailan is a portrait of the late King Cailan of Ferelden, painted on luminescent velvet.

According to rumor, King Cailan commissioned a large number of these paintings. The portraits were distributed to stores around Denerim shortly after his coronation, and the king received a portion of the profits from each sale. The coin funded his ever-growing kennel of mabari war dogs.

Art patrons throughout Thedas find the Velvet Cailans singularly revolting. As part of her ongoing mission to rid Thedas of their ghastly influence, Orlesian art collector Blanchette de Lemoux is offering a reward for every Velvet Cailan brought to her. Mistress de Lemoux has publicly derided the paintings and has been quoted as saying, "I despise furry art."

—*Excerpt from the Hightown newsletter Artists' Quarterly*

## **A Vessel of Tears**

## **Lore**

Although this wax-stoppered vessel is clearly labeled "Tears Shed During the Burning of Treviso", many questions remain, not the least of which is: Which burning of Treviso? When the Qunari conquered it in 6:35 Steel? When it was burned by the liberating armies of the White and Black Divines during the Second Exalted March of 7:52 Storm? Or when it was accidentally burned to the ground in 8:62 Blessed after a dockhand knocked over a lantern in a warehouse full of lamp oil?



Even assuming the correct event could be determined, the question of whose tears have been collected remains. Presumably not any of the numerous fire victims. Surviving relatives, perhaps? Nobles with summer homes on the Antivan coast? It should be noted that nowhere on the label does it say that these tears were shed in relation to the event, so they could have been the tears of a woman in Montsimnard, weeping because she was not asked to dance at the last costume ball, unaware that at that very moment, one of the greatest port cities of Thedas was aflame.

—*From the letters of Brother Ferdinand Genitivi to Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **Xenon the Antiquarian**

## **Characters**

You received the invitation? Then you are fortunate, indeed. Xenon is no ordinary man, as you will discover for yourself when you enter the Black Emporium. The... item you'll see resting in the chair is not one of the displays; rather, it is the proprietor. It may speak to you—that's Xenon, using the mystical bauble that has allowed him to communicate since he lost the power of speech.

The story tells that Xenon was a Kirkwall nobleman in the Age of Steel, almost three hundred years ago. Obsessed with the pursuit of eternal life, he made a deal with a powerful witch (some say it was the legendary Antivan "Witch of the Weyrs"), and his wish was granted. He obtained eternal life—but not eternal youth. His body became decrepit, and he used his vast wealth to seek out ways to preserve it. Some were magical, many were dangerous, and almost all of them were unsuccessful.

What remains is an immobile mass of twisted flesh—and I think Xenon's mind has slowly decayed along with his body. He hid away in the Undercity and has slowly amassed a collection that's sure to amaze. If he invited you, he thinks you have the coin he needs to further his search for a cure.

Just don't think of stealing anything. The golem is not for show.

Although you're free to look around the shop, I wouldn't suggest staying overlong. You might be present for one of the "baths" his servant gives him hourly to keep his flesh from becoming completely desiccated.

Trust me: you don't want that.

—*From a letter of unknown origin, 8:49 Blessed*

# **LEGACY**

## **Carta Bronto**

## **Creatures**

Sent for more brontos from Orzammar today. We lost two in a landslide, and they were carrying full loads of silver and iron. Those responsible have been flogged.

The creatures are useful underground in wide tunnels, but not so sure-footed on the mountain passes. And bringing them to the surface in daylight is always a catastrophe waiting to happen. They're spooked by every sign of movement, and once riled up, they'll charge just about anything in sight.

Bah. Must investigate the possibility of using a more even-tempered beast. Donkeys, perhaps? The humans swear by them.

—*From the journal of Rhatigan, leader of the Carta in Kirkwall*

## Deepstalker

## Creatures

One of the few natural, non-darkspawn creatures to live in the Deep Roads, the deepstalker is a reptilian cave-dweller known for burrowing into the stone paths of the Deep Roads and ambushing prey, usually nugs. They hunt in packs, attacking with round mouths full of serrated teeth or spitting poison from venom glands. Although a single deepstalker poses little threat to any experienced explorer, packs can be quite lethal.

—*From Tales from Beneath the Earth by Brother Genitivi*

## Genlock

## Creatures

The genlock is the most common darkspawn in the underground. They are tough, stocky, and notoriously difficult to kill, since many show at least some resistance to magic. They are creatures of darkness, with keen senses and an intuitive understanding of the deep places that allow them to take even groups of seasoned warriors by surprise. Genlocks are what make traversing the Deep Roads so dangerous—a group of the creatures can easily overwhelm and mercilessly slaughter a small party within minutes.

Genlock alphas are stronger and more physically intimidating than most genlocks. They are known for bullying other genlocks into doing their bidding.

## Hurlock Alpha

## Creatures

The hurlock alpha is more intelligent than the alphas of other darkspawn types. Usually armed with a large, vicious weapon, they have been known to act as commanders on the battlefield, directing and controlling the lesser darkspawn in their strange, brutish way.

## Helm of Weisshaupt

## Items

The labyrinth has claimed Warden-Commander Astor. Ulrich tampered with one of the magical seals in this place and unwittingly released a demon upon us. Commander Astor ordered us to run—he would hold the creature back while we activated the prison's defenses, trapping them both. The barriers came up, and they will stay up. This was Commander Astor's last instruction and we will follow it to the letter.

We are unable to retrieve the Warden-Commander's prized helm and the other trappings of his office. They will not be returned to Weisshaupt and will remain with the Commander, wherever he may be.

—*From a torn Grey Warden report, the writing barely legible*

## The Key

## Items

The key is, and always will be, part of the cage that holds Corypheus. The prison's power is tied to that of the key; as the power of one waxes, the other wanes.

The key's origins are lost to time. All we know is that it is an ancient, powerful weapon. The Wardens of old uncovered a few of its secrets—just enough to draw upon its magic to create the seals that hold Corypheus.

Accounts indicate that the key attunes itself to whichever man or woman wields it in the rituals that reinforce Corypheus's chains. It is the nature of the magic, something in the blood. The key is currently attuned to one Malcolm Hawke, the last mage to hold it.

The key is an essential part of strengthening the seals, and also the only thing that can break Corypheus free.

—*From Janeka's research notes*

## **Regalia of Weisshaupt**

## **Items**

I find myself drawn inexplicably to the principal seal. My waking moments are consumed by thoughts of it. I make excuses so that I might visit it. Then there are the journals of the Warden mage who created the seal using the artifact known as the key: What is the key? Can the seal be broken without it?

I have begun to suspect that these thoughts are not my own. Close scrutiny of my emotions and thoughts have led me to the frightening conclusion that this obsession was planted in me by the creature they call Corypheus. Corypheus wants me to learn about the seal and key so that he may pluck the knowledge from my mind. Corypheus wants to be free, and he will stop at nothing to achieve his goal.

—*From the journal of Erasmus, a Grey Warden mage who, shortly after penning this entry in 1012 TE, threw himself off the highest level of the prison tower*

## **The Warden's Prison**

## **Places**

The Grey Wardens' prison in the Vimmark Mountains is believed to have been constructed more than a thousand years ago. The original method of construction has been lost to history, but the Warden-Commanders of the Free Marches have maintained the prison's secret through the centuries.

The prison is concealed in a great rift in the Vimmark Mountains, far from any easily-traveled mountain passes. The Wardens themselves have spread rumors of banditry and beasts to prevent explorers from approaching.

The prison consists of a central tower built into the rift with magically-maintained bridges allowing access at different levels. Each level is sealed by a blood magic ritual in which a mage of untainted blood uses his own life essence to create a magical barrier that is permeable from the outside yet impenetrable from within. This one-way access has caused other darkspawn—and perhaps unwary travelers—to be caught within the prison's confines. Those who disappear inside never re-emerge.

## **Amgefor the Foul**

## **Lore**

We called it Malverniss. The Pestilent One. It devoured thaigs, turning our fairest work into a noxious waste. It consumed living warriors, turning their bodies to slime, and when its hunger was not abated, it consumed the bones of our ancestors.

Foulness came from its touch, poison and filth and desecration. It threatened the Stone itself. The Shapers bound it. Chained in lyrium stained with the blood of a hundred warriors. But within the orb, it hungered, it waited.

We carried it here to the wasteland of the surface, where it can threaten nothing of value. The Stone will live. The Stone must live. We have sworn to defend it from the Foul One at any price.

## **Amgefor the Lonely Vigil**

## **Lore**

One watcher each generation will be chosen from the Warrior Caste. He will stand guard until his death.

Only the constant vigilance of the Stone's Children can keep the foulness of Malvern's at bay. The burden of living in exile beneath the sun is terrible, but this sacrifice, this amgeform, will ensure the sanctity of the Stone forever.

Valos atredum.

—*By decree of Paragon Ilona*

## **Amgeform the Wasteyard**

**Lore**

You who must serve beneath the empty sky, you stand between this Poison and the Stone. The Ancestors will remember when all others have forgotten your name. Remember your oath: it must endure even beyond death itself. Be vigilant.

If the Pestilent One awakens, you will know it by these signs: The air will fill with the scent of putrefaction. You will hear a sound like the cadence of drums. Malvern's the Defiler will try to weaken your will and compel you to bear the orb out of Amgeform, but you must hold fast.

This is the sacred duty that cannot be forsworn lest the Stone fall to poison and death.

## **Dumat, the Dragon of Silence**

**Lore**

Dumat was the most powerful of the Old Gods, known as the Dragon of Silence for the vows of silence undertaken by his acolytes. Chantry lore claims it was he who taught the first magister, Archon Thalsian, the powers of blood magic. It was Dumat's followers who are believed to have entered the Golden City, thereby corrupting it with their presence.

Modern scholars question whether the Old Gods were truly gods, or whether they were merely a more advanced species of high dragon, possibly capable of magic or speech, that were worshipped by the ancient Tevinters. Whatever the truth of his history, Dumat was also the first of the imprisoned Old Gods to have been discovered by the darkspawn and thus transformed into the first Archdemon, the monstrous force behind the First Blight.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar*

## **The First Darkspawn**

**Lore**

Those who had been cast down, the demons who would be gods, began to whisper to men from their tombs within the earth. And the men of Tevinter heard, and raised altars to the pretender-gods once more, and in return were given, in hushed whispers, the secrets of darkest magic.

But it was not worship the false gods craved.

They urged the magisters to ever-greater depravity, rewarding them with power and more. Arrogance became a great caged beast in the lands of Tevinter, an emptiness that consumed all and could never be filled. To satisfy its hunger, the mage-lords, at the goading of their gods, assaulted the Golden City, heart of all creation, to take the Maker's power for themselves.

With magic born of mingled blood and lyrium, the Tevinter broke into the Maker's House. But the promised power did not await them there.

The moment they entered the city of the Maker, their sin poisoned it. What had been golden turned black, and violently they were flung from the world of dreams back into the waking world. Twisted and corrupted by their crime and their magic into monsters, they fled underground, unable to bear the light of day. The first darkspawn.

— *Threnodies 8:21-27, the Canticle of Transfigurations*

## A Change of Course

## Letters and Notes

I was wrong. We cannot control the creature Corypheus. Even our most powerful mages hold no influence with him. In truth, it is they who have been most vulnerable.

A dozen times, those assigned to guard or study the creature have sought the key to free him. When they are removed to a safe distance, they remember little. They speak of a voice in their minds, a calling like that of the Old Gods, but it wanes outside Corypheus's presence.

Darkspawn have attacked as well, seeking him. I can only assume they are summoned the same way. Somehow, his magic lets him speak through the blight itself, affecting any who bear its taint.

This same power stays the hand of any Warden who approaches to kill him. I must recommend that we seal this prison over and conceal its very existence. Corypheus must not be allowed to go free.

—*From Warden-Commander Daneken to the First Warden in Weisshaupt, 1014 TE*

## The Great One's Key

## Letters and Notes

The Wardens did not guard the key with care. It was left in a repository, with objects of little worth. Trinkets. Dusty Grey Warden trophies. Not even a guard posted. Fools. If only they knew what they had, and had lost.

It will not wake at my touch; it sleeps and its power remains within. The Great One says it requires Malcolm Hawke's blood to awaken it. Only then can its powers set him free.

I will find the heir to the blood and the Great One will reward me. Yes. Let it be soon.

—*From the journal of Rhatigan, leader of the Carta in Kirkwall*

## Larius's Final Missive

## Letters and Notes

My dearest brothers and sisters,

I am leaving to take that last long walk into the deep. I have been a Grey Warden for a full thirty years, and the Joining can only hold back the taint for so long.

These last months, the song of the Archdemons has become not a whisper to me, but a terrible roaring that I cannot endure. My conscience compels me to leave before the corruption becomes too much, before the madness takes over.

It has been my honor serving with every single one of you. I go to the Deep Roads to meet my death in combat against our eternal foe. When my brothers in Orzammar salute my departure, I will walk proudly in my duty, and joyful in the knowledge that my burden will soon be lifted.

Remember me, and do not fear your own Calling, when the time comes.

—*Larius, Commander of the Grey*

## First Legionnaire's Journal

## Letters and Notes

It's ironic. Hearing of Tethras Garen's crime first gave me the courage to confess my own and join the Legion of the Dead. Knowing that a Paragon's son could give in to the same base passions as a mere merchant, commit a murder even fouler than mine...

Yet he was sentenced to die in the Deep Roads for murdering his sister, not even offered the chance at the Legion. I am grateful every day for what the Legion gave me: a family, a purpose, and my name is clear.

So when the Paragon learned that the Carta were responsible for the murder, not his son, I was the first to volunteer to retrieve the prince. It's not right that he should be the only one who doesn't know he's been exonerated.

—*From the journal of Malev Haran, Legion of the Dead*

## **Second Legionnaire's Journal**

## **Letters and Notes**

Paragon Garen refuses to give up. We're the eighth Legion unit he's sent after Tethras in the past five years. None dare tell him that after so long alone in the Deep Roads, Tethras is certainly dead. The Paragon insists he will see his heir restored to his rightful place. May the ancestors favor his cause.

We've followed the paths of the other Legionnaires, and so far, we seem to be on the right trail. We're in a section of the Deep Roads that appears to have been altered by human magic, so perhaps we'll find some new clue here. We're going in tomorrow. Ancestors be with us.

—*From the journal of Karles Aratack, Legion of the Dead*

## **Third Legionnaire's Journal**

## **Letters and Notes**

This place is cursed. For ten years, Paragon Garen has been sending Legionnaires to search out our lost heir. Now I know what's become of them.

There's no way out. This is no normal part of the Deep Roads. There's lyrium worked into the walls, into the Stone itself, some kind of human magic. From the outside, it looks like just another tunnel, but walk in and it's a prison. There is no way past the barriers, no way forward, no way back. But the trap remains open to every beast, darkspawn, and dwarf that wanders in.

My brothers in the Legion have died, and I have done my best to lay their spirits to rest in the Stone. I am the last. There will be no one to do the same for me, or for Tethras, if he too was snared by this noose. For you, my prince, I wish you the Stone's blessing. Atrast tunsha. Totarnia amgetol tavash aeduc.

May someone recite the ritual words over your bones and return your spirit to the Stone.

—*From the journal of Bashath Garen, Legion of the Dead*

## **A Letter to Gerav**

## **Letters and Notes**

My dear Gerav,

A little bird told me you were spotted near Kirkwall. Come by the Hanged Man sometime and show me the new self-loading chambers you were working on for our little girl. Bianca's missed you, and I think she might need a tune-up.

Your friend,  
Varric Tethras

## **Locks within Locks**

## **Letters and Notes**

The Wardens set a trap for Corypheus and bound him in a prison of their own making. Beneath the Free Marches, they carved out a series of caverns—a veritable maze—and enchanted them. Wards within wards, locks within locks, spells woven with the help of a powerful artifact they called "the key." All this to hold Corypheus.

It seems that even that wasn't enough. Warden-Commander Riannon writes in her private journals:

"Corypheus is too powerful. Nothing will hold him forever. The seals are already weakening. We must find a way to fortify them, and soon."

—*From Janeka's research notes*

### **Malcolm Hawke's Reply**

### **Letters and Notes**

Warden-Commander Larius:

I have been considering your offer, and I accept your terms. In addition to what was discussed, I find a payment of twenty-five sovereigns per seal to be sufficient. All I require from you is your promise that my wife will be kept safe while I am gone, and that Lord Aristide Amell will be convinced to let Leandra leave Kirkwall with me when I return. I wish for my bride and I to be free, and I do not intend to have her father's men hunting us down.

Before we depart I would also like to confirm your statement that the ritual does not require contact with demonic influences. I would also like to discuss this "darkspawn of magical talents" in greater detail. It quite defies belief that the Grey Wardens have kept a secret of this magnitude buried so close to Kirkwall.

I await your reply.

—*Malcolm Hawke*

### **Praise Corypheus!**

### **Letters and Notes**

Like many of you, I was once a thieving wretch. I was a servant to coin and my own base desires. And that is when I heard his call. Corypheus opened my eyes, just as he has opened yours, and showed me what was true.

What is the Carta beside Corypheus? Nothing but dust and ashes. Only Corypheus is eternal. We are his hands and his eyes on the surface. We are the ones he honoured with his trust, to dig him from his prison in the Deep Roads.

When Corypheus steps into the sunlight, we will be rewarded. Praise him! Praise Corypheus!

—*From a scrap of parchment, evidently notes for a speech*

### **Privileged to the Wardens**

### **Letters and Notes**

All we hear is that this is one of the great Grey Warden secrets. "It must be protected at all costs." As usual, we're most concerned with deceiving our own people. But why hide that the Deep Roads were shaped not only by the dwarves but also by us?

I found records dating back to 1004 TE, the wake of the First Blight. Early Wardens discovered that some darkspawn could think and speak and commanded portions of the horde even after the Archdemon's death. A few could wield magic with the skill of a Tevinter magister, and the Wardens greatly feared them.

It was here, in the Vimmark Mountains, that Warden Sashamiri set her trap to capture and study the greatest of these creatures, the one whom they called Corypheus.

—*From Janeka's research notes*

## Scout's Report

## Letters and Notes

My team was sent to evaluate the fortified structures that overlook the northern caravan routes in the Vimmark Mountains. The viscount's library suggests the buildings were part of an ancient Grey Warden fortress, constructed to guard the pass but abandoned after the Free Marches gained independence from Tevinter.

Our examination revealed construction that is remarkably sturdy for its age. The fortress's foundations reach deeper into the rock than expected. Two levels below the surface, we discovered a series of twisting, underground passages, chiseled out of the mountain itself. I commanded the men to set up camp there.

Not an hour later, one of the newer men reported voices from the depths. He flew into a frenzy, demanding that we leave immediately. Those unused to tight spaces often display such hysteria. Thankfully, I was able to calm him before his raving affected the rest of the team.

But he was gone this morning. Tracks lead deeper into the caverns. We shall follow him.

*—From a scout's report, apparently quite old*

## Speculations on Kirkwall

## Letters and Notes

The records say Corypheus has been trapped below the Vimmarks since the days of the Tevinter Imperium. Can it be a coincidence that the darkspawn besiege this area more fiercely than anywhere else on the surface of Thedas? Or that Kirkwall, the closest city, suffers from endless plagues of violence, lunacy, human sacrifice, and blood magic?

If one studies Kirkwall's public records, it becomes hard to deny that some malevolent force has long shaped its history. Could a darkspawn, even a powerful mage, have such influence even as it slumbers?

*—From a weathered journal bearing the Grey Wardens' seal*

## To Capture the Hawke

## Letters and Notes

*Before the expedition to the Deep Roads...*

Small hovel in Lowtown, owner one Gamlen Amell. Take the youngest two, but do not harm them. The blood of Malcolm Hawke must remain pure. Do as you wish with the old man and woman. They are of no consequence.

*If the sibling died in the Deep Roads...*

You will find Malcolm Hawke's heir in Hightown. By the grand stairs to the keep. The home will be well-defended, but do not spill Hawke's blood. Use the poison if capture proves difficult. If you have to kill anyone else, do it quietly.

And don't go near the young dwarf. He sees things.

*If Carver became a Templar...*

We have found Carver Hawke in the templar barracks. Take him from there intact and unharmed. The blood of Malcolm Hawke must remain pure. Kill the others if you must. The Great One will reward you richly for your service.

*If Carver became a Grey Warden...*



We have learned Carver Hawke is with the Grey Wardens. Search all of the Free Marches if you must, but find him. Kill whoever gets in your way, but make sure the boy is unharmed. The blood of Malcolm Hawke must remain pure. The Great One demands this of you.

*If Bethany became a Circle Mage...*

We have tracked Bethany Hawke to the Gallows, where the mages are housed. Bring her intact and unharmed. The blood of Malcolm Hawke must remain pure. If someone gets in your way, kill them, but do it quietly. The Great One will reward you richly for your service.

*If Bethany became a Grey Warden...*

We have learned Bethany Hawke is with the Grey Wardens. Search all of the Free Marches if you must, but find her. Kill whoever gets in your way, but make sure the girl is unharmed. The blood of Malcolm Hawke must remain pure. The Great One demands this of you.

*—In the name of the Master, Corypheus. May he see sunlight again.*

## **An Unusual Discovery**

## **Letters and Notes**

The creature can speak. It has a name, Corypheus. We have encountered darkspawn before who use words, but none individual enough to have chosen a name. This Corypheus appears unique among darkspawn, and has gathered many of its brethren to follow it.

It would be wasteful to kill such a creature. If it can be captured, tamed somehow, its unnatural influence over the darkspawn could perhaps be turned to our favor. It is clear the darkspawn will never bow to human commands, but this Corypheus seems at times more human than beast. I have conversed with it, and though its thoughts are disordered and inhuman, it speaks of the Old Gods by their Tevinter names. I have wondered if perhaps he is no darkspawn at all, but a ghoul, so corrupted by the taint as to have become a new creature entirely.

I recommend we find a way to capture Corypheus, hold it somewhere safe from both men and darkspawn, and study its unique nature. This will require magic, however, for Corypheus's own abilities are powerful. It uses spells both human and tainted, and has a strength that would shame any magister. We must muster our best mages to face it and to hold it.

*—From Warden-Commander Farele to the First Warden in Weisshaupt, 1004 TE*

# **MARK OF THE ASSASSIN**

## **Ghast**

## **Creatures**

The ghast is a small, vicious creature that dwells in mountain caves. One is little more than a nuisance and will flee if threatened. A pack of five or more, however, is much bolder and can easily overwhelm a bear.

Although ghasts are cunning and able to cooperate for survival, they show no signs of true intelligence. They are unable to speak, communicating only through grunts and squeals.

Occasionally, a pack of ghasts will include the strange creature known as the velghastrial. Unlike the common ghast, the velghastrial can wield magic. Some assume that they first learned by lurking around and watching other mages. Others believe that ghasts, like animals, are sensitive to the unseen forces that shape our world and that the velghastrial is able to utilize magic purely through instinct. It is unknown if velghastrials risk possession when casting spells, as other humanoid mages do.

## Wyvern

## Creatures

The wyvern—like its relative the dragon—has nearly been hunted to extinction. Wealthy Orlesians are particularly fond of the wyvern chase, although their servants and dogs take the risks while the nobleman merely accept the praise.

It is the venom that makes the creature so valuable. It's used in potion-making, alchemy, and the production of a rare and potent liquor called aquae lucidius. The minuscule quantity of the venom remaining in the aquae after distillation leads to a unique hallucinatory effect.

Testimonies from a few of those fortunate enough to sample the costly concoction:

"I feel confused but happy!"

"It was as though my soul took wing and floated about my head."

"I had a vision of my great-grandmother and found it oddly arousing."

"I can see through time!"

## Enchanter Illana

## Items

One hundred and fifty years ago, the girl who would rise to become First Enchanter Illana of Montsimnard was born to a noble family of Val Royeaux. When Illana's gift was discovered and she was sent to Circle of Magi, her family did not abandon her; rather, they took an enthusiastic interest in her career as a mage.

Her mother made several feeble attempts to start fashions at court with her "Circle-inspired" gowns. Illana's father was more successful, directing his daughter's fortunes through support of coin and political influence. Throughout Illana's apprenticeship at the Circle of Montsimnard, he secured private quarters for her as well as a personal guard of templars hand-picked by the knight-commander. So long as she was accompanied by her guards, Illana was allowed to leave the Circle as often as she wished.

With her father's backing, Illana rose swiftly through the Circle's ranks, named senior enchanter just after her twenty-second birthday. Eight years later, she was appointed first enchanter. Her family commissioned a fine set of a first enchanter's ceremonial raiments, designed in accordance with the prevailing styles of the time and presented them to her on the day she was raised.

Illana was first enchanter for just shy of two years, during which time the Circle was mostly run by her assistant, Hugh, and a small group of senior enchanters. She cited mental exhaustion when she stepped down and lived the rest of her days in a quiet manor outside Val Royeaux.

—*From Mages in Orlais, by Senior Enchanter Percivale*

## The Messenger

## Items

A good messenger of swift foot and sound mind is rare. Maker knows, I couldn't rely on mine to convey a simple "dinner is served" to my daughter, and her quarters are but two doors down.

But here you have Gilbert de Marais, whose capable hands delivered not only notes to family, but also secret documents to the emperor. He rendered unto you fifteen years of faithful service, no? And not once did he fail. They say you treasured him far above rubies. An exaggeration, surely, for if that were so, you would have entrusted him with baubles meant for mistresses, not crucial messages in the lands of a sworn enemy.

Gilbert insisted he knew nothing of your plans to divest me of my fortune and have me removed from court. I believed him, and so he is on his way back to you with one last message.

Oh, another thing: thank you kindly for the handsome suit Gilbert was wearing when I found him. Alas, he has no further use for it.

*—Letter, written on vellum and sewn onto the skin of messenger Gilbert de Marais, who was found naked and nailed to a tree on the border of his master's lands*

## Orlesian Lancer

## Items

With her in all circumstances  
Celene's guard and their stony-eyed glances,  
Hand-picked by the dame,  
For strength, boldness, and name,  
And also the size of their lances.

*—A ditty circulated at court in Val Royeaux, referring to Empress Celene's stringent criteria in choosing her "personal" guard*

## Chateau Haine

## Places

Chateau Haine, situated on the western verge of the Vimmark Mountains, is one of the many estates of the illustrious de Montfort family of Orlais. Duke Prosper de Montfort vacations at the estate frequently, particularly during wyvern-hunting season.

The structure was built late in the Black Age for Lord Norbert de la Haine, whose treasonous schemes to seize power in the Free Marches led to a call for his execution. Lord Norbert escaped to what was then Fortress Haine and barricaded himself within. The siege lasted a hundred days. Eventually, Antivan Crows slit the lord's throat while he slept. The estate's scandalous past left it unoccupied for long thereafter.

When the Fourth Blight ravaged the Free Marches, Fortress Haine served as a garrison for the Grey Wardens. The Wardens dug a hollow into the mountain's interior; when darkspawn attacked Kirkwall and Cumberland, citizens of both cities took refuge in the caves, which came to be known as "the Retreat."

After the Wardens left victorious, Fortress Haine was presented to Ser Gaston de Montfort, a chevalier of Orlais. The building was converted from military keep to pleasure palace and rechristened "Chateau Haine."

*—From Portrait of the Free Marches, by Guillaume van der Haute*

## The Ben-Hassrath

## Lore

The ox-men do not kill their prisoners. The Qun abhors waste, and a person is a valuable commodity. Instead of death, we found ourselves housed in a labor camp run by the Ben-Hassrath. They called us "kabethari"—simple ones—and this was where we were to be inducted into the Qun.

The accommodations were no match for the State Inn in Minrathous, but we never expected them to be. Our dormitory was kept spotless, and we were fed three daily meals of a bland but nourishing porridge. Water and a strong unsweetened tea were always available as well.

Both males and females are chosen to join the Ben-Hassrath, which struck me as peculiar. I'd always heard that the Qunari drew distinctions between what counted as men's work and women's work. Thinking on it, however, perhaps it makes sense. The Ben-Hassrath are responsible for "re-education" and the assimilation of conquered peoples. Both women and men, in my experience, relate better to those of their own sex. It is thus prudent to choose women for the re-education of women and children, and men for that of men.

To their credit, the Ben-Hassrath were never cruel. They were always reasonable, if firm. I played along, repeating what they taught, but holding in my heart the truths by which I was raised.

Others were not so clever. Some of my platoon resisted the indoctrination, refusing even to pretend. The Ben-Hassrath see rebellion and discontent as an illness that can be cured, and they took these men to the "viddathlok," temples dedicated to healing and recovery. I do not know what happened there. The men who returned were changed in profound ways.

Others, we never saw again. I can only assume the "cure" did not take.

—*From the memoirs of an Imperial soldier captured at sea*

## **Bust of the Outlaw Bearded Beast**

**Lore**

What in this fearsome visage appeals to us? What virtue can this otherwise uncouth and generally suspect creature inform?

Raw, fiercely bearded aggression, not so much carved as inflicted by the chisel. Common humor claims that whole figures are carved, then sundered to the bust, the limbs used to beat the form from the next sculptor's block. Examples are common and deliberately crude—none claim to be an accurate representation of a specific person and the name is irrelevant, often stolen from the fears of the day.

So if it is not the honoring of a villain turned folk hero, what is left to discern? What does this say about the manners of court, that beneath is an affectation for such unfettered and brutal images of strength. What is hidden by this beard?

—*Musings on a Form: The Beast, as collected by Jun Emond, Esr.*

## **The Chevaliers**

**Lore**

I remember, as a child, watching a column of chevaliers parade down a wide avenue in Val Royeaux. Dashing knights on armored steeds, pennants snapping in the breeze. I have never forgotten.

Most of the Orlesian aristocracy has ties to the chevaliers. Joining the knighthood and dedicating one's life to the empire is a tried and true method to improve one's social standing. It is the obvious choice for landless nobles and noble children not in line to inherit.

The knighthood welcomes both men and women, although it is rare for a woman to choose the harsh life of a chevalier over the gentle bliss of marriage and children or the peace of the Chantry. Those who do are following in the footsteps of the first woman knight, Aveline, but we hope that not all meet as ghastly an end as she did.

Sadly, some members of the order abuse their power to commit atrocities that will not be recounted here. All decent Orlesians know them to be no true knights. One day, they shall answer to the Maker Himself.

—*From Orlais: A Modern History, by Revered Mother Laetitia*

## **The Cult of the Sky**

**Lore**

Thethane of Wyvern Hold, so the story goes, had a vision and in it he beheld his clan, sleeping, deep in their cups after a feast. And as he watched, they transformed one by one into serpents. The only ones who escaped this fate were those snatched up by eagles and carried away.

The thane took this to mean that a terrible calamity would befall his people and that only the Lady of the Skies could save them. So the Wyvern clan forswore all other gods and devoted themselves to the Lady.

But the other Avvar clans feared that the disrespect of Clan Wyvern would bring the wrath of Korth the Mountain-Father upon their people. The other thanes tried words and then blades to change Wyvern's ways without success.

When the Tevinter Imperium came with their legions to claim the mountains, many clans were wiped out, enslaved, or forced to flee across the Waking Sea to the south. Clan Wyvern, however, was not among them. They simply disappeared. And to this day some Avvar thanes will tell you—if they have had enough mead—that the last any soul ever saw of the Wyvern clan was a great flight of eagles descending to their hold.

—From *"Tales of the Mountain-People,"* by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

### **Lady Amandine du Val**

Lady Amandine du Val arrived at the court of Emperor Corentine, aged only fifteen, and by all accounts took it by storm. Her bright gold hair, expressive eyes, and graceful mannerisms endeared her to all. The emperor's sister, Lady Charlotte, wrote:

"Little Amandine is a true delight! Such sparkling wit, and oh, those dainty feet flitting across the ballroom... she is spring come upon our tired court."

This adoration did not last long, however. Not a year after her arrival, little Amandine became enchanted with a bard who taught her swordplay, amongst other things. Being young and nimble, Amandine took to blades like a fish to water. Seduced by the life of romance and high adventure, she ran away from court, dressed as a boy. In the years that followed, Amandine became a sailor, a highway robber, and a courtesan. Once, she was betrothed to the emperor's cousin.

At the age of forty-four, Amandine entered into a cloister. She remained there till the end of her life and died a penitent.

—From *The Gallery of Knaves, a portrait book, compiled by Lady Wilhelmina Bonchance*

### **A Library of Distinction**

It was with no small flair that Duke Prosper de Montfort offered a home to the exiled Esme de Jolie's considerable library of social graces, including the ever-growing volumes of Courtly Prominence so carefully logged by the dedicated scholars of Her Majesty's intimate circle.

It was an act of charity to a former enemy that, while earning a considerable influence, was no small expense of delivery. De Montfort downplayed these elements with customary charm, insisting that he accepted this burden with the increase in status firmly second among his considerations. "It is an honor to be honored when literary lineage is the true benefactor. De Jolie can rest well knowing that I hold his treasured tomes where none shall harm or read them. If he is allowed to encroach upon Orlesian territory at some distant time, perhaps he can petition to visit them."

—A Library of Distinction: Notes on the Dispensing of the Holdings of the Disgraced Esme de Jolie, *collected and edited by Delsea Veland in service of Duke Prosper de Montfort*

## Notes on the Avvar Sky Cult

Lore

Every Avvar holy site, regardless of clan or deity, has a well-hidden opening in the altar which would be aligned with the rising sun on the Winter Solstice, where the sacred relics of the god or goddess would be enshrined. This would never be removed, even in dire emergency, for fear of angering the gods.

Avvar tales from the Divine Age are filled with warnings about those who mistreat or showed the least disrespect to altars of the Lady of the Skies. Unfortunately, the superstitious Avvars counted a host of innocuous things as disrespectful, including speaking, coughing, holding objects in your right hand, and possessing anything containing feathers. It is unlikely there is any real danger in approaching the altar.

## Portrait of the Dowager

Lore

The Orlesians have a saying: You must dance with the dowager if you want to play the Game.

To a foreigner, this might sound like some sort of proverb. In fact, Dowager Lady Mantillon has been one of the most influential members of the Imperial Court for over thirty years, and nobody advances in the Game without her favor. The rumors surrounding her are many: She was Emperor Florian's mistress. She was Florian's assassin. She placed Empress Celene on the throne. She once killed a rival with only harsh words. She rules Orlais from the shadows.

One thing is certain, however. If you must have the best society in Orlais, ask a dance of the dowager.

—*From A Guide to Good Society, by Lady Alcyone*

## Pride and Rider

Lore

An image in oil of the last pure Anderfel stabled at court, before the practice of mounted sport fell from favor. This is an absolutely iconic and typical example of the artist.

The work preserves the true majesty of a species that, while in abundance on their natural plains, becomes exotic to a people who eschew mounted travel in their daily existence. An ambitious work often referred to as *Pride and Rider*, it is part of a series of similarly-themed canvasses which, for reasons known only to the creator, were labeled *And Went the Griffon*.

—*Auction notes for the works of Bujete Pochesvides, a catalogue of the foreign and lost dispensed by the holding house of Therein and Whatnot*

## Qunari of Other Races

Lore

Many believe that Qunari is the name of the race of horned behemoths from the north. They are mistaken. "Qunari" means "people of the Qun." There are elves, humans, even dwarves who have submitted to the Qun and who think of themselves as Qunari.

All soldiers of the Imperium must remain aware of this fact: Any person could be a Qunari spy. Elves seem particularly susceptible to conversion.

New converts uniformly become zealots, either of their own volition or as a result of the Ben-Hassrath's "re-education." Yet the converts still understand our culture as only those born to it can. They can move unnoticed in Tevinter lands. If elven, they may even return themselves to slavery.

These spies, as long as they remain undiscovered, will pass sensitive information to Par Vollen. They may even try to convert others by sowing doubt and uncertainty. Every Imperial soldier must watch for this treachery.

—*From a lecture to new recruits of the Tevinter army*

## Uncertainty

Lore

In uncertainty, find infinite possibility.

—*An old Orlesian saying*

## Empress Celene I of Orlais

Characters

Empress Celene I is arguably the most powerful woman in Thedas. No other nation rivals Orlais in wealth or power, and Celene is Orlais personified.

Rumor and scandal surround the empress's rise to the throne, and it is difficult to separate truth from fiction. Celene is the daughter of the late Emperor Florian's youngest sister, and others in the family held stronger claims when Florian died. Court rumors at the time implied that Celene had her uncle assassinated then schemed against her older cousins to challenge their right to rule.

Regardless of how she came to the throne, Celene quickly proved that it was exactly where she belonged. The mad Florian's rule had brought the empire to the brink of collapse. Celene was its savior. Orlais has never been quite so peaceful or prosperous as it is now. The empress highly values education and learning and is an ardent patron of the arts. The aristocracy—in order to impress her—has followed suit, leading to a rebirth of Orlesian culture.

—*From Orlais: A Modern History, by Revered Mother Laetitia*

## Duke Prosper de Montfort

Characters

Duke Prosper is the head of the powerful Montfort dynasty, the descendants of Ser Gaston de Montfort, a chevalier who rose to prominence during the Fourth Blight.

Prosper de Montfort is a close personal friend of Empress Celene and a perennial fixture at the empress's annual Spring Fête. He spends most of his time outside Orlais either on personal business for the empress or vacationing at his estates in Nevarra and the Free Marches.

(Note: Titles other than lord (or lady) and emperor (or empress) were abolished during Emperor Kordilius Drakon's reign. Duke Prosper uses his title only in his private dealings or when he travels beyond Orlais's borders. At court, he is addressed as Lord Prosper de Montfort.)

—*From Lifestyles of the Wealthy and Politically Influential, by Lady Jonquil Severin*

## Thoughts on Tallis

Letters and Notes

It's been over a year now since I met Tallis, and she hasn't resurfaced so far.

Or has she? I spotted a red-headed elf in the market just the other day, and there was something familiar in the way she moved, despite the servant's clothing and all the Orlesian braiding. I tried to get a closer look, but she disappeared into the crowd.

If it was her, I've no clue what she's up to. Tallis spoke of Qunari spies throughout Thedas... doing what, I wonder? Just providing information to the Qunari, or something more sinister?

Unsurprisingly, mentioning the spies to those in power has earned only disbelief or indifference. Those who bothered to consider the possibility weren't certain what could be done. They appeared unwilling to admit that the Qunari might be inclined towards subterfuge. Too dangerous a foe, if so.

If Heart of the Many is completed before Demands of the Qun: You'd think this would merit attention, considering that several hundred Qunari warriors are camped in Kirkwall's docks. Perhaps people don't want to think about that too closely. Either way, I doubt this is the last I've heard of Tallis. She'll show up again one day. That's just the way things work out.

If Heart of the Many is completed after Demands of the Qun: You'd think that after what happened in Kirkwall, it wouldn't be such a shock. Regardless, I doubt this is the last we've heard from the Qunari... or from Tallis. She'll show up again one day. That's just the way things work out.

—*From the diary of Hawke*

### **An Unsigned Note**

### **Letters and Notes**

Renzo,

Someone has to clean up what's left of Edge. The squirrely little dwarf made a mess when we questioned him, but we got what we needed.

*If Hawke worked for Meeran and the Red Iron mercenaries:* Hawke will be in the Hightown market tonight. Be sure to deliver the best regards of Lord Friedrich's family.

*If Hawke worked for Athenril and the smugglers:* Hawke will be in the Hightown market tonight. Be sure to deliver the Cavril family's best regards.

### **The Wine of Chateau Haine**

### **Letters and Notes**

Don't you wish you could've been invited to the duke's party? Oh, everything is so splendid here and so Orlesian! The decorations, the company, the food! And just thinking about the wine sends me into a giddy fit.

The duke spares no expense, truly! I hear he has it brought in from Val Chevin, just for these parties. He has whole crews of thick, simple-minded Fereldans to carry his barrels of wine up the mountain. And they're too stupid to know that what they carry is worth more than what they earn in a year.

It's so funny. Fifi and I actually saw the laborers. One rolled down the mountain and crashed to the bottom. It was such a shame. I almost died seeing all that gorgeous red seeping into the ground. Or maybe that was from the laborer. Well, whatever.

—*Excerpt from a letter written by Babette de Launcet to her brother, Emile*

## **ITEM PACKS, UNLOCKABLES AND CUT CONTENT**

### **The Fugitive's Mantle**

### **Mage Item Pack**

Malcolm Hawke ranged the breadth of the Free Marches as he ran from the templars who pursued him. He often posed as a mercenary, and his substantial martial skills easily secured him positions in different bands. On one assignment for the Crimson Oars he was sent to Kirkwall, the seat of templar power in the region. He had every intention of staying there briefly, but fate had other plans.



## **The Long Trek**

## **Mage Item Pack**

Malcolm would never tell his wife or young children where he was from; it was a bloody tale that forever gave him nightmares. When their love was still fresh, Leandra once pressed him on the subject. All he would say is, "Freedom's price is never cheap, but that was hundred leagues and a lifetime ago." His haunted gaze lingered on his favorite boots, and he would say no more.

## **Malcolm's Bequest**

## **Mage Item Pack**

In Kirkwall, Malcolm met Leandra and, despite all common sense, courted her. The few times Leandra managed to slip away from her family, Malcolm showed her a whole new world, something completely different from her cloistered existence. It was dangerous, forbidden, and she quickly fell madly in love with the dashing Malcolm Hawke. These stolen moments would end all too soon.

One day, while fighting the Carta on the docks, Malcolm used magic to save the life of the Crimson Oars' leader. The Kirkwall templars were alerted, but Malcolm wouldn't flee the city without seeing his love one last time. He devised to meet her at the masked ball for the visiting Orlesian Empress.

Disguised in Orlesian robes, Malcolm slipped past the templars to dance with his love. At the end of the night, Leandra would not hear his goodbyes and chanced at happiness rather than face her gray prearranged future. Malcolm and Leandra ran into the night and never looked back.

## **Malcolm's Honor**

## **Mage Item Pack**

Malcolm and Leandra fled across the Waking Sea, to a new life away from the cold shadow of the Gallows. It took some doing, but the vastness of Ferelden allowed them to fall beneath the notice of their templar pursuers. They settled in the small village of Lothing, where Malcolm made every effort to ensure that his children didn't fear magic, and were well insulated against those who did.

Malcolm had picked up a trick or two, here and there, and this deceptively simple staff shows the breadth of his knowledge. More an ongoing project than a specialist's tool, it is the handiwork of someone comfortable with the life he must live, for as long as he was granted the opportunity to live it.

## **Aldenon's Vestments**

## **Mage Item Pack II**

To all appearances, he was a hedge wizard hailing from the Frostbacks, perhaps Alamarri—but from the wild lands if so. Venerable, certainly worthy of respect, but not commanding it. When he stormed into my master's feathall and offered his service in a resounding voice, there was laughter at his audacity. Several bondsmen offered to remove the miscreant, but before they could grab him the mage lifted his staff and the bondsmen fell to the ground. Each time they stood, they slipped again, and their antics were met with laughter. Arl Tenedor the Elder, who was not long for this world, demanded to know who this arrogant invader was.

"I am the beginning and the end. I am luckbinder, spellweaver, and the keeper of secrets. And I am here to build a kingdom. I am Aldenon the Wise, and if you haven't heard of me yet—never can you say the same again." His voice boomed, silencing all. His magic was potent and the hall gave him a wary look. Tenedor accepted him as his advisor that day. Then, when Tenedor the Younger rose to his father's seat, he took Aldenon into service as well. I sat with the mage in many councils and although his magecraft was greater than even the Tevinter magisters, many believed his advice to be folly. He had little appreciation for the hard truths of our lands, they said. Compassion, mercy, justice—they matter not when Teyrn Simeon invades your land, subverts your nobles, and takes what's yours. He grew bitter and impatient with us and ours, and these sentiments were often returned. But others could see he had a vision of something better than the endless petty wars of teyrns and arls.

When Arl Myrddin besieged us, a youth named Calenhad was sent to meet the asp, but all expected a treacherous end. Yet the boy returned, to great acclaim, and announced there would be no terms. Aldenon was taken with the "foolhardy honor" the boy displayed and seemed to awaken as from a dark dream. The mage told Tenedor the Younger he would lend his aid for this battle, but after that, he would serve another. Tenedor accepted his resignation with relief more than anything.

By the end of the siege of the Western Hill, Arl Tenedor was no more. It was Calenhad who defeated Myrddin in single combat, and he became Teyrn Calenhad. Aldenon was named his chief advisor.

—*From The Recollections of Ser Devith, banner knight of King Calenhad*

## **Freedom's Promise**

## **Mage Item Pack II**

As Calenhad grew into a man, one great contentious issue separated him from Aldenon: Calenhad's faith. As biddable as Calenhad was on some topics, never would he back down from matters of honor or Andraste. What Aldenon believed, only Aldenon knew, but he most certainly did not believe in the Maker. The friends' arguments grew only hotter as they years passed.

But that aside, the union of Calenhad's peerless honor and Aldenon's ingenuity overcame every obstacle set before them. Rivals turned into friends, treacheries were uncovered, and impossible battles won. But as we turned to Teyrn Simeon, no one rested easy. Teyrn Simeon's host outnumbered us many times over. He controlled the holy city of Denerim. Many great and terrible warriors had sworn him fealty.

Aldenon conceived a plan to enlist strong allies and Calenhad went into the Brecilian Forest to make it so. But unbeknownst to the mage, Calenhad had made contact with the Chantry. When Calenhad returned at the head of the Ash Warriors as Aldenon expected, so as well did templars and Circle mages join our host. Aldenon was in a fury such as I've never seen. He wanted a kingdom of free men, of moral people beholden to law. Where a common man could tend his land safely and in peace. He lifted his staff and his voice echoed through the hills: "A civilization cannot be civil if it condones the slavery of another. And that is what this Circle is! But by accident of birth, those mages would be free to live, love, and die as they choose. The Circles will break—if it be one year, a decade, a century, or beyond. Tyrants always fall, and the downtrodden always strive for freedom!"

Then Aldenon left. And although Lady Shayna slew Simeon that day and Calenhad ruled a united kingdom, my liege was not the same without his mentor and friend. We live in the kingdom built on the dreams of two great friends, and we are all lessened by Aldenon's departure.

—*From The Recollections of Ser Devith, banner knight of King Calenhad*

## **Robes of the Pretender**

## **Mage Item Pack II**

As the Chantry's hold on the kingdom grew, and Aldenon's rebel mages were claimed one by one, the great Calenhad came to regret letting the Circle form in his kingdom. Certainly he missed his old friend's counsel.

And then Calenhad disappeared, leaving crown and kingdom to his unborn son.

One story says he tracked down Marterel the Elusive, the only one of Aldenon's apprentices who was never captured. Calenhad managed what the templars could not and found the mage. He asked Marterel where Aldenon had fled to, but Marterel refused him. The next night, the king asked again, and was again refused, so he began to tell Marterel his whole life's story. After a full week, the king reached the end of his tale and Marterel heard the regret in the king's words. So the mage broke his solemn vow and told Calenhad where his old master had gone. Calenhad thanked him and left to find his truest friend.

Whether Calenhad ever found Aldenon, what they said, and whether they made amends—only the Maker knows. But that's the last anyone ever saw our king.

*—From a story told and retold many times by apprentices in the Circle Tower of Ferelden*

## **Wisdom's Eye**

## **Mage Item Pack II**

Although his vestments are legendary, Aldenon also weaved many subtle and potent enchantments into his cap during the years he fought against the Circle Tower of Ferelden. He claimed he could use Wisdom's Eye to even see the future. Certainly the innumerable times he and the other rebel mages escaped templars lend some credence to the claim.

When Aldenon's band numbered fewer than the fingers of one hand, he donned his hat and meditated a full day. When he awoke, he said the Maker and the Circle had won, and he bade his apprentices run. He was never heard from again.

## **The Black Fox's Jerkin**

## **Rogue Item Pack**

During the merriest part of the night in any tavern in the lands, odds are good you'll hear one of the many tales of the Black Fox. A scoundrel and a hero, the Black Fox's misadventures took him and his band throughout Thedas. He's blamed for many thefts, a few murders, a revolution, and almost a kingdom-wide civil war, but every one of his deeds were designed to thwart tyranny and oppression.

The final tale of the Black Fox tells of him and his band searching for the sunken city of the elves deep in the forest of Arlathan, where he parted with this jerkin in a less than voluntary manner.

## **Hood's Message to the King**

## **Rogue Item Pack**

He wields a rebel's bow, strung tight against heartwood strained too far. It's a tension that can't last, but it doesn't have to, for the cause must be won or lost while passions still burn. It's a powerful template for revolution repeated many times across the Free Marches, but was it born on a battlefield or in rhetoric?

The "Message to the King" is where the stories usually diverge. Sometimes it's a plea for liberty taken to a tyrant's heart by the point of an arrow. More often, it's carried in the clatter of sacrifice as weapons fall to a courtyard's cobbles. It depends on the audience—the young like their victories sudden and violent, while the old prefer something more cautionary.

It may be that Hood is not so much a person as a tactic, ushered to far horizons or the grave's embrace in order to protect conspirators. After all, how many deaths can he claim when one is the typical limit for a common man? But the tales return, time and again, across leagues and centuries. At a certain point, one hopes the name is symbolic, because allying with such a power would bring its own problems and debts.

—*From Rebels of the Marches: Allegory in Rebellion, forward by Philliam, a Bard!*

### **Jarvia's Shank**

### **Rogue Item Pack**

When the Carta crime boss Beraht fell, his lover Jarvia fought off rivals, planting this shank in each of their hearts before she emerged as the group's undisputed leader. For years, Jarvia used a mix of brutality, cunning, and blackmail to grow the Carta's power until it threatened the Diamond Quarter itself.

When King Endrin Aeducan died, some whispered that Jarvia planned to force the Assembly to recognize the rights of dusters in Orzammar. Others said she planned to overthrow the nobles entirely. The truth will never be known, though. She was killed in cold blood by the Hero of Ferelden.

### **The Lion's Claws**

### **Rogue Item Pack**

Foiled at every turn by the infamous outlaw Lady Rosamund, the ever-persistent Teyrn Loghain fielded an army to chase the bandit through the Korcari Wilds. Eventually, she was captured near Barshamp. Bound, gagged, and in chains, she still managed to escaped on the first night using thieves tools concealed in these gloves. To this day there is an unclaimed bounty on her head of one thousand sovereigns.

### **The Rascal's Scale, by Coinheart**

### **Rogue Item Pack**

Strangest suit I ever made? The scale for that fool Rascal, no second thought needed. A project I wanted to try for years, obvious given my name, right? But I could never find a fool to wear his wealth as protection. This one, though, was daft as any surfer and was paying two coins for each that I hammered, and that buys a smile and nod for any idiot. I guess he's something of a name in his own lands, this Rascal, so I can't really question, and I did him my best, like always. Damned lyrium weave left my fingers numb, though. No sword will get through that, I guarantee, but I'll bet his children are born pale.

*From Tales of the Craft: Masters in their Own Words, a record of dwarven smithwork, guild archived*

### **Arms of Mac Tir**

### **Rogue Item Pack II**

Teyrn Loghain Mac Tir was not born a nobleman. It's said his family descended from freeholders in the western Bannorn, a region known as Oswin. His father, Gareth, would have had no surname of his own. He likely would have described himself as "of Oswin" or "ban Aehswin" (as the region would have been known in the Old Tongue).

The name "Mac Tir" means "son of the land." It was bestowed upon Loghain by King Maric after the Battle of River Dane. The Fereldan people considered the name highly appropriate: to them, Teyrn Loghain was a son of the entire nation, and he was famously said to have told a crowd that Ferelden would forever be "part of his blood."

After Loghain's betrayal of King Cailan at Ostagar in 9:30 Dragon, the general became as reviled as he had once been revered. His manse in Gwaren was looted and many of his personal possessions stolen—among them the armor he wore at the Battle of River Dane. That armor is said to have had special significance to the man. One peculiarity of the armor was a square of red silk pinned to one of the shoulderbelts. "For luck," Loghain once explained.

### **Arms of the River Dane**

### **Rogue Item Pack II**

The Battle of River Dane is among the most famous in Ferelden's history, fought at the onset of the Dragon Age in a bid to secure the country's independence from Orlesian rule.

The Fereldan army was cobbled together from commoners and banns who had turned against the Orlesian usurper, King Meghren. Even so, under the leadership of Loghain Mac Tir, they scored an astounding victory against a large force of chevaliers fording the River Dane.

Afterwards, Loghain was hailed as a Fereldan legend, and for a time veterans of the battle enjoyed similar status. The soldiers' possessions became prized mementos, in particular the suits of armor belonging to those early supporters who joined Maric after the death of his mother, Moira, the Rebel Queen. Folk tales suggest that the Maker's blessing lives on in the armor those brave allies wore on that fateful day.

### **Bard's Honor**

### **Rogue Item Pack II**

A curious thing, Perren. I found the axe among Cailan's belongings, wrapped in damask cloth, and initially I thought it might be another gift from that Orlesian harlot. It was a pretty enough thing, and the markings on the blade certainly seemed imperial.

I even went so far as to confront Cailan with it, and do you know what he said? The axe was of "personal importance" to his father. So why wasn't it buried with his ashes, I asked? "Because my mother wouldn't have approved." I wondered if he was lying, but Cailan's terrible at it.

I did some digging, and are you aware there was an elven woman seen in Maric's company shortly before the Battle of the River Dane? There was a rumor, I understand, that they were lovers, and that she was a bard. Was Maric being blackmailed? I wonder if this has anything to do with that mysterious bequeathment to those elven families in Orlais?

Of course, I had Cailan dispose of the axe immediately.

*—From a letter written by Queen Anora of Ferelden, 9:27 Dragon*

### **Fiona**

### **Rogue Item Pack II**

Duncan became Ferelden's Commander of the Grey in 9:10 Dragon, assuming the mantle from Commander Polara, under whom he had served since the order's restoration in Ferelden.

Polara, who hailed from Antiva, had built an amiable relationship with King Cailan. She overcame many of the objections of Teyrn Loghain, who had argued strenuously against the order returning—after all, the Wardens had attempted to overthrow the Ferelden throne centuries before.

When Polara disappeared—perhaps recalled to Weisshaupt, although none in Ferelden saw her leave, nor have seen her since—Duncan bequeathed to her son a silverite axe of great value. Duncan said he had wielded it and a twin in younger days, back when he had been a far different man. He'd named the axe "Fiona" after a Warden who inspired him, and suggested that the son ought to take similar inspiration from his mother.

It's unknown what became of Polara's son, other than that he fled Ferelden during the same Blight in which Duncan perished.

### **King Maric's Helm**

### **Rogue Item Pack II**

King Maric Theirin, widely regarded as a hero by the Fereldan people for liberating the country from Orlesian rule, disappeared at sea while en route to Wycome in 9:25 Dragon. He was to attend a gathering of the Marcher lords in an attempt to forge a union in the north, and when he failed to appear, the Free Marches fell back into the petty squabbling that they are infamous for.

Teyrn Loghain spent almost two years searching for his lost friend, consuming much of the royal treasury and the majority of the Fereldan navy. The search was futile, and when Loghain claimed that Orlais had purposefully sunk King Maric's vessel in order to prevent Marcher unity, he was called off by his daughter, Queen Anora, and a united Bannorn. It was time to mourn the king, they said, and so, in 9:27, a massive state funeral was held in Denerim's chantry.

To this day, rumors insist that Maric is still alive, perhaps held in an Orlesian prison somewhere. The lasting mystique has increased the value of his personal possessions, leading to the theft of several artifacts from the royal palace. Among these was the helmet said to have been worn by a young Maric at the disastrous Battle of West Hill.

### **Longbow of the Avvars**

### **Rogue Item Pack II**

We investigated the area as per your instruction. It seems Warden Fiona is correct: It was once a dwarven fortress that one of our scouts called Kul-Baras. Regardless, it has fallen to ruin and the taint now.

Despite Fiona's description, there were no darkspawn to be found. If they were ever present, they have since moved on... which, if you ask me, seems highly unlikely. Her tales of this "darkspawn who speaks" must be a product of a fevered imagination.

There are no signs of a library in the fortress, nor any indication that the Grey Wardens or King Maric were there at all. One of my men did, however, find something in a section of the Deep Roads not far away: a longbow of Avvar origin, amid darkspawn corpses (the age being hard to judge, considering how the creatures deteriorate).

I suspect the bow belonged to Kell ap Morgan, the Warden who sacrificed himself to facilitate Fiona's escape. If so, he put up an impressive fight. We found no evidence of his body, sadly. I shall send the bow to you in Weisshaupt.

*—From a letter found on the body of a courier killed by bandits in the Anderfels in 9:20 Dragon*

### **The Archon's Blades**

### **Warrior Item Pack**

The Archon's Guard of Hessarian are vilified throughout the lands. The Chant depicts their cruel treatment of Andraste as one of the reasons the Maker turned his gaze from his creation. After Hessarian converted to Andraste's teachings, he disbanded his guard and stripped them of their arms. Most of the guards' swords were destroyed, but a handful of the archon's blades are still around. Perhaps one of the blades here drew the prophet's blood as the archon interrogated Andraste before her execution.

## **Beregrand the Bold**

## **Warrior Item Pack**

Beregrand the Bold was either a hero or a traitor, depending on how you look at it. Before exile was common among the dwarves, only the most heinous crimes warranted a dwarf being stripped of house and sent to the surface. Beregrand qualified and was banished on accusations of regicide after killing a dwarven king on the Proving Sands. Beregrand spat on the Assembly that pronounced his sentence before strapping on his armor and leaving Gundaar.

Living on the surface, Beregrand's incredible fighting skills, tactical knowledge, and intellect built a naval empire centered in what would one day be Antiva. His more enduring legacy was teaching human smiths, engineers, and other crafters jealously guarded dwarven secrets. Cursed by dwarves and hailed by humans, Beregrand became a figure of much controversy.

As complicated as his life was, the story of Beregrand's armor is even more checkered. His armor has passed through many heroes hands over the centuries. Despite the advantages it gave them, no hero using it ever survived to old age.

## **The Edge of Night**

## **Warrior Item Pack**

You've never seen a lad so taken with an axe! He carried one of the old sodding things with him wherever he went. Practicing day and night, he drove his mother to distraction, he did. Even when he was fully raised into the Warrior Caste, he refused proper weapons. Said he had the feel of an axe, and that's all he needed. Over the years, he spent a small fortune having smiths layer enchantments on 'em. Oh, how others would sneer at those ancient things. Well, they did until Beregrand lopped off King Jegrek's head on the sands. Sad business, that, and Gundaar was the poorer for it. And I'm not just talking about the king.

*From The Memories of Gundaar, a collection of stories preserved by the Shaperate of the lost dwarven kingdom*

## **The Empress's Point**

## **Warrior Item Pack**

As one the early rulers of contemporary Orlais, Empress Jeanve the First created many of the traditions and practices of the imperial court. She employed the bravest and most skilled swordsmen to her guard, the Empress's Arm, one of the main predecessors of the chevaliers. Her guards were given a princely gift, an enchanted Tevinter blade. These blades were named for the Empress's darker side. When rivals overstepped their bounds, Jeanve was always quick to make them see her point.

## **The Golden Prince's Raiment**

## **Warrior Item Pack**

Tales of Emile Deveraux flourish amongst the Orlesian peasants. The dashing "Golden Prince" was a populist who raised a huge army from his common subjects by promising reform for the aging empire. Although he never won his imperial coronet, Lord Emile captured the hearts and minds of generations of Orlesian dreamers while wearing this golden armor. It is said that, as a young girl, even Empress Celeste was captivated by his stories.

## **The Ashen Cuirass**

## **Warrior Item Pack II**

The charge of the Ash Warriors is a sight to behold. With hounds at their side and their fierce battle cries, the Ash Warriors have buckled the ranks of even stalwart veterans. And if the enemy line does hold, then the true test begins. Quill and ink is a poor medium to convey the sheer power of their rages.

Despite the Ash Warriors' renown, several misconceptions persist. Some believe the mercenaries are predominately Avvar or Chasind tribesmen. Certainly their armor evokes barbarian roots. But the men and women of the Ash Warriors are almost entirely civilized. In my travels as chronicler and surgeon, I spent several months with the Ash Warriors, although finding any willing to speak of their history was difficult. The stories I gradually elicited were chilling tales of hard men.

One was an arsonist who joined the Ash Warriors on the gallows. Another had committed fratricide, and another's dire past I dare not recount. In joining the Ash Warriors, their crimes were forgiven, for it was as if they were never born. Even in legal records their old life is erased—contracts voided, marriages annulled, records of birth erased. In this, they are much like the dwarven Legion of the Dead. Their new lives are dedicated to redemption and service.

My first night with the band, I was startled when they asked me to sing a few verses of the Chant of Light. Grim to a man and fearsomely garbed, yet they were as eager to hear the Chant as the most faithful parishioner. I felt as the first missionaries must have—surrounded by barbarians. The more I learned of the Ash Warriors, the more questions I had. They are mercenaries who demand no pay, men with no pasts, considered the king's men yet beholden to no one. I could have traveled with them for many years and still had mysteries to uncover.

—*From Annals of the Scarlet March, by Brother Bedine, Chantry Scholar*

## **The Dogs of War**

## **Warrior Item Pack II**

And then Velcorminth swung his mighty hammer, and the blow tore the Alamarri bann's head clean off. He lay crumpled beneath the war leader and Velcorminth did shout, "You canine-lovers, you who think you can defeat me, stand before me and my dogs. They are the Dogs of War!" He planted his blood-soaked hammer in the earth and his enemies did quiver.

But victory would not go to the Chasind that day, for Hafter approached and intoned, "I am Hafter, slayer of darkspawn, leader of the Alamarri. No dog nor wolf alive frightens me."

And so they traded blows for three days and three nights. Bruised, bloodied, and tired they grew. It was after one thousand blows that Hafter's blade, Yusaris, found Velcorminth's heart. Then Hafter spoke, "I banish the Chasind from these plains. I have taken the greatest of your men from you and claimed his weapon as my own. If ever you rise against me or my sons, we will take more than that." And so, to this very day, the Chasind never venture far from their wilds, and the children of Hafter still hold our lands free.

—*From Tales of the Alamarri, author unknown*

## **Hauberk of Gelgenig the Faithful**

## **Warrior Item Pack II**

Not all of the Alamarri tribes flocked to Andraste. Especially on the borders of the Korcari Wilds, her words found scant purchase. Decades after her death, many Alamarri held true to gods of their ancestors. Missionaries braved these hard lands only to become martyrs of the faith.

And so it was until the Alamarri were embroiled in a bitter war for survival against the Chasinds and Avvars when the leader of the Ash Warriors, Gelgenig, received a vision of Andraste. The charismatic barbarian traveled throughout Ferelden, telling his tale and unifying the fractious banns around the word of the Maker. The Ash Warriors ever since have been fervent in their faith to the Maker.

To the Ash Warriors, Gelgenig's armor is a religious relic, but it was lost in the Nevarran Campaign of 8:69 Blessed.



## The Mountain-Father's Haft

## Warrior Item Pack II

The Frostbacks run red with barbarian blood. We've found their sacred caves and claimed their most holy relics. When the soldiers came out of the mountain cave and brandished this weapon, the Avvars rose up in a mighty furor. We had to put down every man, woman, and child—it was as if they'd gone rabid. Before they perished, their witch woman pronounced a curse so vile and treasonous, three soldiers had to be whipped to re-establish discipline. Our guide says this axe is a sacred weapon, a weapon of the gods.

We plan to march further into the mountains to defeat the last of the tribes. Surely there cannot be more than a thousand left. I have every confidence that by next spring these barbarians will plague us no more. Then, we can turn our attention fully to the Chasind and Alamarri.

Although this axe may look crude, I assure you that it is of enormous importance to these backward people. Consider it the first spoils of many.

—Last letter to Magister Talerio from the first Tevinter expedition against the Avvars, 483 TE

## Willem's Bulwark

## Warrior Item Pack II

From the fair and deadly Lady Shayna to his faithful squire Ser Tillers, much is known of the companions of Calenhad, the first king of united Ferelden. But seldom do bards recount tales of Willem Halfear and the Ash Warriors.

While noble Calenhad was trying to assemble a nation, he found himself greatly outnumbered by Teyrn Simeon's forces. It seemed a foregone conclusion that Calenhad would fall, but on the advice of Aldenon the Wise, Calenhad ventured deep into the Brecilian Forest in search of allies. Those woods have a fearsome reputation, and after a fortnight of waiting for their liege to re-emerge, his men lost hope.

And then Calenhad returned with Willem Halfear by his side and the Ash Warriors behind him. Although the Ash Warriors' numbers were relatively few, they turned the tide in the Battle of the White Valley. Halfear and his men breached the enemy's van, allowing Calenhad and Lady Shayna to kill Teyrn Simeon and unite the land.

Sitting at the Ash Warriors' campfire, listening to them tell of the prowess of Willem Halfear, it has become clear to me that his role in the formation of our kingdom is greatly underestimated.

—From *Annals of the Scarlet March*, by Brother Bedine, Chantry Scholar

## Air of Confidence

## Unlockable

After averting a disaster at the Circle of Markham, Evra was given this ring by the first enchanter. Though the Air of Confidence is not as eye-catching as his other famous ring, it is said that Evra always wore it, even when sleeping. The exact magical properties of the Air of Confidence are a subject of much speculation amongst minstrels.

## Amulet of Ashes

## Unlockable

A ruined piece of charred wood hangs from its setting of half-melted gold. Holding it over an open flame, however, reveals its powers – in the flickering flames, the gold recedes into some former shape while the wood turns brown and reveals its grain.

### **Blood Dragon Armor**

**Unlockable**

Commissioned by an infamous Nevarran dragon hunter, this armor was crafted in a time when dragons had almost been hunted to extinction. Infused with the beasts' blood, the armor gained notoriety after the hunter died at the hands of men rather than the dragons it was designed to protect him from.

### **Boots of the Frozen Wastes**

**Unlockable**

Temperatures in the Frozen Wastes can become perilously cold. The barbarians that live there favor boots like these to protect against frostbite. The barbarians, who are generally hospitable and friendly, often present these as gifts to travelers.

### **Dura's Blue Flame**

**Unlockable**

This weathered silver amulet has passed through many hands over the years. A deep blue sapphire almost glows in a certain light. Although time has faded its intricate engravings, the amulet has a certain majesty about it.

### **Evra's Might**

**Unlockable**

When Evra gained notoriety by defeating the Blood Sisters of Vehnstel, he was wearing his signature ring. Although the massive size of the solid gold ring attracts attention, it served a more practical purpose for Evra: he used it to punch demons in the face, sometimes felling them in a single blow.

### **Evra's Trophy Belt**

**Unlockable**

This grisly belt is filled with monstrous teeth, chipped blades, scraps of fur, and armor fragments. Each piece is said to be a trophy collected by Evra during his many adventures.

### **Fadeshear**

**Unlockable**

The core of this blade is old. As old as the first smiths who sought a way to battle the nightmares from the land beyond. It has fought the demonic hosts in countless battles. Sometimes it has been held high in triumphant victory. Other times, it has lain broken besides its dying owner. But after every defeat it has always been reclaimed, reforged, and made stronger. Fadeshear has passed through many hands before yours. Now it is your turn to make the demons of the Fade pay for crossing the Veil into the waking world.

### **The Far Cliffs of Kirkwall**

**Unlockable**

Written by a Ferelden refugee as she fled the Blight, this book of poems describes her dreams of a new start in Kirkwall, the city across the sea. Readers will surely be enriched by her insights.

### **Hayder's Razor**

**Unlockable**

In Kirkwall's seedier quarters, fortunes have been built on the slave trade. This ancient dwarven blade undoubtedly commanded a high price, but Hayder could clearly afford it. Who says crime doesn't pay?

## **Hindsight**

**Unlockable**

There are more famous swords than you could count, there are helms beyond numbering, and there are breastplates, daggers, and even mystical footwear that roll immediately off the tongue. There are storied rings, gloves, and even bags invoked around a camp's common fire. But belts? There are very few noteworthy belts. It was here that the dwarf Thaulid Hammerspur decided he would make his mark. Here, he thought, between the tunic and the trousers, I will stake my claim.

He was familiar with the state of the art, of course; as an artificer making a name for himself in Orzammar, he had access to the typically robust record-keeping of the forges. He knew of the Drunkard's Cinch and the Pouchpaw, but there was no poetry to them, no lineage. They were parlor tricks, the domain of hawkers and pawns. He wanted a belt whose buckle gleamed with purpose, but what purpose? He worked on it from time to time, waiting for inspiration to strike. In the meantime, he needed something to keep his pants above the knee and though he might as well wear the damned thing.

And he did so until, after an especially memorable night at Tapster's Tavern, he managed to fall into his own forge. Shoveling out his remains, they found among the grey ashes his belt, somehow mercifully preserved.

Hindsight is a belt possessed of a strange, slow intellect. Whatever would have killed the wearer, does, and at that very moment, the belt develops a resistance that would have saved its owner. No one knows how Thaulid managed this, and at this point, it would be difficult to ask him. When the belt is held in the light, just so, the leather, reveals a grisly catalogue etched in glinting lyrium:

Thaulid Hammerspur, fire.

Gorgut the Wized, poison.

Vil Arak, stabbed forty-three times.

Haliath Baronet, witches.

It went on like this for many years, until it fell into your possession. Your temporary, temporary possession.

## **The Irons**

**Unlockable**

Fashioned from the black steel of Kirkwall's infamous iron foundries, miner's safety harnesses such as this one have protected their hearty wearers since the days when the Tevinter Imperium last claimed the City of Chains.

## **Ivo Family Crest**

**Unlockable**

Evolving over the years, the crest of House Ivo has become much more ornate than Paragon Ivo's original design. This ancient golden amulet bears the original crest. Though the engravings are simple, the stark lines are somehow deeply stirring.

## **The Lion of Orlais**

**Unlockable**

At the height of the Summer War all of Orlais was embroiled in fierce battles. Over the course of the war dozens of contenders for the Imperial Throne emerged – most long forgotten except as footnotes in scholarly tomes. But everyone remembers the gallant young lord Emile Deveraux, "the Golden Prince". Though outnumbered at every turn, he racked victory upon victory culminating in the Seventh Battle of Roses. While wearing this shield he broke through his uncle's vanguard to win the day. He never knew the taste of defeat, instead meeting his end at the hands of a jealous lover in the dead of night.

### **Lothering's Lament**

**Unlockable**

Written by a Fereldan refugee as she fled the Blight, this book of poems contains touching reminiscences of all she had to leave behind. Readers will surely benefit from her experience.

### **Of Things Not Lost**

**Unlockable**

Written by a Fereldan refugee as she fled the Blight, this book of poems describes her struggle to preserve her past and cling to the few physical mementos she'd brought with her into foreign lands. Readers will surely find this book enchanting.

### **Ser Isaac's Armor**

**Unlockable**

The chilling tales of Ser Isaac of Clarke are a favorite of bards performing in the wee hours of the night. In dank taverns throughout Thedas, these horror-filled stories captivate listeners and bring nightmares to those faint of heart.

### **Staff of Parthalan**

**Unlockable**

During the Exalted March, the Tevinter Empirium was in chaos. Magister Parthalan and two high-ranking magisters were sent to Kirkwall to put down the slave uprising before it spread to the entire empire. However, their legion never arrived at Kirkwall; no one knows what happened to the party, Magister Parthalan—or his fabled staff.

### **Blackfeather Boots**

**Cut Content**

We have found him at last, sire. This "Lalo" is not his true name at all—the culprit is not other than Count Eduardo Sanvelli, your own cousin. Strange that such a small and slender man could be one of the Crow's finest assassins. It cost twelve of my finest men before we were finally able to corner him in the abbey, and even then he almost escaped us. He would have slipped into the shadows had not one of my archers pinned him to the wall with her arrow. It was a fine shot, and had she not left the man's other hand free to cut his own throat I'd pin a medal on her.

Sadly, I've no body to prove what I say. This morning I discovered that someone left the door unlocked to the room where Lalo's body was kept. His head has been removed from his body, and all his clothing and equipment are gone as well. It's difficult to say whether this was the doing of the Crows or merely some of my men looking to make some coin by pawning off a legend's goods. Perhaps both. I'll question the men who reported the body, but I think there will be no recovering what was taken. You must reconcile yourself with the fact the assassin is gone. You are safe until another Crow steps in to take his place. Perhaps a few days at most, yes?

*—Excerpt from a letter written to Prince Enzo di Treviso, 6:32 Steel. Prince Enzo was discovered poisoned two days later.*

### **Cuirass of the Winds**

**Cut Content**

This piece of armor is something of a legend for the sea-faring folk of the East.

According to the tales, it was created by a Rivaini seer who lived high on the cliffs overlooking the Amaranthine Ocean. The woman took inspiration from the harsh winds and stinging rain that buffeted the coastline, and fashioned a cuirass that was as beautiful and cruel as the storm. As a finishing touch, the seer plucked the howling wind right out of the sky, and bound it within the armor. It is said that the winds of the Amaranthine Ocean will always favor any who possesses the cuirass.

This story may be true, or it may be a complete fabrication. However, one thing is certain—plenty of superstitious sailors have fought and died over this legendary object, risking everything to be able to bend the wind and the sea to their will.

## **Vigilance**

## **Cut Content**

Vigilance was commissioned by Ferelden's Warden-Commander and crafted by master smith Wade of Denerim. This powerful blade was fashioned from the bones of an ancient dragon. Forging was arduous and required the use of many rare and priceless components.

The sword was stolen from Vigil's Keep by Antivan Crows, but even they could not hold on to the blade. It has since changed hands several times. Some say that Vigilance has a life of its own and that it chooses its owners, coming to them in a time of need.

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# **MAIN GAME**

## **CHARACTERS**

### **ADAAR, THE VASHOTH**

The Qunari in Par Vollen live under the Qun, a religious and philosophical doctrine dictating every aspect of their society. [Player name] Adaar's parents left that restrictive life before he/she was born, settling in the Free Marches and raising their child outside the Qun. Qunari brought up outside their society are still feared, shunned, or misunderstood by most people in the south. The average citizen of Orlais or Ferelden assumes they are cold-blooded thralls, or vicious bandits.

*If the Inquisitor is a warrior or rogue:* Qunari who are not part of the Qun, facing limited acceptance in society, often take advantage of their reputation by taking on mercenary work. [Player name] Adaar joined the Valo-kas mercenary company as a young adult, making a name for him/herself over the years as a capable and resourceful soldier. He/she was hired to provide protection at the Conclave, as a neutral party to stand between templars and mages.

*If the Inquisitor is a mage:* When [player name] manifested a gift for magic, his/her parents arranged for a mage among the Tal-Vashoth to teach him/her how to control his/her talents. He/she joined the Valo-kas mercenary company as a young adult, making a name for him/herself over the years as a capable and powerful mage. [Player name] was hired to provide protection at the Conclave, as a neutral party to stand between templars and human mages.

After the disastrous explosion at the Temple of Sacred Ashes that killed the Divine, Adaar was the only survivor. Rumors that the mysterious mark on his/her hand is a sign of the Maker's favor were spread by those who claim they saw the divine prophet, Andraste herself, lead Adaar out of the Fade.

### **ALISTAIR**

*If Alistair is King and Anora is Queen:* King Alistair Theirin was crowned the ruler of Ferelden after the end of the Fifth Blight; his people consider him a hero for fighting against the darkspawn as a Grey Warden. Few Wardens have ever left the secretive order, and he is the only of those who went on to rule a nation; Queen Anora, daughter of the legendary Teyrn Loghain, rules at his side. Although Ferelden has prospered under their reign, it was greatly weakened by the Blight. Tensions with neighboring Orlais have been high, and many believe a renewal of their long-standing conflict is inevitable.

*If Alistair is King and sole ruler:* King Alistair Theirin was crowned the ruler of Ferelden after the end of the Fifth Blight, and is considered a hero among his people for having fought against the darkspawn as a Grey Warden. He is one of the few known to have ever left the secretive order, never mind one who went on to rule a nation afterward. Some in Ferelden claim that the Theirin line ended with the death of King Cailan and that the existence of an unknown bastard was a lie imposed upon the people to overthrow Queen Anora. As such, Alistair's rule has been plagued with trouble... both within his own lands as well as with neighboring Orlais. The Blight greatly weakened Ferelden, and many believe that a renewal of the long-standing rivalry between the two nations is inevitable.

*If Alistair was exiled:* Rumored to be King Maric of Ferelden's bastard son, there was a moment during the recent fifth blight where Alistair could have ascended to the throne. Instead, the throne was given to Queen Anora, daughter of the traitorous Teyrn Loghain—the very man responsible for the death of almost every Grey Warden in Ferelden at the infamous Battle of Ostagar. Disgusted, Alistair abandoned the Grey Wardens, and for years lived in disgraced exile in the Free Marches. Several years ago, Alistair was retrieved from his exile, sobered up, and eventually re-admitted to the order...though he chose to do so in Orlais rather than his homeland.

*If Alistair remained a Warden:* A hero of the recent Fifth Blight, the Grey Warden Alistair is credited alongside the Hero of Ferelden with slaying the Archdemon and sparing Thedas the ravages of the darkspawn. Rumor has it that he is an heir to the Fereldan throne, but that he turned it down in deference to Queen Anora, daughter to the traitorous Teyrn Loghain.

*If Alistair is a Grey Warden and survives the events of Adamant Fortress:* After the Champion of Kirkwall's sacrifice in the Fade, giving him and the Inquisitor a chance to escape, Alistair left to report to the Grey Warden leadership at the fortress of Weisshaupt in the Anderfels.

## **BLACKWALL**

I do not have much on Warden Blackwall. We know he became Constable of the Grey in Val Chevin after Warden-Constable Fontaine assumed the position of Commander of the Grey from her predecessor. He also bears the Silverite Wings of Valor, an honor bestowed upon Orlesian Wardens for deeds of great daring. The details of the act for which Blackwall earned the Silverite Wings, however, are sketchy. Grey Wardens hide their secrets well. The medal was likely awarded for a campaign to secure Deep Roads entrances within Orlais, shortly after the Fifth Blight. Several Grey Wardens lost their lives on that campaign; perhaps more would be dead if not for Blackwall.

According to my sources, Warden Blackwall has been traveling alone for several years now. The last anyone saw him at the keep in Val Chevin, it was 9:37 Dragon. It has been completely abandoned, along with all other Warden outposts. I believe Blackwall is as curious about this disappearance as we are.

Perhaps in time, we will find answers.

*Leliana*

Constable of the Grey, Silverite Wings of Valor—hardly relevant now. They are Warden Blackwall's achievements, and the man we thought to be him was someone else entirely. It explains why I had scant information on Blackwall. He must have been lying low for years.

I compiled everything I had on Thomas Rainier. Read on.

*Leliana.*

What follows is a history of Thomas Rainier, prepared for delivery by Sister Leliana:

Rainier was born in Markham, a city-state in the Free Marches. There is little information on his early life, but he was already a skilled warrior by the time he turned eighteen. Hoping to make his fortune, he joined the Grand Tourney, that great Marcher contest of arms. He won the melee, proving himself and earning a substantial sum of gold.

What happened to the coin Rainier won in the Tourney is a mystery. Two years later, he appeared in Orlais, no richer than at eighteen. Still, he leveraged his abilities and lingering fame to gain a place in the Orlesian army.

Rainier excelled as a soldier, rising through the ranks quickly to become a captain with a number of men under him. Rainier's men were fiercely loyal. Our sources believe that many would have gladly defied a higher command at his word. On the surface, Rainier safeguarded his men's interests, but further investigation reveals that he was primarily concerned with his own advancement and profit.

Rainier's desire to amass a fortune likely explains his involvement in the massacre of Lord Vincent Callier and his family. Our sources tell us that Rainier was approached by a chevalier: Ser Robert Chapuis. Ser Robert supported Grand Duke Gaspard's claim to the throne and wished to enter into his good graces by eliminating Lord Callier, one of Celene's staunchest allies. Chapuis hired Rainier to assassinate Callier, and offered him a great deal of coin for it. We have no reason to believe his actions were politically motivated. In the spring of 9:35, Lord Callier and his family were traveling to their summer home on Lake Celestine when their caravan was ambushed. It is unknown if Rainier realized that Callier would be traveling with his family. Rainier and his men slaughtered Lord Callier and his entourage; they spared not even the children, all four under the age of thirteen.

It seems that none of Rainier's men were aware of the true reasons behind the lord's killing. They simply followed Rainier's orders. Rumors of Rainier's connection to the murders began swirling through the upper ranks of the army, and must have given him forewarning; he was gone when guards came to arrest him. His men, however, were not so lucky. Almost all were charged with treason, save a few who managed to get away.

Thom Rainier was labeled a traitor and a criminal, but remained at large until now.

## **BRIALA**

Watch out for elves in Halamshiral.

Almost no one notices they're even present. A servant scrubbing floors. A waiter filling glasses. Undergardeners weeding the border. Maids and valets dressing nobles. There's no room, alcove, or alley so private you can't find one there. And they're watching. They're organized.

The rumor you've heard of some mastermind leading the elves is no rumor. I have reports that this "Briala" was Celene's personal spy and assassin, a bard of unusual skill. Who she's working for now we cannot confirm.

Say nothing. They will hear you.

—Part of a communiqué intercepted by Inquisition agents, author unknown

## **CADASH, THE CASTELESS**

[Player name] Cadash is a surface dwarf whose family was exiled from Orzammar generations ago, for crimes known only to the record keepers in the Shaperate. Banned from their underground cities and stripped of all status in traditional society, many surface dwarves are forced to become part of the crime syndicate known as the Carta, simply to survive. [Player name] was raised as part of the Cadash family, a branch of the Carta specializing in smuggling the magical ore lyrium across Thedas. [He/She] moved from city to city in the Free Marches, working wherever the syndicate saw profit to be made.

News of the Conclave shook up the Carta's usual operations, as its success or failure would have tremendous impact on the demand for lyrium for years to come. [Player name] was one of a handful of Carta dwarves sent to spy on the proceedings at Haven. [He/She] was the only survivor of the explosion at the Temple of Sacred Ashes. Rumors that the mysterious mark on [his/her] hand is a sign of the Maker's favor were spread by those who claim they saw the divine prophet, Andraste herself, lead Cadash out of the Fade.

## **CALPERNIA**

I had never heard of Calpernia before I joined the Venatori. Tevinter's Circles have no record of a mage of that name, so I thought her perhaps a magister from one of the old houses who took a false title. Calpernia appears to have no background at all, however, and offers no hints to her past. She is too shrewd to flatter, even if she did not spend half her hours training as her Master's star pupil should.

I cannot openly challenge her. The woman is a fair mistress to her followers, and her passion to restore the Imperium's glory strengthens their hearts and loyalty. Besides, her spells blister with power. Only a fool would try to undermine Calpernia by force. We will require a lighter touch.

—Note from Marconius Pellnix, Ben-Hassrath agent to the Qunari, dated several days before his mysterious death by fire

## **CASSANDRA PENTAGHAST**

Lord Seeker Lucius,

I am fully aware of the intent behind your predecessor's declaration. Lord Seeker Lambert pried the templars away from Chantry control and led them into an assault upon all mages, for reasons you both find justified. I, however, am uncertain when the Seekers of Truth went from guarding against injustice to perpetrating it. If you truly believe that this is not the case, I suggest you look out a window at the chaos this war has caused, and ask yourself if Thedas will recover even if you are victorious. I remain at Divine Justinia's right hand, and will stay there even if you brand me a traitor. I am sorry, but there is too much at stake to swerve from the path we willingly followed at the Chantry's foundation.

—From a letter by Seeker Cassandra Pentaghast to Lord Seeker Lucius Corin, Dragon 9:39

## **COLE**

His name is Cole.

He's not that old, perhaps twenty years, no more. He has blond hair that hangs in front of his eyes; he wears dirty leathers—perhaps the only clothes he owns. He was there when you found Rhys in the templar crypt, but you couldn't see him. Nobody can, and those who do forget him. Just like you are right now.

Remember the dream.

—A letter allegedly written by former Knight-Commander Evangeline de Brassard; found in the Spire in the aftermath of the mage uprising.

*If Cole is recruited permanently during The Forgotten Boy...*

Inquisitor,

If you believe that this "Cole" truly wishes to help the Inquisition and can be trusted to do so safely, I am willing to give him a chance to prove himself. As Solas insists that he is a spirit made manifest in the form of a young man, not a demon possessing an unwilling victim, I concede that he may not be malicious.



Nevertheless, Cole's abilities concern me. I would ask Leliana to have him watched but most of Skyhold seems unable to see this spirit, or remember him even if informed of his existence. The servants complain of odd occurrences, items mislaid or moved to strange locations, but have thus far been unable to see or remember the person responsible. Such actions appear harmless thus far, but I remain vigilant.

Cassandra

Cole appreciates the Inquisition helping those who are hurting and in need.

*If Cole is told to leave during The Forgotten Boy, the codex will only state...*

The Inquisition knows of no one by this name.

## **CORYPHEUS**

Let me tell you what I know about "the Seven," those Tevinter magisters said to have entered the Golden City long ago.

Each was a high priest to one of the Old Gods. Each came to the ritual shrouded in secrecy, hiding their true name even from each other. They were competitors, you see. The Old Gods told them they would break into the Golden City and usurp the Maker's throne... but only one of them could sit on that throne. Each assumed a title related to their role in casting the ritual. Some texts claim they had a leader: the High Priest of Dumat, called "Corypheus." He did not rule this group, but instead conducted it, coordinating their efforts to achieve a magical feat never since replicated. They breached the Fade, walked physically in dreams, and changed our world forever.

Perhaps these Seven were the first darkspawn, cursed by the Maker as the Chant of Light tells us. Perhaps not. One would think these magisters long dead... but there are whispers this is not so. Think, if you will, what might become of the minds of such beings: corrupted by the Blight, cast down from prideful folly, simmering in resentment and darkness for over a thousand years. Where would such men live? Who knows of them? For someone must, if whispers persist. What secrets do they yet hold, and what would we do, should any one of them return to the light? With luck, these are questions we will never have to answer.

—From *Questioning the Chant* by Magister Vibius Agorian

## **CULLEN**

Whatever you have heard of Kirkwall's rebellion, the truth is far worse; I would spare you that. What remains of Kirkwall's templars have been under my command for the past few years. We have done what we could to assist with the city's recovery—to restore some semblance of order—but my time here is done.

Seeker Pentaghost has approached me. She wishes to stop the war between mages and templars. She has been recruiting men and women to the cause and wishes me to oversee the group's military concerns. If the Conclave goes well, then we will not be needed. If not, we stand ready.

I have decided to take Seeker Pentaghost's offer. The Circles have fallen. I can give no more to the Templar Order, nor it to me. The Maker has shown me a new path; I must take it.

—Excerpt from a letter sent to South Reach by Commander Cullen

*After the chess game at Skyhold...*

"Dear Mia, I'm still alive. Your loving brother, Cullen"

Honestly, is it so difficult? We thought you were dead. Again. If the Inquisition was not on everyone's lips, we would never have heard that their fine commander survived Haven.

We've been hearing strange things about the templars lately. I am not sorry you left them. I thought your resignation was implied when you joined the Inquisition, but you meant something more, didn't you?

It's a fool's errand asking you to stay safe, but please try.

Your loving sister, (see how easy this is?)

Mia

*If the Inquisitor starts a romance with Cullen...*

Cullen,

I was glad to receive your last letter. You sound happy. It's been—never mind. I just hope you are well. Which reminds me...

[Inquisitor's first name]? Not Inquisitor? Not Her Worship, the Herald of Andraste? Your last letter was far too short.

Love,

Mia

Mia,

I will write you a longer letter when there's time. Stop prying.

Cullen

## **DIVINE JUSTINIA V**

Formerly the Revered Mother Dorothea of Orlais, Divine Justinia V rose to power after the death of Divine Beatrix III in the year 9:34 of the Dragon Age. Little is known of Dorothea's background before she joined the Chantry as an initiate, but she proved to be a liberal and daring thinker, willing to take a former bard and lay-sister, Leliana, as a close advisor. A headstrong devotion to her own agenda and rumored support of the mage rebellion earned her no small dislike from the powerful priests long used to controlling access to the Divine.

In the year 9:40 of the Dragon Age, Divine Justinia called a summit, intending to negotiate a truce between the mage rebellion and the templars splintered from the Chantry. The Divine Conclave was held at the Temple of Sacred Ashes, the most holy place in Thedas. Before a resolution could be reached, a cataclysmic explosion destroyed the Conclave, consumed the temple, rent the sky, and shattered the world's hopes for peace.

Divine Justinia V perished in the Temple of Sacred Ashes. The Chantry flounders, leaderless, in the wake of her death, and its fate grows increasingly uncertain. If order is not restored to Thedas, Justinia V might be remembered as the Chantry's *final* Divine.

## **DORIAN PAVUS**

Only child and heir presumptive to the senatorial seat of Magister Halward Pavus, Dorian comes from a prestigious line of mages, prominent in the coastal Tevinter city of Qarinus since the late Exalted Age. At that time, the Imperium was recovering from a failed Exalted March and the Fourth Blight; Gideon Pavus arose as a voice of reason within the Magisterium. His block of allies convinced the Imperium not to descend upon the weakened south, to extend a hand of reconciliation to those who had once sought their destruction. That House Pavus remained standing even after Magister Gideon was tried for treason is a testament to the power he built, and—as Dorian himself would claim—an excellent example of how internecine politics in Tevinter can bring low even the brightest star. A lesson, he says, one should never forget.

## **EMPRESS CELENE VALMONT**

My dear Viscount,

I congratulate you on securing an invitation to appear at court. Allow me to present you with these three words of advice as a gift: don't underestimate Celene.

You must not mistake her reputation as a diplomat and peacemaker to mean she avoids conflict. Dozens of her enemies litter the bottom of the harbor in Val Royeaux. Negotiation did not send them there. She is as shrewd and ambitious as her grandfather Judicael I, but unlike him, she knows how to handle the nobility. She built the University of Orlais—the most vehemently opposed project in Orlesian history—because she knew how to win the support she needed to overcome even her bitterest rivals. She can keep a pet apostate in front of the Chantry because even the Divine fears her influence.

Do enjoy your visit to the palace.

Sincerely,  
Duke Germain

## **GRAND DUCHESS FLORIANNE DE CHALONS**

Your Grace,

You requested the swiftest, surest method of getting a message to Grand Duke Gaspard, so I have arranged for you to meet with his sister: Grand Duchess Florianne de Chalons. While she is of the least account among the current heirs to the Orlesian throne, her connection to her brother is extremely close. Gaspard will listen to anything she says. Be persuasive.

M.

## **GRAND DUKE GASPARD DE CHALONS**

Lady Mantillon,

I can offer no apology for my nephew's behavior the other night. Gaspard has never betrayed any interest in following my advice. In truth, everything he said to you at your dinner party, he has also said to me. His resentment at being deprived of the throne has festered for some time, and he was never one to accept defeat gracefully.

I would take Gaspard's threats of war seriously. I do not believe my nephew knows how to solve problems through the use of anything but steel; if his record on the battlefield is any indication, he is quite adept at so doing. I shall be increasing my personal guard directly.

Sincerely,  
Duke Gratien

## **GRAND ENCHANTER FIONA**

Grand Enchanter Fiona is considered an anomaly among mages. She is, for instance, the only member of the Circle of Magi ever to leave due to recruitment by the Grey Wardens... and then return. The circumstances of that return are largely unknown, but the notoriety she gained within the Circle allowed her to rise rapidly in the ranks. She became First Enchanter of the Montsimmard tower, and then elected Grand Enchanter at the college in Cumberland. The latter was based on her advocacy for greater mage freedom, a view she claimed her time with the Wardens supported. Urging for a vote on the matter led to the College of Enchanters' dissolution in 9:40 Dragon, and then, when a vote was attempted secretly, to Lord Seeker Lambert of the Seekers of Truth arresting Fiona and her fellow enchanters.

Following their flight to the ruin of Andoral's Reach, the escaped mages held and passed a final vote on the Circle of Magi's independence. This began the mage rebellion; while Fiona no longer holds the official position of Grand Enchanter, most mages still consider her an integral part of the rebellion's leadership.

## **HERO OF FERELDEN**

*Dwarf Commoner Origin:* The Hero of Ferelden was born casteless in the slums of Orzammar. He/She impersonated a man of Warrior caste in Orzammar's Provings, a crime punishable by death. However, the Hero's showing in the arena impressed Grey Warden Commander Duncan so much that he recruited the Hero before he/she could be executed.

*City Elf Origin:* The Hero of Ferelden grew up in Denerim's impoverished elven Alienage. A bitter clash with a Denerim noble during the Hero's wedding resulted in the Hero facing arrest by the city guard. The Grey Warden Commander Duncan recruited the Hero, saving him/her from a certain death sentence.

*Dalish Elf Origin:* The Hero of Ferelden once belonged to a clan of Dalish elves. An encounter with a tainted magical mirror corrupted the Hero; only the Grey Wardens held the cure. To save the Hero's life, the clan gave her up to Grey Warden Commander Duncan and the Order.

*Dwarf Noble Origin:* The Hero of Ferelden was born to noble House Aeducan of Orzammar, the second child of King Endrin Aeducan. After being charged with fratricide, the Hero was exiled to the Deep Roads. There, he/she met Grey Warden Commander Duncan, who recruited him/her into the Order.

*Human Noble Origin:* The Hero of Ferelden was the son/daughter of Bryce Cousland, Teryn of Highever. When Arl Rendon Howe's forces attacked Castle Cousland and murdered most of the Cousland family, The Hero escaped to safety with Grey Warden Commander Duncan, who then recruited him/her into the order.

*Mage Origin:* The Hero of Ferelden belonged to the Circle of Magi in Ferelden, residing in the tower at Lake Calenhad for most of his/her life. First Enchanter Irving recommended the Hero to Grey Warden Commander Duncan; shortly after the Hero's Harrowing, Duncan recruited him/her into the Order.

*If the hero slew the Archdemon:* The Hero fought and killed the Archdemon, dying in the ultimate sacrifice to save Ferelden. With the Archdemon gone, the darkspawn ranks broke; the horde was easily routed.

*If one of the Wardens participated in the Dark Ritual or either Alistair or Loghain slew the Archdemon:* After defeating the Archdemon and ending the Fifth Blight, the Hero of Ferelden took up the mantle of Warden-Commander. He/She began the task of rebuilding the Order in Ferelden, serving with honor until his/her disappearance several years later.

*If the Warden was female, became Queen of Ferelden and Alistair participated in the Dark Ritual:* After defeating the Archdemon and ending the Fifth Blight, the Hero of Ferelden was wed to King Alistair and crowned Queen of Ferelden. She and the king ruled the country together until she disappeared several years later.

*If the Warden was Anora's Prince-Consort:* After defeating the Archdemon and ending the Fifth Blight, the Hero of Ferelden was wed to Queen Anora. He bore the title of Prince-Consort, and the two lived happily until he disappeared several years later.

*Before/Without completing war table operation "Contact Hero of Ferelden":* His/Her current whereabouts are unknown.

*After completing war table operation "Contact Hero of Ferelden":* The Inquisition has discovered that he/she has gone west in search of a way to cure the Calling.

## **HIGH CHANCELLOR RODERICK**

There are some who claim men have no place in the Chantry, beyond the lowest rank of scholarly brothers and those who take their place amongst the templars. It is not true. This is an organization spanning seven nations, from the smallest village chantry to the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux. It takes more than sermons to keep it alive. There is an invisible army at work ensuring meals are delivered, repairs are made, and faithful tended to... and much of it done by Chantry brothers like myself. The position of High Chancellor places a man beside the Most Holy; I control who is permitted audience, handle her correspondence, deliver her word to Thedas, and serve as her advisor on matters which may be mundane but cannot be disregarded. If I have influence, let it be said it is something I use sparingly if at all. This is a task to which I devote myself with solemnity. I and my fellows bear a burden so that others are free to guide the spirits of Thedas unencumbered.

—Excerpt from a letter by High Chancellor Roderick Asignon, 9:38 Dragon

## **IRON BULL**

M, my dear friend,

I completely understand the difficulty you face. To have such *well-equipped* bandits attack your family's caravans so regularly and with such exquisite knowledge of your shipping schedules is indeed highly unfortunate; there is no shame at all in finding your household guards wanting in such trying circumstances.

To answer your question, when faced with my own troubles last year, I employed the Bull's Chargers. Their leader, the Iron Bull, is a Qunari, a great horned giant of a man; he looked like a savage but spoke like a gentleman. He seems unstoppable in combat, but is far more clever than a simple swordsman. His mercenaries were costly, but they were both strong enough to protect my family's caravans and clever enough to discover how the bandits came into such luck in their attacks upon my family. The bandits have been no trouble at all since, and a baron of our mutual acquaintance effusively assured me that he would be greatly surprised if they ever again caused us difficulty.

If you wish to employ the Iron Bull, I can provide you with his contact information... as well as a list of the liquors he enjoys most particularly. Will your husband also be present in these negotiations, or will you be making the acquaintance of the Iron Bull in a more intimate setting? If so, we shall have to talk, the next time our men go hunting.

Yours in friendship,

B.

—A letter lifted from a hidden drawer in a noblewoman's vanity and copied carefully before being returned

## **JOSEPHINE MONTILYET**

Seeker Cassandra:

Josephine Montilyet is a noble from the nation of Antiva. She was educated in Val Royeaux, where she built connections among the court. Once she finished her schooling—at a surprisingly young age—Lady Montilyet became the official diplomat between King Fulgeno of Antiva to Empress Celene of Orlais. The appointment suits her. She is well traveled, familiar with many forms of etiquette, and by all accounts a skilled negotiator.

If that endorsement does not suffice, Josephine is a personal friend. I have faith in her. We require someone both influential and trustworthy to be an ambassador for the Inquisition; you cannot tell me you would prefer to take the job yourself.

Sister Leliana

## **LAVELLAN, OF THE DALISH**

The Dalish are elves who refuse to live in human cities, where their people are exploited, having few rights. They choose to eke out an independent existence in the forests, attempting to keep the last remnants of their ancient culture alive. [Player name] is from clan Lavellan, a group of Dalish who migrate around the perpetually feuding Free Marches. [Player name]'s people travel along the borders of each city-state's territory, where Free March rulers will be less inclined to attack them, for fear of accidentally provoking neighboring cities.

*If the Inquisitor is a mage:* [Player name] manifested a talent for magic as a child. The clan's leader, Keeper Deshanna Istimaethriel Lavellan, taught him/her how to control and hone his/her new powers. [Player name] grew into a capable mage, far away from the eyes of the templars and mage Circles. When tension between the two factions erupted into warfare, spilling into the countryside, Clan Lavellan was forced to pick up and move. [Player name]'s Keeper sent him/her to spy on the Conclave at Haven, as the outcome might determine the fate of [his/her] own clan.

*If the Inquisitor is a warrior or rogue:* [Player name] became a hunter at a young age, growing into a respected protector and provider. The recent mage rebellions disturbed his/her clan's way of life, as the fighting spilled out into the countryside. Clan Lavellan's leader, Keeper Deshanna Istimaethriel Lavellan, chose [Player name] to spy on the meeting at the Temple of Sacred Ashes between the Divine and the feuding factions, so he/she could bring back news of the outcome.

After the explosion that killed the Divine, [player name] was the only survivor at the Temple of Sacred Ashes. Rumors that the mysterious mark on his/her hand is a sign of the Maker's favor were spread by those who claim they saw the divine prophet, Andraste herself, lead Lavellan out of the Fade.

## LELIANA

She has many names. Most know her as "Sister Leliana" or "the Nightingale." Some refuse to speak her name at all, referring to her only as the Left Hand of the Divine—the shadow behind the Sunburst Throne.

The spymaster Marjolaine trained Leliana from a young age. For years, Leliana was Marjolaine's instrument in the Great Game of Orlais. While Leliana was devoted to Marjolaine, the reverse was not true. Marjolaine betrayed Leliana and almost succeeded in killing her. Leliana survived the betrayal, thanks to Revered Mother Dorothea.

Following this betrayal, Leliana spent several years in a cloister in Ferelden, hiding from her past. Inspired by Revered Mother Dorothea, Leliana dedicated herself to her faith, discovering peace in a simple life of devotion. But when the Fifth Blight began, she received what she believed a vision from the Maker. This prompted her to leave her sanctuary, taking up arms against the darkspawn.

Several years after the defeat of the Archdemon, Leliana received a summons from Dorothea—now Divine Justinia V. She returned to Orlais to become an agent of the Sunburst Throne.

Justinia perished in the explosion that destroyed the Divine Conclave, and Leliana became a founding member and spymaster of the new Inquisition.

*If Leliana is chosen as the new Divine at the end of Inquisition:* After the defeat of Corypheus and the sealing of the Breach, the Chantry chose Leliana to be the new Divine. Divine Victoria, as she will be named, will oversee the birth of a new Chantry, one that she hopes will unite all the peoples of Thedas.

## LOGHAIN MAC TIR

"I passed your test. Fate has a twisted sense of humor, it seems."

Loghain was born a farmer in a time when his country was under foreign occupation. While still a boy, he joined the resistance, where his tactical genius quickly became apparent. He became close friends with Prince Maric, the true heir to the Fereldan throne; together they led the rebels, driving out the forces of the Orlesian Empire. Maric raised his friend to the nobility; Loghain became a living legend, a symbol of the Fereldan ideals of hard work and independence.

During the battle at Ostagar, he fled the field, leaving King Cailan and the Grey Wardens to die.

He returned to Denerim and declared himself regent to his daughter, Queen Anora, demanding that Ferelden follow him against the darkspawn—upsetting many of the banns. His actions sparked a civil war. Loghain's supporters found themselves fighting their neighbors, who blamed Loghain for the death of the king, as well as those who wished to take advantage of the power vacuum. He was defeated in single combat at the Landsmeet, and sentenced to undertake the Joining ritual. He survived, and rejoined the fight for Ferelden as a Grey Warden.

*If the Warden did the Ultimate Sacrifice:* Destroying Archdemon Urthemiel at the Battle of Denerim cost the life of the Hero of Ferelden, but in the aftermath Loghain remained to help repair the kingdom and the Wardens he had nearly destroyed.

*If the Dark Ritual was done:* Together, Loghain and the Hero of Ferelden fought the Archdemon Urthemiel when it attacked the city of Denerim. They emerged victorious, having slain the creature, ending the Fifth Blight almost before it began.

## **LORD SEEKER LUCIUS CORIN**

For months, we were all so certain Lord Seeker Lambert's death was an assassination carried out by mages. He had, after all, declared the Nevarran Accord null and void, hurtling us headlong into a war against the rebels. Why else would he be killed, except as an act of retribution? The entire Templar Order was fired up, ready to take up the fight against the mages... something we were sure would be over in a matter of weeks. Thus the election of Lucius Corin to the role made me despair. According to the few Seekers of Truth with whom I spoke, he was a moderate. He agreed to the Divine's Conclave, and every templar I knew felt certain he would compromise to see the war ended.

But lately... the man seems different, does he not? I never met him before he assumed command, but even in this short time his opinions on the war have turned. He did not go to the Conclave he personally supported. In fact, he seems to regret supporting it at all. He talks of the templars establishing themselves as a power in our own right, and our fellows are all too eager to listen. I don't know from where this change of heart came, but I begin to wonder if Lambert's death wasn't as simple a matter as we assumed. Something is amiss within our Order, and all I know is that it's beyond me to discover what.

—From a letter written by an unknown templar, found in a burned-out fort, 9:41 Dragon

## **MAGISTER ERIMOND**

My dearest Demetrius,

I hope this letter finds you recovered from those ghastly meetings about road repair or import taxes or whatever terribly important work has consumed your time. I applaud your patriotic efforts to maintain the Imperium's infrastructure while the horned beasts to the north wage bloody war upon us.

I have asked before, but you are my closest friend, and now that you have seen the stirrings of our work, I hoped you might reconsider. You cannot think your talents adequately spent on *roadwork*, 'Metri. You come from the blood of the Dreamers. My master will restore the Imperium to a greatness it has not seen since our ancestors walked in the Golden City. He will rule not just a nation, but the world; those who show loyalty now stand to reap the benefits when all the world kneels to the Venatori.

Perhaps you are more comfortable with roads. When my master returns Tevinter to the glory it deserves, he will be pleased to find the nation well paved.

Consider well, my friend.

Magister Livius Erimond of Vyrantium

## **MAGISTER GEREON ALEXIUS**

Lords and ladies of the Magisterium, before we vote on the budget for this latest measure against the Qunari, I would ask that we take a moment to consider the state of our institutions of higher learning.

The Circle of Minrathous is more than ten thousand years old. Darinius the Dreamer himself was born within those walls. It continues to be a source of wisdom and guidance for the best and brightest of the Imperium's youth. Yet it falls into disrepair.



Magister Aurarius has made her case several times for increased funding to the Circles, and as yet, her appeals have gone unanswered. Magister Viren has spoken at length on the threat of the oxmen in the north—a tide of brutality that we alone hold back. Let me add this: how shall we defeat the Qunari? How have we held back their advance all these long years without support from the other nations of Thedas? You know the answer: magic. It is our magic that holds the beasts at bay, and through the ingenuity of our magic we will drive them from our shores forever.

My friends and colleagues, this is the battle we prepare our apprentices, sons, and daughters to face. They need the resources to discover new magic, new techniques, that can lend us an advantage in this endless war. They cannot do this while roofs crumble over their heads. Repair the Circles; let the Imperium's future be more than slow decline to the marching steps of legions.

—An address by Magister Alexius to the Magisterium, taken from the official minutes in 9:39 Dragon

## **MORRIGAN**

Monsieur,

I, too, am concerned about this new "advisor" to the Imperial Court. If Celene is truly curious about magic, why not turn to Madame de Fer with her questions? Why seek out this dark-haired apostate from Ferelden? Why bring the woman here? After a great deal of surveillance, I can reassure you somewhat. I do not believe this Morrigan has our empress ensorcelled. There is no way to be certain, of course, but the witch and Celene argue often. If Morrigan tells Celene something unpleasant, she will avoid the witch for months before curiosity draws her back. Morrigan has an interest in ancient things—magic from a time before the Chantry even existed—and it is this pursuit that intrigues Celene. Morrigan can answer questions that Madame de Fer either could not or would not. Whether any pertain to blood magic or other forbidden things... that I can only suspect. Three of my spies disappeared after attempting to breach the spells protecting this woman's laboratory in the depths of the palace. I would raise a fuss, but then my efforts would be revealed... even though I doubt I am alone. The entire court is consumed with curiosity, and the more Celene keeps her in the sidelines, the more we all wish to know.

Our empress plays with fire. Considering she has yet to find herself a husband to solidify the future of her dynasty, these dealings with the apostate are one more nail in her coffin.

Yours in trust,

Madame de Carnay

## **PROFESSOR FREDERIC OF SERAULT**

Anton,

If anyone alive can answer your questions about the social habits of the Greater Vimmark Wyvern, it is Frederic of Serault, Professor of Draconology at the University of Orlais. I have met him a few times, and he is exceedingly knowledgeable about his field of study, although less knowledgeable about his current state of dress, the day of the week, and the location of his quill and ink. But nonetheless, quite brilliant.

Cordially,

Magister Zaldereon Antonidas

## QUEEN ANORA MAC TIR

Previously wife to King Cailan, descendant of Calenhad and last of the Theirin bloodline to rule Ferelden, Queen Anora came into her own during the Fifth Blight. With the throne left vacant following her husband's death, she was confirmed as sole ruler with the support of the Hero of Ferelden — and this confirmation allowed her to rally her nation behind the Grey Wardens and the battle that ultimately ended the war with the darkspawn before it ever truly began.

*If the Warden was Anora's Prince-Consort:* After the Blight's end, Anora and the Hero of Ferelden were married. She began the process of rebuilding a country devastated by the Blight's corruption... a process that is considered to have gone well, at least until the Hero of Ferelden's disappearance from the Fereldan court several years ago.

Since that time, concerns linger that Queen Anora has still not produced an heir, concerns that she has thus far successfully dismissed. The people believe her rule wise and well-reasoned, and they fully supported her decision to give the rebel mages safe harbor in Redcliffe following an impassioned speech she delivered in Denerim six months ago. When the rebel mages took over both the town and castle, forcing Arl Teagan to flee for the capital, her support among the nobility dwindled rapidly. What this will mean for her rule in the coming years — particularly with renewed interest from neighboring Orlais — remains to be seen.

## SAMSON

I want this made clear to every man and woman in our army: do not challenge the red templars' leader, General Samson, on your own.

You may have heard stories of how Samson used to be a templar in Kirkwall until he was thrown out of the Order, that he became a vagrant begging for coin to buy lyrium. That man no longer exists. The fiend who attacked us at Haven had the strength of a dozen men. Samson has the training of a templar and all the power of red lyrium at his command. For those who did not see it firsthand, he is as dangerous as any demon. Perhaps worse. Treat him as such.

I will hold personally accountable any officers who do not communicate this order to their soldiers.

—Letter from Commander Cullen, issued to commanding officers and read to all Inquisition soldiers

## SER STROUD

Born the younger son of a minor noble family in the Fields of Ghislain, Jean-Marc Stroud had just finished training at the Academie des Chevaliers when he received word that his family had been killed, ostensibly by bandits. In reality, they were victims of the Orlesian Great Game. Ser Stroud's plan to find his family's murderers was cut short when the Grey Warden, Clarel, recruited Stroud on the advice of the Academie trainers, who did not wish to see a promising young chevalier throw his life away in fruitless pursuit of vengeance. Unable to refuse such a request honorably, Ser Stroud joined the Wardens and left his old life behind.

Warden Stroud has served the Grey Wardens with honor for decades. He is regarded as one of the finest swordsmen in the Order, combining his study at the Academie with years of fighting darkspawn alongside dwarves in the Deep Roads. Warden-Commander Clarel has tasked him with recruiting and training new Wardens; most young Warden warriors owe their skill to Stroud's mentorship.

Stroud prefers to travel in the Free Marches rather than Orlais, knowing his family history could cause him to become caught up in the Game, leading to accusations of political interference among the Wardens. He also has no strong opinions regarding mages or templars, although he believes both groups wrong to turn their back on the Chantry, which Stroud holds in some esteem.

—An intelligence report delivered to Leliana

## SERA

*This report by Josephine has been defaced numerous times in a different hand:*

On Sera, Red Jenny, and *Velissisima Ladyparts von Knucklefronts*,

It falls to me to comment on this "Red Jenny," for as a creature of the court I must have seen the effect of her actions, although I cannot be certain. Does that make them effective or ineffective? What I know is that "she" has vexed cities' guardsmen across Thedas, and always escaped. Accessing all available records, it seems clear that there have been multiple embodiments of the name, often at the same time; the limitations of communication are such that this is impossible to verify in the moment.

*(A crude drawing of a guard with her breeches at her ankles.)*

The severity of the attributed actions vary wildly, from petty to outright vicious. While official reports label these actions unfair, I have knowledge of many named as victims, and several are of suspect character. Sera would call them something altogether untoward.

*Yes mum. Shits, the lot of them.*

There are tales of "Red Jenny" targeting criminals, slavers, and even assassins' guilds. The benefit of having a "local" is that they are invested in regional concerns, although this obviously varies. I can discern no protocol.

*Don't need a title to be awful and deserve it.*

So who is our "Red Jenny?" She has been amusing herself in Val Royeaux for some time, although it is clear from her accent that she is deeply Fereldan. She met with outright laughter my inquiry as to whether she had any special "elven concerns" that I could address. I have conferred with Leliana about the danger of this group, and our estimation is that this incarnation of Red Jenny is, at least, a good distraction.

*Aww, the scary one cares.*

### Addendum: Denerim

Sera's claim to have lived in Denerim cannot be verified, but seems likely. The alienage there was neither stable nor secure; many residents of the city fled the region following the Blight. Given her nature, Val Royeaux would have seemed rife with targets. Denerim has more than its share of suspect nobility, but most were rallied against a common enemy, thanks to the efforts of the Hero of Ferelden.

*Forced to, more like. Shits and double shits.*

### Addendum: Lady Emmald

I attempted to find information about this "Lady Emmald" Sera mentioned. It is difficult, given how many noble houses were all but erased during the Blight. Emmald seems a recent name, rather than established nobility. Perhaps the title of "Lady" was a negotiated honorific due to mercantile holdings.

*Didn't say she didn't work hard. Said she was a bitch.*

*If the Inquisitor romances Sera...*

Addendum: Personal Privacy

In light of your developing relationship with Sera, I wish to clarify that any and all information I have gleaned is, at best, secondhand. I would never expect to exceed your own observations, given their intimate nature, and I do not wish to intrude on your privacy.

*Keep your nose out. She's mine.*

Addendum: On Sera's hatred of darkspawn

Having read the reports, I might have expected that someone with ties to Ferelden—and specifically Denerim—would harbor a violent dislike of darkspawn. Whatever claims she has to family, all were threatened during the blight.

*They don't look right. Not living.*

Addendum: On "Red Jenny" Caches in Populated Areas

It bewilders how such things go unnoticed, but perhaps that is the power of the practiced servant—they are keenly aware of what escapes the preoccupied eye. Sera, of course, can spy them instantly. She seems an extreme version of a very narrow definition of "perceptive." I have pressed for a schedule, or even some hint of procedure, but she is content to rely on the unknown. It may seem exciting, but I should find it ever so frustrating if I were searching.

*It's just red, right? Bet she'd see it if it was on a hat out of season.*

Addendum: On Sera's Fascination with Dragons

I do not know what Sera finds in dragons that enralls her so, but it is clear from her excited admissions that battling them speaks to her in a way for which she was not prepared. At least, in my estimation. If you seek an admission, at best she will declare "that was grand!" or similar. She's hardly introspective. Nevertheless, she has expressed an interest in any future hunts.

*(A crude drawing of Sera, tongue out, standing atop a dragon, mimicking its horns with her fingers.)*

*Piss, can't draw saddles.*

## **SOLAS**

Cassandra,

I understand our first order of business must be to investigate this bizarre breach in the sky and protect people from the demons descending. While my search continues, I wish to draw your attention to a new arrival at our camp: an elven apostate calling himself Solas.

Solas entered the camp voluntarily, surrendering his staff to Chantry forces without protest. He is not Dalish and says that he has never been part of the Circle, claiming instead to have studied magic peacefully on his own... particularly magic tied to the Fade.

While I suspect you will be reluctant to accept the help of an apostate, Solas did come to us freely. Witnesses saw him in a nearby village at the time of the blast, so he was likely not responsible for what happened at the Conclave. However, he has described the effects of the Breach in enough detail to convince me that he knows more about the Fade than anyone else present.

Solas has requested permission to study the lone survivor and one of the smaller rifts, in hopes of finding a way to seal the Breach. He has correctly guessed that it is growing, and believes it will destroy the entire world unless we find a way to stop it. Unless you object, I will allow him his studies—under proper observation, of course.

Leliana

*Post-Epilogue...*

Inquisitor,

Despite my efforts, I have been unable to locate Solas. From the site of your battle with Corypheus, he was last seen headed west, still distraught over the destruction of the orb Corypheus carried. From there he disappeared, evading my people so easily and so completely that I am forced to wonder how much he knew about them.

When Solas initially approached the Inquisition and offered aid, I questioned him extensively about his background and history. He was evasive, but he did give the name of the village where he grew up, noting that it was small, unlikely to appear on any map.

I hate loose ends, so I kept a few of my agents searching, to verify his story. They recently located the village... or what remains of it. It is a ruin, as it has been for centuries, its name preserved only in degraded form in Ancient Tevinter mysteries. Whoever Solas truly is, wherever he came from, he has deceived us from the very start.

I apologize for not investigating this more thoroughly while Solas was here. He was clearly helping us, and other matters were of greater urgency, but it was an oversight nevertheless, given how little he shared with us. It is not clear what his plans are, if any, but I will continue to search.

Leliana

## **THE CHAMPION OF KIRKWALL**

*If Hawke sided with the mages...*

I've heard the name "Hawke" on several lips this week. Many of us blame the Champion for the events in Kirkwall, which sparked a war and hurled all Thedas into chaos. But can we truly fault Hawke for what she/he did?

Here was a poor refugee from Ferelden who came to the Free Marches fleeing the Blight.

Coming from a family of apostates, Hawke must have spent her/his life hiding from templars, hearing about the abuses to which mages under the care of the Circle were subjected.

Make no mistake, there were abuses. We will never find a peaceful solution to this conflict until we admit that we were partially responsible.

Imagine how it must have been for Hawke when she/he rose to prominence for her/his role in ending the Qunari threat of 9:34.

From refugee to Champion of Kirkwall.

Hawke's position gave her/him power and influence. Nothing could touch her/him.

*If Hawke was a mage...*

But although the Champion of Kirkwall walked free, there were mages in the Gallows who did not. The thought must have rankled.

*If Hawke was not a mage...*

Hawke always had sympathy for mages, and perhaps wished to do more for them.

Are the Champion's actions during the mage uprising so hard to understand, given all I have said? Following the destruction of the chantry, Knight-Commander Meredith invoked the Right of Annulment and called for the execution of every mage in Kirkwall. It was not right; another injustice added to an already lengthy list. Hawke knew it, and stood against her.

She/He put herself/himself between the templars and the mages they sought to destroy, and became a legend. Even though she/he later disappeared, fleeing Kirkwall and the Chantry's justice, what happened in Kirkwall that day changed Thedas forever.

By defying Meredith and our Order, Hawke became a beacon for mage rebellion, that gave the mages hope, rallied them. They fought back. And here we now stand, on the eve of Divine Conclave, seeking peace before their rebellion destroys us all.

—Knight-Commander Marteu of Montsimmard, speaking to templars attending the Divine Conclave.

*If Hawke sided with the templars...*

I cannot tell you with any certainty if the Champion of Kirkwall will be present at the Divine Conclave.

Although Hawke is the current viscount of the city, he/she left Kirkwall some time ago, leaving the running of the city to the guard-captain and the seneschal.

If either of them knows anything about their viscount's whereabouts, they are saying nothing.

I understand the need some of you feel to have Hawke present.

Many of you believe we would not be at war if not for his/her actions.

Thedas has always feared us, but the destruction of Kirkwall's chantry awoke all to the realization that some mages would go to any lengths to achieve freedom. And in the aftermath, Hawke's support of the templars' systematic slaughter of all of Kirkwall's mages showed that no mercy should be spared in restoring peace.

What Hawke did in Kirkwall sparked something in the Templar Order. This was the Champion who beat the Qunari invasion of Kirkwall,

*If Hawke fought the Arishok:* who killed their Arishok.

He/She was powerful, influential. His/Her word counted for much.

Templars believed the mages had gone too far, and Hawke agreed. It was Vindication.

*If Hawke is a mage:* Hawke was one of us — a mage. If the Champion could turn against us, surely we were beyond redemption.

When the Circles began to rebel, the Templars did what they saw as their duty — as Hawke did in Kirkwall. They put us down. They restored order. Not even the Chantry could control them, because they had right on their side.

So here we stand, on the eve of the Divine Conclave, hoping this end before we are all dead. But ask yourselves: why look for Hawke? What good would the Champion's presence be?

His/Her part in this is done.

This peace depends entirely on us and the templars. We just need to decide how much we're willing to sacrifice for it.

—Senior Enchanter Lorace of Cumberland, speaking to mages attending the Divine Conclave

## **TREVELYAN, THE FREE MARCHER**

The Trevelyans are nobility from Ostwick, a city-state on the southern coast of the Free Marches. It is an old and distinguished family, in good standing among its peers, and with strong ties to the Chantry. Its youngest sons and daughters—those third- or fourth-born children with little chance of becoming heirs—often join the Chantry to become templars or clerics. As the youngest child, Lord/Lady [Player name] Trevelyan was expected to follow suit... until the disaster at the Conclave.

[Player name] was present at the Temple of Sacred Ashes as a representative of his/her family's interests, along with other distant relatives in the Chantry. He/She was the only survivor at the temple after the explosion. Rumors that the mysterious mark on his/her hand is a sign of the Maker's favor were spread by those who claim they saw the divine prophet, Andraste herself, lead Lord/Lady [Player name] out of the Fade.

*If the Inquisitor is a mage the following section is different...*

As a mage, however, Lord/Lady [Player name] Trevelyan was expected to spend his/her life in the Ostwick Circle of Magi.

A sedate place, the Ostwick Circle did not decide in favor of either templars or mages, clinging to neutrality during the rebellion. [Player name] was chosen as a delegate to the Conclave in the hopes his/her noble position would provide protection for his/her fellow mages while negotiation continued. Trevelyan was the only survivor of the explosion that rocked the Temple of Sacred Ashes.

## **VARRIC TETHRAS**

"There's power in stories. That's all history is: the best tales. The ones that last. Might as well be mine."

Varric Tethras of the Dwarven Merchants Guild of Kirkwall is famous (or infamous) for two things: his books, and his association with the Champion of Kirkwall.

After the templars and Circles broke away from the Chantry, Divine Justinia V sent her agents to Kirkwall—where the roots of the war began—in search of answers. The Champion had long since disappeared, but Varric had written a book on his friends' involvement in the destruction of the Kirkwall Chantry, and the Left and Right Hands of the Divine located him with surprising ease. They captured and interrogated him, then brought him to the Conclave to give his testimony to the Divine in person, but fate decreed that he would never meet her.

## **VIVIENNE: MADAME DE FER**

"Magic is dangerous, just as fire is dangerous. Anyone who forgets this truth gets burned."

An assiduous and talented scholar, Vivienne rose rapidly through the ranks of Montsimnard's Circle. When made a full-fledged enchanter, she elected to join no fraternity, a decision that shocked colleagues but may have been a calculated maneuver. When she successfully applied to be appointed Enchanter to the Imperial Court, nearly every fraternity clamored for her favor in hopes of having a representative at the empress's ear. She was voted First Enchanter of Montsimnard at an age young enough to cause scandal. The Circle widely regards her as the most shrewd and disciplined mage in Orlais.

## **WARDEN-COMMANDER CLAREL**

To Arl Teagan Guerrin,

I sought a chance to speak with you in person, my lord, in hopes of convincing you to allow us to send further aid to Ferelden, to give the Grey Wardens in your homeland a chance to rebuild. I hope this letter succeeds where my requests for a meeting have not.

I understand Fereldan feelings regarding Grey Wardens. Sophia Dryden's actions were reprehensible. Grey Wardens are forbidden from interfering in the affairs of nations, save when we must exert our authority to battle the Blight. Still, even you must acknowledge the vital necessity of my Order after the Blight nearly ravaged your homeland. Without the Grey Wardens, Ferelden would be a wasteland populated only by darkspawn.

I understand as well your concern that I am a mage, living outside the confines of the Circle. I have been informed that you saw magic ill-used by apostates at Redcliffe. You have my sympathy in this, but not my apology. The Maker saw fit to give me the gift of magic, along with a temperament better suited to battle than quiet meditation. I left the Circle legally, and the Grey Wardens gave me a chance to use my abilities to defend our land. I am no apostate.

My first interest, Arl Teagan—indeed, my *only* interest—is to see this world protected from the Blight. I may be Warden-Commander of Orlais, but I am not Orlesian at heart. I am a Grey Warden and nothing more, and I will defend this land from horrors you cannot even imagine. My oath comes before political ambition, before concerns about the rights of mages. It will one day come before my own survival.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours,

Warden-Commander Clarel de Chanson



## CRAFTING MATERIALS

### AMRITA VEIN

Amrita was a hedge mage, famed for her talent as an herbalist. She could brew philters to soothe every ache or ailment, even coax the ill back from the brink of death. As word of Amrita's talents spread, she was made a target for capture. Amrita fled from them, refusing to go to a Circle. The templars took off in pursuit, dogging her steps, until they came to the edge of the Western Approach. Knowing the templars were less than half a day behind her, Amrita forged ahead. When the templars came to the edge of the desert, they stopped and turned back, believing that Amrita would be doomed to die in that sand-blasted wilderness.

But Amrita did not die. She crossed the wasteland on foot, living off the strange plants that grew there, finding water in roots buried beneath the sand. On that long trek, Amrita discovered the herb now known as Amrita Vein. She brought it out of the desert with her and continued to study and cultivate it. Amrita's extensive writings about desert plants, including Amrita Vein, eventually found their way to the White Spire, where it was decided that her contributions would earn her a degree of freedom. She was allowed to continue living as she desired, as long as she submitted to the Harrowing.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

### ARBOR BLESSING

"Blessed by the vine in spring,  
I shall not fear the winter's sting."

Arbor blessing is a useful vine that is notoriously difficult to cultivate, as if it had a mind of its own. The wind often carries its miniscule seeds for great distances from the parent plant. It is hard to say what causes the seeds to sprout once they land. However, it has long been believed that comfort and abundance follow where arbor blessing goes. Perhaps the vine only chooses conditions that promote rich harvests from domesticated flora. Therefore, see arbor blessing in spring, and you shall not grow hungry in winter.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

### BLOOD LOTUS

Do not try to get out of this. We were told you were the best. That is why you were contracted. Was it not you who obtained the two hundred white blooming rose bushes for the Empress's winter ball last year? The comtesse has been infinitely patient 'til now, but she doesn't understand why it is so hard to fill the garden pool. She wants no more excuses. And no, she will not compromise with the dawn lotuses. They're white! The flowers have to match the silk canopies. It is crucial! Dark purple. Dark red. Do not try to frame this as a safety issue. The guests will be perfectly safe. Why, if they experience any hallucinations from the concentration of lotus essence in the air, I'm certain it will only make the evening more thrilling.

I don't care if you have to send someone to some Fereldan peat bog to get it all. Just do it!

—A note from Chamberlain Laurent to Grand Gardener Umbert Vaulain, over the decorations for Comtesse d'Arnee's summer garden party

According to gossip in Val Royeaux, the chamberlain did succeed in convincing Grand Gardener Vauclain to provide four hundred and twenty lotus plants. The party was considered by most to be a roaring success, even though the evening concluded with at least twelve guests asleep on the lawn, three in the pool, and one lady losing several teeth trying to take a bite out of a marble statue of the comtesse's father, which she was convinced was made of cake.

## **CRYSTAL GRACE**

The flowers of the crystal grace plant are appreciated for their beauty as well as their medicinal value. Pale blue and shaped like delicate crystal bells, the flowers should almost tinkle in the breeze. In fact, I have heard a tale of an Orlesian lady who ordered crystal grace to be planted all over her bower and then hired a mage from the White Spire to enchant them to do just that. Eventually, she grew tired of the chiming and set fire to her lawn in a fit of pique.

Let us learn from this. These plants were created exactly as our Maker intended, and our interference rarely improves them.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **DEATHROOT**

## **SAME AS IN DAIL**

Deathroot has been used in magic and potion making for centuries. It's a fragile-looking plant with a thin stalk and purple flowers, which fruits once a year developing bright red fleshy pods that cause disorientation and dizziness if ingested.

There are two varieties. The more common Arcanist Deathroot was first found by Archon Hadrianus when he discovered it growing on several dead slaves. The other, Lunatic's Deathroot, is most closely associated with the story of the courtesan Melusine, who sought revenge on a powerful magister and his family. She harvested the plant, baked it into small pies for the magister's banquet, and presented them to the magister at a banquet. All the guests were seized by terrifying hallucinations after eating the pies and tore each other to pieces.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **DEEP MUSHROOM**

## **SAME AS IN DAIL**

"Deep mushroom" refers to the entire group of fungi that grows underground in caves and many parts of the dwarven Deep Roads. Collection can be a dangerous task, as the Deep Roads are often infested with darkspawn. Because of this, dwarven merchants often recruit "casteless" hirelings for the job, and pay them a meager percentage of what they earn selling the mushrooms to surfacers.

The most common varieties used in the herbalist's trade are the Blightcap, Ghoul's Mushroom, and Brimstone Mushroom, almost all of which tend to carry the darkspawn's corruption. While they cannot transmit the disease, this trait often makes them quite poisonous. Deep mushrooms should only be handled by experienced herbalists and should never be consumed without first being adequately cleaned and prepared. Careless consumption has been known to cause insanity, severe abdominal cramping, and even death.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **DRAGONTHORN**

The wood of the dragonthorn tree is prized for its strength, and has been used to craft bows of remarkable quality, but the leaves are equally valuable. Alchemists have known for centuries that an extract of dragonthorn leaves will enhance and stabilize other, more volatile magical compounds.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **ELFROOT**

## **SAME AS IN DAI**

Elfroot was first used by the elves of Arlathan, hence the name. The root gave their medicines particular efficacy, so when the Imperium conquered the elves, the magisters adopted its use and its popularity spread to all corners of the empire.

Elfroot is a hardy plant with large green leaves that grows wild in many places. It's so common that it tends to show up in most gardens and fields, almost like a weed. Unlike a weed, however, most people appreciate having access to the wonderful little plant. The roots can be used with very little preparation. Rubbing some of the juice on a wound, for example, will speed up healing and numb pain. And chewing on a slice of root treats minor ailments like indigestion, flatulence, and hoarse throats.

There are several varieties, but the most useful for herbalists are the Bitter, Gossamer, and Royal Elfroots.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **EMBRIUM**

## **SAME AS IN DAI**

Embriums are flowers from the orchid family. Its therapeutic qualities were actually discovered because of the embrium's exceptional beauty.

The beloved daughter of Lord Ignace Poulenc of Orlais fell victim to a terrible sickness of the lungs, which her healers were unable to cure. Thinking the girl would soon perish, her parents surrounded her bed with brightly colored flowers, hoping that they would bring some warmth and cheer in her last days. Oddly enough, the girl began to recover from the illness, and grew stronger each day. Her parents were baffled, but overjoyed. The healers eventually learned that the fragrance of one of the flowers eased the child's breathing. The flower was an embrium, and later became known as the Salubrious Embrium.

The other variant that has certain magical properties is known as Dark Embrium.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **FELANDARIS**

## **SAME AS IN DAI**

The name felandaris is elven, meaning "demon weed," which is fitting for this rare plant because it grows only in places where the Veil is thin. Felandaris is easily identified. It's a twisted, wicked-looking shrub with long, thorny shoots, and no leaves: a skeletal hand, reaching out from an unmarked grave. Many swear the plant radiates a palpable aura of malevolence, so it comes as no surprise that it unnerves many a junior herbalist.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **GHOUL'S BEARD**

Ghouls don't really have beards, do they?

*I imagine some do. If they had beards before becoming ghouls, that is.*

What? You don't think they grow them after be-ghoulment?

*"Be-ghoulment"? Anyway, isn't it caused by the blight? Nothing can grow on blighted ground.*

I don't think that applies to hair, does it? Skin isn't really ground.

*Why are we discussing this?*

I'm bored. Can you believe she's forgotten she already talked about ghouls' beard two weeks ago?

*Be nice. She's... mature.*

It's hardly useful, unless you want to kill someone, ruin their minds, or some ghastly combination of the two.

*There was that one story about a cat that chewed on ghouls' beard and ended up bursting into flames.*

You're just proving my point here. Ugh, I hope she doesn't make us touch it again. That thing is so repulsive. Plants really shouldn't be... hairy.

*Like a ghouls' beard? Ha-ha.*

Stop laughing! I think she heard you. Shit, she's coming

—Notes passed between apprentice mages during a lesson

## **PROPHET'S LAUREL**

According to Orlesian folklore, Andraste's followers and sympathizers tossed sprigs of the laurel in her path as she was led to her pyre. After she burned, her ashes blew across the leaves on the ground, bestowing upon them their famed purifying qualities. It is just a tale, of course. The laurel was recognized as a healing herb long before Andraste's time. Ancient Tevinter scrolls describe the use of the laurel in poultices, tinctures, and even incense. Though the legend might be pure fabrication, the laurel will always be symbolic of Andraste's sacrifice. Its glossy dark leaves represent the Sword of Mercy; the red berries, the drops of her blood upon it.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## **RASHVINE**

Be wary when harvesting rashvine because the plant comes by its name honestly. Indeed, calling its effect upon exposed skin a "rash" is an understatement. I've known apprentices who went without treating the red sores, assuming them irritating but harmless, and eventually required either magical healing or amputation.

Once the poison gets into the blood, it causes a painful calcification that turns the surface skin stone grey... and that's only the first symptom. In addition, it's primarily found in marshes and remote areas of deep vegetation, so there is often danger in finding rashvine patches, even aside from that in collecting it.

Fortunately (or unfortunately, if one happens to be a witless apprentice), rashvine has a number of useful applications: salves that harden the skin or otherwise provide protection, not to mention being one of the primary ingredients for Antivan fire. My advice? Use thick gloves and carry a sword.

—From *Herbology in Thedas* by Master Ilian Gravire

## SPINDLEWEED

## SAME AS IN DAI

It is an old country saying that spindleweed grows best for the sorrowful. Verdant spindleweed in a household's garden has often brought neighbors offering consolation, usually without even asking what might be wrong.

This originates from the plant's use as a seasoning for dishes meant to speed the recovery of the infirm. A person who grows much of it is likely caring for the fatally ill.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## VANDAL ARIA

The vandal aria is a flowering shrub, related to the rare and nearly extinct felcidus aria, otherwise known as the Silent Plains rose. Of course, neither variety of aria is a true rose, and they are called roses only because of their sweet scent. The fragrance of the vandal aria, however, is lighter and greener than that of her rare cousin, and redolent of honey and cut grass.

The felcidus aria is best known for being the only plant capable of growing on blighted land. Vandal aria lacks this quality, but is capable of proliferating almost everywhere else, even though she seems to favor dry, arid climes. If left to grow wild, the vandal will take over a space, choking out any other plant unfortunate enough to be in her way.

—An excerpt from *The Botanical Compendium*, by Ines Arancia, botanist

## WITHERSTALK

Elodia,

I said you could take a few components for your personal use. I'm certain I didn't say you could empty our stores! Enchanter Ines looked like she was shitting hognuts when she noticed. Do you know how long it took to collect that witherstalk? I know what you're doing with it! No one needs that many warming draughts.

I'm locking the chest. Find your own witherstalk. Or perhaps either you or Ferran could try to stick to your own quarters.

—A note written by Apprentice Veralinn of the Fereldan Circle

Maker, Vera!

That is not what's going on! All the witherstalk in the chest was dried anyway, and you know it's only efficacious as a preventative when the sap is fresh. I'm more interested in its effects on the mind when combined with certain other plants. Ines knows all about it. Just ask her. She probably forgot that I'd already told her. Old bat.

And please, Ferran and I are more than able to amuse ourselves without resorting to the tired old dip-and-stir. Maybe if you got out of the botanical section and looked at *other* books.

—Apprentice Elodia's reply

## **CREATURES**

### **A HORSEMASTER'S NOTES ON MOUNTS**

Never seen a proud rider atop a regal mount? That's your failing. Such animals are common enough, but there're costs, so you keep them away from chance of blight, theft, attack. All the nonsense that makes for poor stabling. These aren't working beasts, with the fire bred out of their eyes so they can suffer a plow. These creatures are about spirit. A proper mount isn't some noble's plaything on a hunt, it's your everyday, and you'd better match it to deserve it.

#### **On Horses**

You've never had a mount like the Fereldan Forder, a hardy warmblood. Don't let the size fool you: they're no meant for the farm. Centuries of careful breeding have taken common stock and produced a glory. A creature as much at home in a charge as they are in a march across nations. But for all the stamina and speed they place at your command, press too far, and you'll be picking dirt from your teeth. They know their role and expect that you know yours. Warning and promise and all that.

#### **On the Flames of the Inquisition Armored Charger**

Never in all my days did I think I would handle such barding, never mind the quality of the breed. A true purebred lineage, clad in the hallmarks of a master. The combination is one of a kind, and this animal knows it. Mount and rider, meant for greatness. Don't disappoint - The bar has been set very, very high.

#### **On the Red Hart**

Honored to see one up close without meeting it points-first. The pride of the stable. Of any stable. Even the Dalish I've had occasion to ask have said it's rare to glimpse them at a distance. The few who have mastered one - and it truly is very few - say there is no animal more sure of foot, more attuned to its rider, more inspirational to simply gaze upon. You want to match the majesty of this creature? Grow some bloody wings.

#### **On the "Bog Unicorn"**

Still not sure what you unearthed. Talked to a mage about it and got a typical "head in the Fade" response. Got a better answer from that Tranquil of yours, and it still chilled my short hairs. Plain speak, there's a spirit of some kind in there. Now, a horse to me means "freedom", but I understand that sometimes it's a demon? The wrong side of what it should be. What's the wrong side of freedom? Chaos or just "unending"? Something like that. Whatever is in there, this animal was best of breed, an Orlesian charger fit for any Chevalier, and well tended in life. By its wounds, I'd wager it fell in battle with demons of some ilk and was finished by its master's mercy. Whatever spirit of loyalty or freedom or whatever makes horses run brought the strange thing back. It wants to serve. I've no doubt it will ride well, and I'll stable it, but I'm not going near it.

#### **On the Dracolisk**

I've heard of them. Seen a few. They're not as rare as you'd think, but they are very, very difficult. "Spirited" and "stubborn" suggest a reasonable resistance. No, they're just plain mean. Spur a horse a little too hard, and you're getting a brush against a tree. Kick this thing the wrong way, and it's taking a piece of you. That said, there's utility here. As fast and strong as any other, and the rider who masters one is making a statement. Not just "I can do what you can't". It's almost "I can do what you wouldn't even dare".

### **Greater Mountain Nuggalope or "Deth Nug"**

It has hands. It *handles* things. That's hitting me worse than anything else. What the ever-loving spit? Can't argue the impressive stature of the thing, and it's stubborn, like the most entitled charger. It knows how strong it is, and it knows *you* know. I expected the dull snuffling of its small cousins, but this - it has hands and spirited eyes. Mind where you secure the buckles of your saddle. I expect it'll let you know when it tires of suffering you on its back. Not that it tires. Hands. *Hands*.

### **ARCANE HORROR**

### **SAME AS IN DAO**

"Upon ascending to the second floor of the tower, we were greeted by a gruesome sight: a ragged collection of bones wearing the robes of one of the senior enchanters. I had known her for years, watched her raise countless apprentices, and now she was a mere puppet for some demon."

—Transcribed from a tale told by a templar in Antiva City, 7:13 Storm

### **ARCHERS**

To fight an enemy with a bow or crossbow is simple, although not always easy.

A guard with a crossbow must crank his weapon after each shot. If there is only one such enemy, seek cover and give him cause to waste his shot, and then close upon him before he may fire again. If there are many, close to their flank so you face one guard directly, using him as a second shield, and no other guard has a clean shot at your unprotected back. Do not move to the middle of their ranks and rely upon them hesitating to risk hitting one another.

A soldier with a shortbow is a little more dangerous. Attack him as you would an enemy with a crossbow, but accept that he will likely fire again. Approach with your shield up, even if you must sacrifice speed. Few soldiers are true masters of the bow; those who do not fumble their draw in fear will fire a shot quickly, so it is more likely to glance off your armor or shield than punch through.

Few soldiers have the skill or strength to make good use of the longbow. Respect those who do. Against such an enemy, cover is the only defense. Move quickly across his field of vision, forcing him to compensate for your movement. Do not charge directly unless your allies can distract him. A fully drawn longbow can drive an arrow through a chevalier's plate at a hundred yards.

A fight between an archer and a chevalier is a test of cunning versus patience. We are too often patient—heavily armored as we are—and faced with lightly armored foes who would harass us. While archers frustrate me as they do most chevaliers, it is good that we fight them, so we remember how to be cunning, how to break an opponent's patience.

—An excerpt from *A Meditation upon the Use of Blades*, by Swordmaster Massache de Jean-mien, required reading at the Academie des Chevaliers

## AUGUST RAM

"The August Ram!" Surely whoever named it "ram" had never seen its more common cousin; the slender legs and sleek hide give the animal the grace of a hart or halla. Its curved horns spiral back over delicate ears twitching at the slightest rustle of grass. When startled, speed is the August Ram's only defense against the hunter. It is difficult to sneak up on these shy and wary creatures, but I have been here so long and shown such mild behavior that I have gained their trust. The rams graze peacefully a stone's throw from my sketching easel as I write this, thinking no more of me than a rock in the field or a flower in the grass.

I just wish the rotten things would stop trying to eat my canvases whenever I leave camp.

—*From The Diary of Tillendall Lemallen, noted painter of wildlife and portraits to the Orlesian court*

## BEAR

We went into the woods near Val Foret to find a great brown bear that had the townsfolk worried. We found her some miles from the west gate. She had made a den in a cave on a hillside, close to a stream. We stopped some yards away and watched. Eldwin cast a spell to make us less likely to be discovered. Useful, useful magic.

After several hours, the bear emerged from her den. Beautiful red-brown sheen to her coat. Phenomenal beastie. Following close behind were three cubs. Balls of fluffy brown fur with eyes set in them. Amazing, amazing little creatures.

I would've liked to watch the little family playing in the stream all day, but the wind changed and the mama bear caught our scent, even with Eldwin working his magic. She leapt in our direction, stopped when she couldn't see anything, then rose up on her hind legs and roared. *What a sight that was!* I estimate she was half again as tall as I. Quick as anything, she charged towards us, snapping branches as she went. I dove out of the way, but Eldwin, bless his heart, was too slow. A massive paw caught him right in the chest and he went down. Poor Eldwin. Nature is ruthless but magnificent.

—*From The Wilds of Thedas: Volume Two*, by Stephan d'Eroin

## BEHEMOTH

We could have held off a battering ram, but the behemoth? It took the gate off at the hinges. Then it screamed. Not a roar or growl—a scream, all rage and pain. As I drew my blade, all I could think was: "There's a templar in there". Somewhere in that thing was a brother or sister of the Order; every fiber of my soul was crying out to them. But whoever it might have been, whoever's son or daughter, they were lost to us, swallowed by corruption and lies. I helped the only way I could, the only way any of us can. We must end their suffering. And, Maker willing, we must try to remember them as they were.

—From the reports of Knight-Captain Veddir, tactical consideration for the Inquisition

## BLACK WOLF

The scouts report activity uncharacteristic of lupine behavior.



The Breach and resulting rifts have caused unprecedented disruptions in the Veil. Such alterations to the environment may account for the unnatural aggression. If this is indeed the case, I cannot yet say how widespread the impact. How may wolves does this environmental imbalance influence? What threat do they pose to resistant members of the pack? To the local population?

This warrants further investigation.

—Report submitted to Seeker Pentaghost by Minaeve, Mage Apprentice and Inquisition Researcher

## **BOGFISHER**

I accompanied Marquis d'Archambon upon this expedition reluctantly, although d'Archambon insisted that an exploration to show me the truth and beauty of the world might assuage the consternation with which I observed it.

As we entered the caves, the cold and brackish water dripping incessantly, we came upon a hulking beast whose great flapping paws slapped the stone. In countenance it was broad, its flaps of hide hanging loose across its bristled back. D'Archambon drove it away, laughing at its clumsiness, heedless of the declinate fangs protruding at unknowable angles from its distended maw. He said the beast, or "bogfisher" as the locals called it, was a failing vestige in the land of men, fit to be tamed or slain.

That night, we camped beside an underground lake, its rippling waves a susurrus of inhuman whispers. The sepulchral emptiness of the starless night was vast, our own fire pitiful in its sullen rebellion against the unending dark.

The bogfisher slipped from the lake, its flapping paws perfectly equipped to propel it through the water; its spiny maw closed upon d'Archambon. Then the marquis was gone, his frantic thrashing all we could see in the frenzied white water as the bogfisher pulled him under.

That night, I knew that this is not the land of men. The lightless torpid waters are not tamed; men are but ants crawling witlessly across a lily pad in a pond. Most think the emerald land bound to their tiny will. Those few who peer over the edge and see the leviathans, pale bellied, scales shimmering in colors with no name, swimming beneath them, can only scurry away, trying in vain to articulate the vast and uncaring terrors that awaits. What my eyes have seen, my limited mind may never comprehend, but I shall never draw near dark water again. The bogfisher has taught me well.

—From *An Anatomie of Various Terrible Beasts* by Baron Havard-Pierre d'Amortisan

The bogfisher likes hiding in dark places and water. Master does not like baths.

—Footnote in the margins of the manuscript by the baron's scribe, Dunwich

## **BRONTO**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

"There's only two things a noble will step aside for: Paragons and angry brontos."

—*Dwarven saying.*

The dwarven Shaperate originally bred this hulking beast as a beast of burden and food source, the rough equivalent to surface oxen and cows. Some versions of bronto have even been developed as dwarven mounts, valued far more for their sure-footedness and stamina than speed. While present within Orzammar in large numbers, some bronto still exist in packs within the Deep Roads, having returned to a wild state after the fall of the dwarven kingdoms. They require remarkably little sustenance, absorbing nutrients from water, fungus and even rocks (hence the "rock-licker" appellation many dwarves use to describe brontos), and exist primarily in a dormant state until provoked. An angry, charging bronto is considered a rather dangerous opponent.

— from *Tales from Beneath the Earth* by Brother Genitivi

*A slight rephrasing has occurred in a couple of sentences compared to the DAO version*

## **BRUISER**

A warrior wielding a great blade strikes terror into common soldiers, but to a chevalier, he is no greater danger than any other opponent. A skilled warrior is struck down by a maul or battleaxe in one of three cases: in the first, he is taken unawares in the heat of battle; in the second, he cannot evade the blow because of the nature of the battlefield or his own injuries; and in the third and most common case, he is struck down because he reacts poorly.

We do not train enough against two-handed weapons because we disdain them ourselves. I think this is a mistake, and in time to come, I hope it is corrected. I have seen too many skilled warriors die because they have seen a great maul coming down at them and raise a shield to block instead of deflect. I have seen men lose their composure due to fear or anger and engage such a warrior directly, thinking they can risk a blow to their body as they would from a light sword or a dagger. In the heat of battle, even the trained mind will think such things. Those who cannot overcome such thoughts die.

You must watch the weapon, but only to gauge its length. Otherwise, as in all fights, the opponent's hips and shoulders will tell his intent. The great weapons are dangerous only when moving or poised overhead to strike down. You must give ground, but only against the true threat. If he advances but is not truly prepared to strike, you must rush in, cut him, and withdraw to your guard before his blow is ready. It may take ten cuts to kill him. Even after the ninth, he may cleave your head from your body if you do not respect the distance he can cover.

If using such a weapon yourself, mark your distance and do not allow yourself to react to an opponent outside your reach. You cannot recover your guard as quickly as you can with a sword and shield. Keep your weapon moving and measure your blows. A stuttered step on your strike can fool many opponents into thinking you out of range and then rushing their defense. In this manner, you may kill most who stand against you. Fighting in such a manner, you may feel more like a butcher than a hero, but the living may console themselves while the dead cannot.

—An excerpt from *A Meditation upon the Use of Blades* by Swordmaster Massache de Jean-mien, required reading at the Academie des Chevaliers

## **CORPSE**

In most corners of Thedas, funeral rites include burning or dismembering the dead to prevent them from becoming host to demons. But not everyone gets a proper burial. It is not unheard of for the dead to be thrown into mass graves in the aftermath of a battle or execution, almost asking some demon to claim the corpses.

—From *Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons* by Enchanter Mirdromel

## **DARKSPAWN**

Those who sought to claim  
Heaven by violence destroyed it. What was  
Golden and pure turned black.  
Those who had once been mage-lords,  
The brightest of their age,  
Were no longer men, but monsters.

—Threnodies 12:1

Sin was the midwife that ushered the darkspawn into this world. The magisters fell from the Golden City, and their fate encompassed all our world's. For they were not alone.

No one knows where the darkspawn came from. A dark mockery of men, in the darkest places they thrive, growing in numbers as a plague of locusts will. In raids, they will often take captives, dragging their victims alive into the Deep Roads, but most evidence suggests that these are eaten. Like spiders, it seems darkspawn prefer their food still breathing. Perhaps they are simply spawned by the darkness. Certainly, we know that evil has no trouble perpetuating itself.

The last Blight was in the Age of Towers, striking once again at the heart of Tevinter, spreading south into Orlais and east into the Free Marches. The plagues spread as far as Ferelden, but the withering and twisting of the land stopped well beyond our borders. Here, darkspawn have never been more than the stuff of legends. In the northern lands, however, particularly in Tevinter and the Anderfels, they say darkspawn haunt the hinterlands, preying on outlying farmers and isolated villages, a constant threat.

—From *Ferelden: Folklore and History* by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **DEEPSTALKER**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

One of the few natural, non-darkspawn creatures to live in the Deep Roads, the deepstalker is a reptilian cave-dweller known for burrowing into the stone paths of the Deep Roads and ambushing prey, usually nugs. They hunt in packs, attacking with round mouths full of serrated teeth or spitting poison from venom glands. Although a single deepstalker poses little threat to any experienced explorer, packs can be quite lethal.

—From *Tales from Beneath the Earth* by Brother Genitivi

## **DESPAIR DEMON**

Once upon a time, we classified these as demons of sloth, but we learned that despair demons are something quite different. They are not the antithesis of justice or valor, but rather of hope. They form nightmares tearing away the foundations of self and purpose. When brought into the world, they are most attracted to places the downtrodden populate: alienages, slums, prisons, and the like. The miasma they spread can lead to extreme behavior. We look for a rash of unexplained suicides, men and women so filled with grief they lash out. The most intelligent of these creatures are to be feared, for they not only feed on despair, they understand its causes... and seek to bring it about. From the shadows they ruin lives, drinking the tears of those who have no idea the cause of their misery is not random chance.

—From a lecture by renowned hunter, Ser Hayward of the Templar Order

## **DRAGON**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

A fully mature adult female dragon is the high dragon: the great monster of legend, the rarest of all dragonkind. These dragons hollow out massive lairs for themselves, for they need the space to house their harem of drakes as well as their eggs and the dragonlings.

High dragons are seldom seen. They spend most of their time sleeping and mating, living off the prey their drakes bring back. But once every hundred years or so, the high dragon prepares for clutching by emerging from her lair and taking wing. She will fly far and wide, eating hundreds of animals—most often livestock—over a course of a few weeks and leaving smoldering devastation in her wake. She then returns to her lair to lay her eggs and will not appear in the skies again for another century.

## **DRAGONLING**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Newly hatched dragons are roughly the size of a deer and voraciously hungry. They live for a short time in their mother's lair before venturing out on their own. The slender, wingless creatures are born in vast numbers, as only a few survive to adulthood.

## **DRUFFALO**

They said the mages were coming to Redcliffe. We had to leave or be caught in the middle of their war. Guy said that it would be safe in Denerim. We left as soon as we could, but the little ones could barely walk a mile. I was about to turn back when Guy saw a herd of wild druffalo passing through the hills. He said, "How different can they be from horses? Or brontos?" Oh, but those horns. I was afraid and told Guy not to go, but he said we had no choice.

Guy said he would catch up to us, that we should continue on. We kissed goodbye, and he left. The children and I kept walking. One day passed. Two. Then three. And I knew in my heart he was dead.

I almost gave up. One morning, I was fetching water from the river when I thought, How easy it would be. They would just slip away. And I would just follow them. No more pain, no more fear. As I searched for my courage, I heard a crashing through the undergrowth. Bandits, I thought. Or a bear. But instead it was a giant beast, with pelt of blue-grey and gleaming black horns. And riding its muscled back was my Guy.

The druffalo was enormous but gentle as a doe. The children called her Bluebell.

I never told him what I almost came to that day.

—A diary found in a refugee tent in the Hinterlands

## **ENVY**

Envy demons are equal parts arrogance and cowardice. They isolate their victims to study them at length, seeking to become them. Once the demon is satisfied it knows its chosen subject, it takes on their form, leaving the poor soul to rot. Envy is never satisfied, however. The demon's bottomless cravings to be more—more powerful, more skilled, more inspired—cause it to seek fresh prey, leaving a trail of stolen identities behind.

This transition is when Envy is weakest, for it is vulnerable as it moves from body to body, slavishly copying the habits of the old identity until it finds another mortal to mimic. This is why I am writing this down. The man cowering before me wanted so badly to know what a demon thinks, wants, feels. He would document everything. Everything. He resists, a prisoner in his own home, but I already know this. I hunger for knowledge as he does. As I will.

—Scroll found on the body of "Scholar Esmar Treviento," by the templars who hunted him down.

## **FEAR**

Imagine, if you will, the most basic impulses possessed by mankind. Rage? Hunger? Perhaps the most primal is fear. Even the youngest of us understands this concept, and the raw power of it drives almost all else. A demon that preys upon fear is not the most sophisticated sort of creature. They mimic forms they see in the nightmares of mortals, hoping to elicit the response they crave. Some of these demons, however, stumble upon terrors that are much more deeply rooted: fears of the future, of chaos and disorder, of failure. This sort of demon develops a far more refined palate, attacking the psyche of their target rather than seeking a simple scare. Beware the fear demon that gorges upon the terror of not only a single nightmare but of a nation, for it will grow to such a size that it dominates the Fade.

—From a lecture by renowned templar, Ser Hayward

## **FENNEC**

My dearest and best father and lord,

You are strong and fair and obviously the most handsome arl in all of Ferelden. I want a fennec. Please please please get one for me. I saw a picture in a book that Brigid was carrying for Master Fergal and it is the fluffiest and most delightful creature I have ever seen.

The book says they live in the mountains and eat voles and repulsive things like that. When I get mine I will feed it only nice things. Like cake. And pearls. Please please please send someone to catch one. I really need one right now. Ruby wants company. It's not my fault Primmie and Bobble broke. Don't believe anything Eileen says.

Please? I promise I will spend no more gold on silks this month. It's too cold anyway.

Your most loving and obedient daughter, Habren

—A note from Habren Bryland to her father Leonas Bryland, arl of South Reach, written in 9:31 Dragon

Reports indicate that Habren did receive a white fox as a gift from her father, later that month. She promptly "lost" it down a well.

## **FOOT SOLDIER**

I have faced Antivan duelists, Fereldan Ash Warriors, and Fog Warrior skirmishers; when we strip away the titles and tricks, they are simply men who want to see their enemies dead, but need a hand free to manage it. Duelists favor a thinner target over the offensive strength of a main gauche. Ash Warriors need a hand to guide their mabari and a lighter weapon to take advantage of the openings their dogs leave, while Fog Warriors rely on stealth and speed too much to use a heavy shield.

When engaging with such an opponent, respect his speed. His hands and feet will move a great deal; ignore them. Watch his hips and shoulders instead. First deny what advantage he has in his allies or environment, unless you have trained equally in such matters. Once you control his weapon, overwhelm him. He has no shield, and you need not fear a second blade.

If forced to fight in such a manner, you must decide whether you will fight as a duelist, one-handed, or as a chevalier. If the former, drop your back leg away to tighten your center target, as you have no shield to cover your body or second weapon to bring into range; focus on a quick attack and give ground freely when you cannot find an advantage. If the latter, rely on your vambrace and gauntlet as a shield, and try to wrench your opponent's weapon away. My left arm bears the scars of such efforts, but my opponents bear worse. Better still: do not lose your shield at all, but battles are not a place of perfection.

—An excerpt from *A Meditation upon the Use of Blades*, by Swordmaster Massache de Jean-mien, required reading at the Academie des Chevaliers

## GHoul

Among the saddest legacies of the Fifth Blight are those poor souls who survived the darkspawn attacks across Ferelden only to succumb to the corruption of the blight itself. We have seen animals—birds, wolves, and even bears—corrupted into mindless ruinations of their former selves, but humans are by no means immune.

Those unfortunate victims not killed quickly by contact with darkspawn blood or disease become mad with fever. Their bodies lose their hair and become misshapen with sores; in their last lucid thoughts, many speak of hearing whispered words, or a song that no one else can catch.

It is vital that once victims begin hearing such things, they are put out of their misery quickly and mercifully. There are stories across Ferelden of these ghouls, maddened by the corruption of the blight, attacking their friends and spreading the corruption further. While it is likely that the sickness will eventually kill a ghoul, the dying strength of these poor creatures makes them nearly as great a danger as the darkspawn themselves.

They are no longer our friends, our family, or our countrymen. They are victims of the Blight, and must be given the same mercy Hessarian showed Andraste: a swift sword.

—An excerpt from *Marks of the Blight* by Sister Dorcas Guerrin

## GIANT

9:38 Dragon, 4th Harvestmere, continued musings on giants.

I assume they encroach due to disruption of their environs. Perhaps clawing darkspawn rerouted underground waters, altering the landscape of their prey. Food is seemingly their only motivator, and I have observed them eating meat, grains, leaves—nearly anything digestible, with no care or joy for taste or texture. So complete is their scavenging that "troll" might be a more academically accurate term, but I cannot blame farming folk for imposing an obvious descriptive. Yet are these giants merely beasts of destructive instinct?

I followed one specimen from the north, where they are somewhat more common (Tevinter breeding grounds? Warmth of seasons? Corruption of Silent Plains?). It followed waterways, preferring to float its bulk, but never did I see any sense in its eye, and never did it appear to plan beyond its immediate surroundings. But I remain intrigued, for they have *hands*, and that means the potential to raise them in praise. Throughout creation, upright beings with hands have been a sign of greater purpose. What lesson, Maker, in these strange children? I will approach tomorrow, in Your name.

*Excerpt annotated below in a different hand:*

Last entry in the letters of Brother Estomahr, his only recovered possession, likely because they were already flat. This archivist's recommendation: remind the neophytes that the tale of "Sister Dariel in the wolves' den" is metaphor.

## **GIANT SPIDER**

Maybe it's meant to be that size, and the regular ones are miniatures. I mean, a just and caring Maker would create them big to start. Then they can't hide. That's what bothers you, isn't it? The hiding? A big one like that, a good twelve-footer, sure, it's all fang and such, but you know where it is: dark places where the Veil is weak. You're never surprised by a giant one because you had to go to their "house." They're not on your face at night or in your boot in the morning. And if their web is thick as rigging, you don't have to worry about that hair on your neck. Or the baby ones on the breeze! You hate that, right? Hitting a cloud of them while you're riding? Could be a dozen, but you only see one, and you try to smash it, but when you look, the thing is gone, and now your arm itches right up to the shoulder, and that hair feels like it's back, but you can't unbuckle your helm because of the gauntlets, and now the hair in your ear is tingly. That's just about the worst, isn't it?

—Records of the Redcliffe guard, 14 Guardian 9:39. Witness recounting of provocation and resulting brawl. No jailings. Victim was being an arse.

## **GREAT BEAR**

The Orlesian great bear is so named because it is very large. Very large, indeed. Other names for it include the colorful "Old Man of the Forest" and the less-charming, but more clearly descriptive "Woodsman's Death." I am told that they are only found in remote parts of the Dales and that not even the nobility is willing to hunt for them, which makes them unique among the rare, giant, deadly, exotic fauna of Thedas: the only thing the Orlesians are truly afraid of.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar* by Brother Genitivi

## **GUARDSMAN**

A novice believes his sword of the utmost importance, and his shield there to show his family's colors. All scoff at such foolishness, but the older student thinking his shield a sign from the Maker that he cannot be struck down, is little wiser. A warrior coming away from battle with his shield dented and ripped may be praised for bravery. A warrior coming away with his shield merely scratched should be praised for skill.

Remember that every metal shield was beaten into shape, and may be beaten out of it. Even a blow that does not tear a hole drives impact through your arm and shoulder, where shock and pain will wear down even the strongest warrior. In a duel against a single opponent, you may seek a quick advantage in taking a blow directly to the shield in order to strike one in return; if you are protecting another, you may have no choice. In all other cases—against one opponent or many—it is better to hide the movement of your hips and shoulders behind your shield, forcing enemies to focus on it rather than on you.

This is also true when fighting an opponent so armed. Your goal is not the shield, but the man behind it. Circling or locking shields may gain you an advantageous position. Failing that, rain blows upon his defenses until he tires and his guard grows sloppy. If you are neither skilled enough to slip past him nor fit enough to wear him down, you will most likely die.

—An excerpt from *A Meditation upon the Use of Blades*, by Swordmaster Massache de Jean-mien, required reading at Academie des Chevaliers

## GURGUT

The Chant of Light claims that the Maker made us, and in our folly, we think ourselves blessed by such fact. If fact it is, for in my seeking, I find only base illusions, the better for being torn down and mocked as inadequate in the harsh light of reason. But as an exercise, let us say that it is true, that the Maker made us.

I have seen the gurgut basking in a slanted shaft of sunlight in the penumbral canyon, its putrescent tongue scenting the rancid air of the nameless and unnamable swamp, swishing the uncaring grass of the plains with its passage. It is some cousin of the wyvern, but bereft of the savage ferocity for which the latter is praised and hunted by Orlesian nobles. Its thick-lidded eyes stare witlessly, and its jaw hangs agape; it is not befuddled or frustrated by its want of reason, but perfectly content, a drooling idiot.

Its pallid belly stretches and distends, disdaining all reason, when it gorges itself upon its prey. I have seen such a lowly beast swallow a chevalier whole, the great and shining warrior taken by surprise in the tall grass, his silverite armor gleaming as the gurgut unhinged its jaw to draw the chevalier in. Across its belly, I saw the kicks and struggles grow frenzied and then still, and the idiot beast settled into a happy torpor. The ruined armor of the noble chevalier lay among the gurgut's spoor several days later.

Say that it is true, that the Maker made us. What if He made us for food? What if the grand purpose of our searching existence is to stretch the belly of a beast that slinks through the tall grass? What if there is a single unbending purpose and, in it, we are cattle to feed the witless leviathans that slumber unseen beneath us?

—From *An Anatomie of Various Terrible Beasts*, by Baron Havard-Pierre d'Amortisan

Master makes us check behind him for gurguts at all times. He also carries a very sharp stick.

—Footnote in the margins of the manuscript by the baron's scribe, Dunwich

## GURN

"We woke to a herd from nowhere, just standing around the camp. And it wasn't the first time. Getting water at an oasis, humming to myself, poof, there's one behind me. Talk to another rider for a few minutes, and there's two, just staring. I think they think talking is weird."

"I say shoo, dumb thing step on foot. I was not paid enough for hurt foot."



"Don't believe they stomp out fires. I set them all the time. Gurns don't show up."

"Harmless, so long as you don't treat them like cattle. Maybe farm-raised, but not wild. One time, we figured we'd saddle one. Maybe break it like a horse? Because that hump would bounce arrows real nice. Bad idea. Did *not* end well for Five-Toe. We used to call him Six-Toe, but not because of his feet. He got the horn something fierce."

"Milk the thing? Your mother."

—*Excerpts on the Gurn, Voices of Working Caravans, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## HALLA

The first thing you must understand about the halla is that they are not our servants. They are not our pets. They are our brothers and sisters. Remember that Ghilan'nain, the first halla and mother of them all, was once a huntress of the People. Without the halla, there would be no Dalish.

The second thing you must understand about the halla is that you cannot force a halla to do something against her will. I have heard tales of shemlen who come across herds and attempt to capture the halla, using ropes and bridles. Many shemlen have died impaled on horns as a result of this foolishness. Never forget that the halla once bore our knights into battle. The fierce blood of a warrior still runs through her veins and she would sooner fight to the death than demean herself. Like the Dalish, the halla are proud. A halla knows who she is, and will tolerate no being that tells her she is less.

How then do we harness them to the aravels? How do we ride them, or strap our packs to them? Well, how do you get a brother, a sister, or a friend to do you a favor? Simple, isn't it? You ask. If you have a halla's trust, she will give you her blessing. It's striking that humans never think to ask for a halla's friendship. But then, they are shems, and respect nothing.

—Adara, halla-tender of the Ralaferin clan, to her apprentice

## HORROR

Presley:

Whatever you do, don't get too close to those red templars with giant lumps on their backs. They can "spit" lyrium! You can actually see it growing before they fling it at you from their palms. One hit Henley in the face. (He'd have a mass of scars if I hadn't been there to heal the wounds as we plucked the stuff out.) We started to beat it down with some spells, and the air went sour. I felt sick, like you do when you're around too much raw lyrium. Lyra almost passed out. I grabbed her and ran. With luck, the thing found better prey than us.

I never loved the templars, but seeing them mutilated with lyrium doesn't give me any cheer. I don't understand why they'd inflict this on themselves.

Jahna

## HURLOCK

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Heaven by violence destroyed it. What was  
Golden and pure turned black.  
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The brightest of their age,  
Were no longer men, but monsters.

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—From *Ferelden: Folklore and History* by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

*Note: this entry is almost identical to the Darkspawn entry, with only slight phrasing changes*

## **HURLOCK ALPHA**

We brought it into Lord Varron's chamber, strong men on both sides holding the shackles. It had been stripped of weapons and beaten until we judged it barely capable of walking.

"I am told you were the lone survivor of the darkspawn from the mines," Lord Varron said to it. "A hurlock, as I understand it. I am told you spoke to my men when we captured you."

The thing spoke. "Told them they would die." Its voice was guttural and savage, like a beast trained to mimic the language of men, but we made out its words clearly enough.

"Yes," said Lord Varron. "You are smarter than your fellow beasts."

"Yes," said the beast.

"I would know more of this," said Lord Varron, "that we might understand your people and negotiate."

"You will," said the beast. "Your men beat me until their knuckles bled. My blood mixed with theirs. Soon they will hear the song. Soon their blood will burn, and I will lead them."

The men all looked to their hands, for the blood-sickness of the darkspawn was known to us. When they did, the beast wrenched the shackles from their grip. Then it was upon Lord Varron, holding him by the throat.

"There is no talk," it said. "No negotiation. You will die. Your world will die. Now you understand."

It snapped Lord Varron's neck and killed four men before we finally killed it.

—An excerpt from *The Blighted Codex*, a classified collection of studies on the darkspawn, held safely in the Imperial Library in Minrathous, available only to members of the Magisterium

## **HYENA**

The common hyena is a remarkable predator, flourishing in the harshest of conditions. Packs working in concert have sometimes taken down prey as formidable as a great bear. It's an incredible sight, but you should keep your distance because one of those beauties took down my bronto in under a minute.

—From *The Wilds of Thedas: Volume Two* by Stephan d'Eroin

## **LURKER**

You want to hunt lurkers? All right, then there's a few things you should know. First, they don't just live in caves. Some of the locals call them "cave lurkers," but I've seen them in the wastelands, in the marshes... really anywhere you think creatures shouldn't be able to live. Why? Because they eat almost anything and they eat rarely. When they're not hunting, they curl up in a sort of hibernation to conserve energy. If you can catch them in that state, consider yourself lucky. If not, you'll need to be on your toes. They're quiet when they want to be, you see. Hence the "lurk" part of their name. They hunt in packs. They *spit* poison. In fact, I've lost more than one fellow because a group of lurkers descended upon him while he took a piss in the bushes. They surround him, paralyze him, and then tear him to pieces—all without the rest of the camp knowing a single thing was going on, not twenty feet away.

—From *The Most Dangerous Things To Eat* by Pol Ageire Phriddlee

## **MABARI WAR HOUND**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Dogs are an essential part of Fereldan culture, and no dog is more prized than the mabari. The breed is as old as myth, said to have been bred from the wolves who served Dane. Prized for their intelligence and loyalty, these dogs are more than mere weapons or status symbols: The hounds choose their masters, and pair with them for life. To be the master of a mabari anywhere in Ferelden is to be recognized instantly as a person of worth.

The mabari are an essential part of Fereldan military strategy. Trained hounds can easily pull knights from horseback or break lines of pikemen, and the sight and sound of a wave of war dogs, howling and snarling, has been known to cause panic among even the most hardened infantry soldiers.

—From *Ferelden: Folklore and History* by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **MAGE**

Mages are not demons or monsters. They are men and women like any other, except for their skill with a weapon few are given. I say this to be clear that I do not think all mages should be put to the sword, as some believe. However, every mage walks through life with a blade drawn and ready, whether they wish it or not. Those who insist that mages are harmless must ask how the apostates who fling fire when the Templars attack learned how to kill so well. We in the Academie know well that no skill comes without practice.

If you fight a mage, you must close with him, regardless of the danger, or risk being overwhelmed. A mage's strike rarely hits with the force of a trained chevalier's blade, but often carries unnatural energies: fire that boils a man inside his armor, lightning that steals the strength from his limbs, and so forth. To hold back is to give him time to alter the battlefield to his advantage in some fashion, whether he summons a wall of ice, a demonic ally, or magical flames to strengthen the blades of his guards. We know that the warrior who controls the battlefield is most often the victor. You must keep him reacting to you and continue your attack.

Mages rarely wear heavy armor, but their magic can shield them as effectively as our own plate. I have said many times to watch the hips and arms of your opponent instead of the hands, but with the mage, the hands and arms may be your only clue. If his body is protected from your blade, attempt to tangle his arms or bear him to the ground. It is not elegant or honorable, but there is no honor when fighting a mage. There is only survival.

*—An excerpt from A Meditation upon the Use of Blades by Swordmaster Massache de Jean-mien, required reading at the Academie des Chevaliers*

## NIGHTMARE

My friends, we accept as fact that more powerful and intelligent demons select more complex aspects of our reality to observe and interact with. A demon of pride may gravitate to the corrupt hubris of nobles, the bloodthirsty arrogance of soldiers, or sadly, the blind confidence of mages. A demon of desire may focus on lust, greed, or even the desperate wishes of those with no recourse in the waking world.

Whether demons are naturally inclined to such specificity, or made so by observing a confluence of specific events in our world, is a subject of much debate, and not the question my experiment would answer. Instead, I turn to the question of *fear*.

We think of fear demons as lesser creatures, powerful but simple, like those common beasts of rage or hunger. But fear has many faces, from the absurd phobias of the pampered nobility to the very real threats of magic, demons, dragons, and perhaps especially, the Blight.

What event has shaped the course of human history more than the Blights? Had the First Blight not weakened it, the Tevinter Imperium would have crushed Andraste's rebellion; we would have no Ferelden, no Circles, and indeed, no Chantry as we know it. The Blight is unequaled as a force of devastation and terror, hated and feared by peasant and king alike from the northern hills of the Anderfels to the southern reaches of the Korcari Wilds.

I know of nothing else that inspires such universal and specific fear. Dragons and demons, yes, but both have found respect and fascination in cultures across Thedas. Only the Blight is an unadulterated source of horror. If there exists a demon of fear who has shaped itself into a more intelligent, more specific mold, it will be a demon focusing on fear of the Blight.

This is the experiment I undertake. By the time you read this, my friends, I will be asleep, traveling through the Fade to find such a creature. If I am correct, it will yield an unparalleled source of information on the history of our world; wisdom hidden since the time of ancient Tevinter. I have instructed the scribes to write quickly upon my return. I will have much to impart.

*—A letter found beside the sleeping body of Senior Enchanter Jessimerre, her last known communication before her subsequent possession and then death, along with twelve mages, nine templars, and uncounted apprentices and Tranquil, at the hands of Knight-Captain Hewlgarre*

## **NUG**

I was sure before the Blight they were a whole lot more rare. Should ask a Warden about that, if killing Archdemons leaves nugs all over. And the poor things don't seem built for anywhere. I mean, they feed on anything, but they blister in the desert and freeze in the snow, and they're easier to track than your own arse. Everything eats them (except me, the hands put me off), yet they thrive. Randy bastards outpace every tooth and claw.

Anyway, my point is, the ones around the farm are so inbred, they're five colors and can't stop peeing. I'm selling them in the capital as "elusive eastern bunny-pigs." What did Father say about idiots with deep pockets?

—*Excerpt from the private letters of "Captain" Byrne, lap-nug dealer, produced in evidence after seven claims of Water Terrors and death following bites in the Garden District, 9:36*

## **PHOENIX**

Orlesians believe the phoenix to be a herald of woe, perhaps because the creatures frequent inhospitable places where sane travelers fear to tread. It may also be because they belch a sort of sulfurous gas that reeks of rotten eggs and ancient peat bog, and flocks of the beasts have a pervasive odor of death about them. Orlesians are not always so metaphorical as they like us to believe.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## **POISON SPIDER**

The dawning of our understanding was violent and terrifying, made all the more so because of the mistaken awe and glory it replaced. We had walked into the cavern on the word of the shaman, and we were not disappointed. Row upon row, an army of dusty figures: men and women, pack animals, and what appeared to be staged tableaux of scavengers, as though silent commentary. We imagined it the toy battalion of a mad king, funded by mountains of gold. Or the subjects of some cruel empress, sealed away with her upon her death. It was, to all of us, a wondrous sight, and yet another example of how we mortals are pretenders to creation and immortality.

And then we asked ourselves, why are they all looking upward? And the answer was upon us.

A sound from above, and then legs, fangs, and poison. I do not know the number—less than my nightmares bear, but still too many. Only quick fires from our Circle apprentice allowed us to retreat. But not all. Several of our number were paralyzed in the instant, as must have been the case for so many before. When I close my eyes, I see them—new recruits to that silent army, frozen in "praise" of a moving ceiling, waiting to be hollowed.

—*Excerpted from We Need Not Demons: Our Dangerous World, a collection of natural horrors and wonders, edited by Philliam, a Bard!*

## **PRIDE DEMON**

The most powerful demons yet encountered are the pride demons, perhaps because they, among all their kind, most resemble men; as clever and manipulative as the desire demon, with a penchant for cruel irony that is almost human. While the demons of desire largely engage in the bribery of mortals, pride will use mortals' own best nature against them. Clever men outwit themselves. Strong men crush themselves. Humble men forget themselves. Jealous men fear themselves. They turn corruption and ruin into an art.

—*From Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons by Enchanter Mirdromel*

## **PROWLER**

When faced directly, an opponent wearing only light armor and wielding only short blades is little challenge to a trained chevalier. However, not all fights are duels. If you assume that your enemy shares your values, you will die. The only rule most warriors agree upon is that it is better not to die, and a Grey Warden or an emperor's bodyguard may contest even that accepted wisdom.

A skirmisher will strike by surprise, relying upon allies to draw your attention. In a great battle with many troops on each side, you must assume that the enemy has such skirmishers in its ranks. When fighting in formation, you have no excuse to break your guard and pursue a perceived advantage; doing so will leave you or those depending upon you unguarded. When fighting alone, you must avoid strikes that would weaken your guard.

Once you know such an enemy opposes you, be vigilant and remember that you wear more armor than he does. He will hide; do not enter the shadows, where he is strongest, to pursue him. He will harass you at range; do not take the bait he offers. A chevalier deserves a better death than a poisoned dagger in his unprotected armpit, and such is the death of those who grow impatient while chasing enemies they deem beneath their honor.

Be calm, be methodical, and wait for your opponent to yield to the fear of your blade and shield. When he does, he will convince himself that he can attack you directly, that his blades are fast enough to slip past your shield. Then he will move, and then you may kill him.

—*An excerpt from A Meditation upon the Use of Blades by Swordmaster Massache de Jean-mien, required reading at the Academie des Chevaliers*

## **QUILLBACK**

Those men of learning who claim dominion over the cold, weirdly angled laws of this world would deny that unutterable savagery of nature, conjuring their knowledge as a man in repose draws a blanket over himself, somnolent, to distract from cognizant mind the lethargic caliginosity of this world. Such mendacity is made manifest in the quillback.

Its hooked beak describes a smile that makes mock of the laws of man and Maker, and in the sagging folds of its rough and squamous hide lies no elegant simplicity. But look upon its dorsal ridge for the proof, if logic be your refuge, for in the ebon spines that jut uncaringly from its back, no man of learning can fail to see the cold and twisted spires of the Black City itself.

What Maker would give mock to our ebullient transgressions by marking His domicile into the flesh of this repugnant eater of flesh, this scavenger of wastes and deserts? What message can any man read in this carrion feeder's decrepit spines than that the Golden City of which we dream is Black, always Black, the swollen infection poisoned from time beyond the knowledge of our insignificant minds, awaiting only our unheeding touch to afflict us with understanding of our true place in this vast, uncaring world?

—*From An Anatomie of Various Terrible Beasts, by Baron Havard-Pierre d'Amortisan*

Master means that it's pointy.

—*Footnote in the margins of the manuscript by the baron's scribe, Dunwich*

## **RAGE DEMON**

**SAME AS IN DAO**

Encountered in the Fade, the true form of a rage demon is a frightening sight: a thing of pure fire, its body seemingly made of amorphous lava, its eyes two pinpricks of baleful light radiating from its core. The abilities of such a demon center on the fire it generates. It burns those who come near, and the most powerful are able to lash out with bolts of fire and even firestorms that can affect entire areas.

Fortunately, even powerful rage demons are less intelligent than other varieties. Their tactics are simple: attack an enemy on sight with as much force as possible until they perish. Some rage demons carry over their heat-based abilities into possessed hosts; otherwise one rarely sees their true form outside the Fade unless mages specifically summon one to do their bidding.

*-Transcript of a lecture given by Vheren, Templar-Commander of Tantervale, 6:86 Steel*

## **RAM**

The ram is a marvelous creature. Its wool makes the best lining for winter coats this side of the mountains. The horns and bones can be crushed into powder and mixed with the soil for a healthy crop, or charred and ground into ink powder. The hide makes a good cover in a window against the winds. You can burn the dung in a pinch. Melt down its fat for candles. I haven't even mentioned the meat! With a full-grown ram, you could make a stew big enough for a village and have enough left over for a week.

So there'll be no more complaining about "being paid in sheep" for your work during the harvest. With that ram and a few ewes, you can start your own flock. You're lucky to have them handed to you instead of needing to go and tame a wild one. Listen to your father for once: take care of those animals, and they'll take care of you.

*—Letter from a Fereldan farmer to his son*

## **RED TEMPLAR ARCHERS**

Take aim. Red lyrium isn't the weak stuff they fed you all your life. The song is deeper. It's got a will of its own. Tame it, and it will do things the Chantry's instructors never dreamed of.

Listen. Focus on the arrow in your hand. Pour power into it when it leaves the bow. That strength can fly across a battlefield and punch a hole through the thickest armor.

Soon you won't need to stop to hear it. Practice, and the song will always be in your blood.

And fire.

*—Red templar archer, instructing new recruits starting to take red lyrium*

## **RED TEMPLAR FOOT SOLDIER**

Do you remember when I was tracking some mages hiding in the mountains? I found those red templar heretics attacking them; the templars turned on me as well. The soldiers looked like normal men and women, but they rained down blows so hard it numbed my arm through my shield. It took me three minutes to kill just one, and he only stopped when I cut off his head! That's when I saw their leader: a huge, misshapen knight. He made a gesture and a streak of light streamed from him into one of the soldiers. Red lyrium burst through the soldier's back; he changed into some kind of *thing* that made the mages all sick.

I still don't know how we survived. These mages are children and frightened scholars, hiding from the war after their Circles fell. Still, if one of them wasn't a healer, I'd have lost my sword arm.

*—Letter from a templar knight who left the Order, to her husband*

## **RED TEMPLAR GUARDSMAN**

Jers:

When I saw templars marching up the road, my heart was glad. I asked if they'd come to stop the rebel mages who burned down the farms, but one growled it was none of our business. That was when I noticed his eyes were red. Not like he'd had a long night at the inn, but really, truly red. Vernie announced these were the bann's lands, and it was his business who was in them. The templar bastard cut him down without a word! A dozen of us against three of them, and we never got a strike past their shields. They're stronger than any man I've known. The templars swung full tower shields of metal like they weighed nothing.

We had to run. Tell the bann to seal the castle gates against any visiting templars.

*—Letter from a guardsman employed by Bann Harkwold*

## **RED TEMPLAR KNIGHT**

At first, I was only suspicious. Some of my brothers and sisters were acting strangely, spending time in the company of those who only days earlier we hadn't even given a passing glance. I would enter a room, and they would all be sitting together, talking in hushed whispers... and then they would stop altogether. I felt my intrusion keenly and withdrew, wondering how it was that I was not included in this group. Was there dissension in the templar ranks? Were they speaking of rebellion against the Seekers of Truth? I could not fathom it, so I kept my peace. Then I saw the lyrium vials Ser Randall kept in his gear. It was accidental, as he had them wrapped in dark cloth and immediately covered them when I entered his quarters, but I did. They were red, not blue. Again, I held my tongue.

Now I wish I had not. More and more of my fellow templars stop talking when I walk into rooms. There is little talk of continuing our hunt for the rebel mages. There is little talk of anything at all. I see the red vials they wear openly around their necks, no longer hidden. They are stronger than the rest of us, and it suddenly seems as if proper blue lyrium has become rare. "Shortages," they tell me. I saw Ser Randall this morning, and his eyes were red. For the first time, I am wondering if I should abandon my post and flee the Order for good.

*—From the journal of Ser Caitlin of the Order of Templars, 9:41 Dragon*

## **RED TEMPLARS**

The red templars are exactly what they sound like. They are templars who have been fed red lyrium, and the results are precisely what happened to Meredith in Kirkwall: it improves their powers, grants new ones, and increases their strength beyond what a human body should bear. Over time, red lyrium will turn them into beasts. Crystals will grow inside their bodies; even, I am told, sprouting through their heads. In the end, the red templars will be lost, mind and soul, to roaring madness.

Did the Chantry push our templars too far, or was this break inevitable? Maker help us, I pray it was not us who drove our good knights into becoming monsters.

*—Mother Celeres, of the Grand Cathedral, in a letter to a friend*

## **REVENANT**

**SAME AS IN DAO**



An entire unit of men, all slain by one creature. I didn't believe it at first, your Perfection, but it appears that this is so. We have a survivor, and while at first I thought his rantings pure exaggeration... it appears to be no simple skeleton. The descriptions of the creature's abilities were eerily similar to those our brothers at Marnas Pell encountered almost an age ago: men pulled through the air to skewer themselves on the creature's blade, and attacks so quick that it was able to assault multiple opponents at once. No, your Perfection, what we have here is indeed a revenant and nothing less.

—*From a letter to Divine Amara III, 5:71 Exalted.*

A revenant is a corpse possessed by a demon of pride or of desire... making it amongst the most powerful possessed opponents that one can face. Many possess spells, but most are armed and armored and prefer the use of their martial talents. They are weak against physical attacks but regenerate quickly, and commonly use telekinesis to pull opponents into melee range should they try to flee. Revenants also have the ability to strike multiple opponents surrounding them. Stay at range if possible and strike quickly—that is the only way to take such a creature down.

## SHADE

## SAME AS IN DAO

"It has often been suggested that the only way for a demon to affect the world of the living is by possessing a living (or once living) body, but this is not always true. Indeed, a shade is one such creature: a demon in its true form that has adapted to affect the world around it.

My hypothesis is this: we already know that many demons become confused when they pass through the Veil into our world. They are unable to tell the living from the dead, the very static nature of our universe being confusing to a creature that is accustomed to a physicality defined entirely by emotion and memory. Most demons seek to immediately seize upon anything they perceive as life, jealously attempting to possess it—but what of those that do not? What of those that encounter no life, or fail to possess a body? What of those that are more cautious by their nature?

These demons watch. They lurk. They envy.

In time, such a demon will learn to drain energy from the psyche of those it encounters, just as it did in the Fade. Once it has drained enough, it has the power to manifest and will forever after be known as a shade. Such a creature spurns possession. It instead floats as a shadow across its piece of land, preying upon the psyche of any who cross its path. Perhaps it believes itself still in the Fade? There is evidence to believe that is so.

## SHADOW

The specimen was fresh, killed only a few hours ago by a troop of chevaliers patrolling outside the city. Their captain told me, in a strained and sickly voice, that a group of red templars had descended on his men and massacred them. I gave him my condolences, but he seemed not to hear me. The one on my slab was fast, the captain muttered, much nimbler than its bulk suggested.

Imagine my nausea when I opened up the creature and saw that red lyrium had fused to the bones, overgrown its lungs, and spread like a fungus into the brain. As I watched, the red crystal pulsed and spread the smallest fraction of an inch deeper into the flesh of the corpse. Blood drained out of the surrounding tissue, *as if the lyrium itself were feeding on it.*

I have ordered my assistants to wear masks and gloves while burning the body. Posterity forgive me, I want no truck with the forces in that thing.

—*From the diary of Professor Auffret, a naturalist studying at the University of Val Royeaux*

## SNOUFLEUR

Picked up someone new. Called himself Marchand and offered three Orlee royals to travel alongside to Celestine. Betting both knees he saw the bows and thought we'd be protection. Didn't think we might turn the weapons on him ourselves. Maker's grapes, by the time we hit Lydes, I wanted to. Little shit couldn't stop bragging about how he was going to be a tutor for some high lord's son. Everything out of his mouth was "Milord Silk-Knickers this" and "Milord Silk-Knickers that."

Showed us a little painting of Milord Silk-Knickers and his lady. Milord I wanted to punch, but the rump on milady—I'd like to tutor that.

And then going through the Dales, we see one of those long-nosed pigs with the stump legs. It's just crossing the highway, dragging its stupid belly along the ground, as they do. Bless the Maker and all, but He was deep in His holy golden cups the day He made that thing.

Anyway, I turn to Lockey, and I say, "Hey, it's one of them snufflers."

Marchand starts in with his giggle. Lockey and me, we look at him.

"Snuffler!" he says, like he just caught me naked with his lady mother. "Non—tu dois dire 'snoufleur.'" Because "snuffler" just isn't fancy enough for Orlee. So I say it like he does: snoooooou-fleeeeur. Can't keep a straight face. Marchand goes red like a virgin with skirts blown up. And good old Lockey, he just shoots the thing with an arrow while it's snuffling its way across the road.

"Now it's dead, and we call it dead," he says. That was that.

—*From the hunting log of Kerr of West Hill, dated 17 Solace*

## SPELLBINDER

I confess myself troubled by the rise in mages binding multiple spirits to a single object. Among the Mortalitasi, interacting with spirits is a serious, even intimate undertaking. These "spellbinders," as they call themselves, bind many simple spirits, usually to books or other easily compartmentalized objects set with runes, and they have stripped the interaction with spirits of its importance, reducing it to a mere mechanical exercise.

That such magic is useful to the spellbinder, I do not argue. Although the power contained in these objects is difficult to focus, the diffused magic can easily distribute energy across a broad area, augmenting the mage's allies. The spellbinders insist that no individual spirit is capable of breaking their bindings, and that the spirits cannot cooperate well enough to effect an escape together. Furthermore, they maintain that because the bindings are all tied to the spellbinder personally, there is no risk of these enchanted books falling into the wrong hands.

Still, the books are in *their* hands, and I *am* concerned. Although the practice has spread across most of Thedas by now, it seems to have originated in Tevinter. These mages bind spirits and demons too readily, and it is not natural for spirits to remain in this world for any great length of time. Our Maker placed the Veil between our world and the Fade for a reason, after all. Who are we to second-guess His wishes?

Perhaps I have grown more reverent in my old age.

—An excerpt from *Life Among the Dead*, by Enchanter Rodomonte van Heigl, senior member of the Mortalitasi

## TERROR

We heard their screams from miles away, out in the darkness where we couldn't see anything. Once, back when I worked on my uncle's farmhold in the Bannorn, there was a calf that fell into a gulch and broke its leg. I should have run for help, but I thought I could drag it back to safety on my own. I wasn't strong enough, however, and each time I tried to pull, its leg ... the calf's screaming haunts me to this day, and that's what I heard out there. Like that calf was coming for me, come to rip off my leg ever so slowly so I knew what it felt like.

But we all heard something different, you see? One of the others said he'd run into darkspawn at Ostagar, and the scream he heard was from something called a "shriek." Another said it was a dragon roar, just like the beast that burned his family. That's when I knew what was out there was a demon. Something that wasn't just looking to make us afraid—it wanted us gibbering in terror. It wanted us running for our lives.

And we did. I couldn't rightly tell you what it even looked like. There was something in the shadows, and even though we were ready when it let out that howl, I turned and ran. I couldn't even control myself. My bowels turned into water, I dropped my sword, and I took off. It was only later when I realized I was separated from the others, and that there were more of those demons out there, hungry for more of my panicked tears.

—*From a report given by Haren, soldier of the Fereldan army, 9:15 Dragon*

## TUSKET

The curving tusks protruding from the snout are present in both males and females of the species. Rarely used in combat, the upper tusks play an important part in mate selection. It's believed that tuskets choose prospective mates based not only on the size, but also on the curve and even slight color variation found in another's tusks. Considering tuskets bond for life, careful mate selection is crucial to the continued success of the herd. Bonded tuskets have been seen gently clicking their tusks together as a sign of affection.

The role of the tusket's signature ornamentation in the mating process led to an unfortunate rumor that their tusks could increase virility in *other* species. Although usually docile, tuskets will defend themselves if cornered (or if someone attempts to saw off part of their anatomy). It's said Baron Vandermine lost three servants this way.

—*From Observed Behaviors in the Common Tusket by Tilda Adere*

## VARGHEST

The varghest is now known to be a distant relative of wyverns and dragons, but in ancient times, it was believed to be a spirit manifest in the world. Ciriane legend says that the varghest hunts those who have committed great wrongs against their own kin, and when the creature finds its quarry, it drags the guilty party to the gods for judgment. This is perhaps due to the beast's hunting habits: varghest prefer to bring prey still living to their nests to feed their young.

—*From A Study of the Southern Draconids by Frederic of Serault, published in the University of Orlais*

## **WRAITH**

Like wisps, wraiths are sometimes thought to be the remains of spirits or demons that have been destroyed. They cannot shape the Fade around themselves, nor are they capable of mimicking forms they see in the minds of dreamers as many weaker spirits do. Instead, they are the scavengers of the Fade, dwelling in the shadows of stronger beings, feeding on scraps of thought and emotion.

—*From Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons by Enchanter Mirdromel*

## **WYVERN**

## **SAME AS IN DAI**

The wyvern—like its relative the dragon—has nearly been hunted to extinction. Wealthy Orlesians are particularly fond of the wyvern chase, although their servants and dogs take the risks while the nobleman merely accept the praise.

It is the venom that makes the creature so valuable. It's used in potion-making, alchemy, and the production of a rare and potent liquor called aquae lucidius. The minuscule quantity of the venom remaining in the aquae after distillation leads to a unique hallucinatory effect.

Testimonies from a few of those fortunate enough to sample the costly concoction:

"I feel confused but happy!"

"It was as though my soul took wing and floated about my head."

"I had a vision of my great-grandmother and found it oddly arousing."

"I can see through time!"

## **GROUPS**

### **BEN-HASSRATH REEDUCATORS**

Detainee has already confessed to resisting arrest when Ben-Hassrath came for his coworker; circumstantial evidence suggests he was part of group planning to become Tal-Vashoth. Coworker died attempting to escape. Detainee requires evaluation for possible reintroduction into society instead of qamek treatment. He is being denied sleep and given restricted portions of food and water, as noted below.

Day 1: Detainee restrained, given water but no food. Detainee requested to use latrine. Was told cleanliness part of the Qun, and he had decided to attack the Qun. Detainee asked why he murdered Ben-Hassrath, responded that he had only defended himself. Detainee eventually urinated on floor.

Day 2: Detainee given light food and water, told he could use the latrine if he could demonstrate ability to follow the Qun. Detainee asked why he murdered Ben-Hassrath, answered that he fought them to protect coworker, did not murder them. Detainee told that lying is unacceptable under the Qun. Detainee observed reeducators eating and drinking and engaging in conversation about daily activities while detainee stood.

Day 3: Detainee refused food and water. Was taken outside and shown qalaba rooting through garbage for food. Detainee told he is similar to qalaba, as neither he nor it follows the Qun. Also told qalaba is better than detainee, as qalaba is too stupid to follow the Qun, while detainee could follow it, but made conscious choice to refuse. Detainee asked why he murdered Ben-Hassrath. Detainee answered that he was angry and trying to protect his friend.

Day 4: Detainee shown drawings of dead tamassrans and children, told these were drawings of people in Seheron killed by Tal-Vashoth. Detainee told all Tal-Vashoth do this, and if detainee wishes to be Tal-Vashoth, he must go to education center and kill tamassrans now. Detainee became visibly upset. Detainee asked why he murdered Ben-Hassrath, answered that he was wrong and lied to by his coworker.

Day 5: Detainee continues to show remorse. Is visibly happy when reminded that Qun offers place for all people. Detainee washed, given new clothes and food, allowed to sleep. Upon waking, detainee asked whether he would prefer to be Tal-Vashoth or Qunari. Detainee answered that he will remain Qunari. Detainee released to road crew for simple labor and will be watched by observers on team.

—*Excerpt from a Ben-Hassrath reeducation report smuggled out of Par Vollen*

## **CHANTRY HIERARCHY**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

The Divine is the titular head of the Chantry, although since the schism split the Imperial Chantry into its own faction there are now in fact two Divines at any one time. One Divine, informally called the White Divine, is a woman housed in the Grand Cathedral in Val Royeaux. The other, known as the Black Divine, is a man housed in the Argent Spire in Minrathous.

Neither Divine recognizes the existence of the other, and the informal names are considered sacrilegious. No matter the gender, a Divine is addressed as "Most Holy" or "Your Perfection."

Beneath the rank of Divine is the grand cleric. Each grand cleric presides over numerous chantries and represents the highest religious authority for their region. They travel to Val Royeaux when the College of Clerics convenes, but otherwise remain where they are assigned. All grand clerics are addressed as "Your Grace."

Beneath the grand cleric is the mother (or, in the Imperial Chantry, the father). If a mother is in charge of a particular chantry, "revered" is appended to her title. These are the priests responsible for administering to the spiritual well-being of their flock. A mother or revered mother is addressed as "Your Reverence."

Brothers and sisters form the rank and file of the Chantry and consist of three main groups: affirmed, initiates, and clerics. Affirmed are the lay-brethren of the Chantry, those regular folk who have turned to the Chantry for succor. Often they are people who have led a difficult or irreligious life and have chosen to go into seclusion, or even orphans and similar unfortunates who were raised into Chantry life. The affirmed take care of the chantry and are in turn afforded a life of quiet contemplation, no questions asked.

Only those folk who take vows become initiates. These are men and women in training, whether in academic knowledge or the martial skills of a warrior. All initiates receive an academic education, although only those who seek to become templars learn how to fight in addition.

Clerics are the true academics of the Chantry, those men and women who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of knowledge. They are often found in chantry archives, sages presiding over libraries of books and arcane knowledge. The most senior of these clerics, placed in charge of such archives, are given the title "elder," although such a rank is still beneath that of mother. All other brothers and sisters are addressed simply by noting their title before their name, such as "Brother Genitivi."

—*From a guide for ambassadors from Rivain.*

## **COUNCIL OF HERALDS**

Legally, the titles and heraldry of Orlesian nobility were banned. But even the power of an emperor pales in comparison to thousands of years of culture and tradition. The oldest families of Orlais trace their lineage back to Ciriane war chiefs; many have ties to the great houses of Antiva, Rivain, and the Anderfels. They would not give up their legacy, but because their titles were not legal, they were mired in a mess of conflicting claims of birthright and inheritance, further compounded by the myriad new titles Emperor Reville handed out as gifts to his supporters.

When Judicael I took the throne, he inherited the political turmoil left behind by his father, Reville the Mad, which had cost his brother, Etienne II, his life. In a bid to win over the nobles of his court, one of Emperor Judicael's first acts was the establishment of the Council of Heraldry. The Council would be the final arbiter over all disputes involving titles—even having the power to overrule the word of the emperor on such matters.

—*From An Examination of Orlesian Government by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **FOUNDING OF THE CHANTRY**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Kordillus Drakon, king of the city-state of Orlais, was a man of uncommon ambition. In the year -15 Ancient, the young king began construction of a great temple dedicated to the Maker, and declared that by its completion he would not only have united the warring city-states of the south, he would have brought Andrastian belief to the world.

In -3 Ancient, the temple was completed. There, in its heart, Drakon knelt before the eternal flame of Andraste and was crowned ruler of the Empire of Orlais. His first act as Emperor: To declare the Chantry as the established Andrastian religion of the Empire.

It took three years and several hundred votes before Olessa of Montsimmard was elected to lead the new Chantry. Upon her coronation as Divine, she took the name Justinia, in honor of the disciple who recorded Andraste's songs. In that moment, the ancient era ended and the Divine Age began.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **QUNARI DREADNOUGHTS**

You think it's hard to fight the Qunari on land? You've never had to face them on open water. No wind, sails hanging limp, but those giant bastards keep coming. We'd always mocked the Qunari for their mindless servitude, but we saw their discipline as they steadily closed, their oars in perfect form even as our galley slaves flagged and faltered.

They pulled alongside, their great ship twice the length of ours, and we drew steel, ready for them to board. Instead, a great series of blasts rocked the waves, spewing smoke everywhere. Iron balls the size of a man's head flew as though fired from a bow. They ripped through hull, mast, and sailor alike; our ship came apart like a child's toy. I'd have died in the water had a trading ship not come by to investigate the wreckage.

That was the day I learned that although the Imperium might win the war against the Qunari on land, it will never defeat them at sea. It was also the day I decided to try life as a merchant's guard.

—*An excerpt from Exiles from the Empire, by Gregorias Pepigit*

## **QUNARI TAMASSRANS**

Nanny Goodwin lay on the hard stones of the Kirkwall docks until the sailors left with her purse. As she struggled to her feet, a large grey hand reached down to help her. It was one of the Qunari, the great horned giants who had come to live in the city.

"I thank you," said Nanny Goodwin hesitantly, looking for her satchel. "I did not know the docks were so dangerous, or I would have asked one of Lord G\_\_\_'s guards to accompany me as I bought healing herbs for the children."

"You are a tamassran," said the Qunari. "Under the Qun, no sailor would accost you. Why are you here?"

"I am but Lord G\_\_\_'s nanny," Nanny Goodwin said, "and Lord G\_\_\_ did not believe me when I told him that the children needed healing herbs, so I was forced to buy them myself."

"Under the Qun," said the Qunari, "tamassrans are trusted and listened to when caring for the children, and any healing herbs they needed would be provided. Why did Lord G\_\_\_ not attend your words?"

"He is a noble," Nanny Goodwin said, "and I am merely a servant who cares for his children." She shifted her shawl to hide the bruises the sailors had given her, as well as the bruises Lord G\_\_\_ himself had left.

"Under the Qun," said the Qunari, "all are equal, and no tamassran thinks herself a *mere* anything."

Nanny Goodwin bid the Qunari good day and returned to Hightown with much to think about.

—An excerpt from *The Lies of the Nobles, the Truth of the Qun*, author unknown

## **BEN-HASSRATH**

Suggesting that all Ben-Hassrath are spies is like assuming that all craftsmen are carpenters. The Ben-Hassrath form a significant portion of the Qunari priesthood, tending to a variety of tasks within Qunari society.

In Qunari cities, Ben-Hassrath serve as something akin to a town guard, investigating anything that disrupts the orderly function of the city. Ben-Hassrath reeducators treat criminals and rebels against the Qun, determining whether they must destroy the subject's mind using a poison known as qamek. Those they can rehabilitate through treatment and education are later transferred to simple work details.

In contested or war-ridden areas, Ben-Hassrath coordinate with the Qunari military to track the dreaded Tal-Vashoth rebels, a function similar to bounty hunting. Outside Qunari borders, Ben-Hassrath agents primarily observe and report. While this may seem underhanded, it is no more than most nations do with their own spies, and the Qunari are (perhaps rightly, in retrospect) extremely concerned with the danger our culture's comparatively liberated mages pose.

Our assumption that all Ben-Hassrath are malicious spies bent on bringing Orlais into the Qun has no basis in fact. It is simple prejudice against a race whose appearance unsettles us, compounded by a guilty conscience at seeing how many peasants, especially elves, prefer life under the Qun to life under our empress. The Qunari are a society of people; people with a different culture and different values, but people nevertheless, as complex and nuanced as Orlais.

—An excerpt from *The Lion and the Bull: Racial Bias and Oversimplification of Qunari Societal Roles in the Orlesian Court*, author unknown, published by the University of Orlais

## REBEL MAGES

Whereas the Circle was established not merely to protect the world from mages, but also to allow mages to practice their art safely and without fear, and,

Whereas under Lord Seeker Lambert's command, the templars sworn to protect all people—including mages—from the harmful effects of magic, have instead persecuted mages with such biased judgment as to worsen the problems they were meant to mitigate, and,

Whereas the Rite of Tranquility intended as a tool of last resort to stop uncontrolled mages from hurting themselves or others, has instead been used for punitive and political purposes to silence dissent and inhibit civilized discourse, and,

Whereas Andraste herself intended the relationship between mage and templar to be one of practitioner and protector, not prisoner and jailer, and this contract has been broken, leaving mages in fear for their lives from those sworn to protect them,

*Now, therefore, the Circle of Magi declares the following:*

We, the mages of Ferelden and Orlais, do hereby dissolve the Circles and renounce our sworn submission to the Order of the Templars, effective immediately.

We reiterate Andraste's assertion that magic was made to serve man, not rule over him, and state unequivocally that we will use our abilities only to defend ourselves from those who would see us relinquish our lives and freedoms under the presumption of guilt for crimes we have not committed.

We condemn those practitioners of magic who, through illness of mind or understandable but misguided anger at those who oppressed them, would use their Maker-given powers to threaten innocent lives, and we pledge to aid any legitimate and impartial government in bringing these lawless *apostates* to justice.

We look earnestly to a future of cooperation between all peoples of Thedas, free from persecution and prejudice, and hope to build a better world alongside all who approach us with friendship instead of fear.

Yours in service to Andraste and the Maker,

The Free Mages of Thedas

*—A leaflet distributed in towns and villages across Orlais and Ferelden*

## SURFACE DWARVES

## SAME AS IN DAI

In Orzammar, dwarven society is divided into rigid castes with houses that compete for power and prestige. But all that is discarded when a dwarf abandons the Stone for the surface. Under the open sky, everyone is equal. Or so the story goes.

The truth is that thousands of years of tradition are not so easily tossed aside. Even though surface dwarves are officially stripped of their caste, many maintain a hierarchy among themselves along the old caste lines. Formerly noble houses are accorded more respect than casteless brands who come up in search of opportunity. The poorest "noble" dwarf on the surface looks upon the rich "lower caste" dwarves with contempt.

Upper-class surface dwarf society is roughly divided into two camps: *kaldas*, who insist on maintaining caste and rank (typically those from the Noble or Merchant Caste families) and *ascendants*, who believe in leaving Orzammar's traditions underground and embracing life in the sunlit world.



Maintaining some tie to Orzammar was seen for generations as the only lifeline for surface dwarves. Bringing surface goods to their kin underground and lyrium and metals to the surface was not only the most lucrative means of making a living, but also a sort of sacred duty, as many surface dwarves willingly accepted exile and the loss of their caste to better serve their house or patron. In recent years, many surface dwarves, particularly ascendants, have branched out. They started banks, mercenary companies, and overland trade caravans. They became investors and speculators in purely surface trade. These new industries have proven tremendous sources of wealth, but are looked down upon by their more conservative kin.

For less-affluent surface dwarves, association with a powerful kalna can open many doors. They can get credit with dwarven merchants and are offered work opportunities by the powerful Dwarven Merchants' Guild more readily, sometimes, than more qualified but less-connected individuals.

—*From The Dowager's Field Guide to Good Society, by Lady Alcyone*

## **TAL-VASHOTH**

Our wagon was traveling from the port village to one of the larger cities when they fell upon us. They shrieked like beasts. Their facial markings were savage and nonsensical, their brutal weapons chipped and uncared for, and they stank of unwashed sweat as they charged.

The Tal-Vashoth snarled as they fought. One of the workers was bitten. The guards cut them down with blades until they fled, then finished the rest with arrows. We followed their trail into the forest and found their camp: there were women, hunched and cowering as no woman should be, filthy children, thin and underfed, and corpses. I will always remember the corpses.

There were more Tal-Vashoth as well, and the guards cut them down. As they disarmed the last Tal-Vashoth, one guard asked him why he lived like this, why he acted in this manner. The Tal-Vashoth looked him in the eye and said, "I deny the Qun." Then he threw himself upon the guard's blade.

I have questioned the Qun. I believe many of us have, although we do not admit it to each other. But when I saw that rage in the Tal-Vashoth warrior's eyes—when I saw the horrible savagery that the Qun alone holds in check—I knew where I belonged. I am not a perfect Qunari, but I know my place and my purpose. I am content.

—*Excerpt from an interview with a Qunari worker in Kirkwall*

## **TEVINTER SOCIETY**

To those outside of the Tevinter Imperium it is easy to imagine a society filled with mages and elven slaves and little else. In truth, there are three different Tevinters, each of them a world completely separated from the others. There are the mages, the land's nobility, completely obsessed with competing for supremacy with each other—almost to the exclusion of paying any heed to the nation's enemies, such as the Qunari. The well-bred altus sneer at the laetans, who in turn sneer at the praeteri. They vie for dominance in the Magisterium, where factions shift and flow on a daily basis with deadly consequences, requiring every family to put on a veneer of perfect citizenship or face scandal and censure.

Then there are the so-called soporati, the "sleepers." These are the non-magical citizens who vastly outnumber the mages, yet are beholden to their whims. Many are resentful of this status, plotting in secret, even as they secretly hope their children will possess magical talent—an enticing lure, since the talent could conceivably show up in anyone, even a slave. It would be easy to forget that Tevinter possesses a massive class of publicans, the civil servants and leaders of the Legionnaires. It has an enormous merchant class, enough teeming poor to drown any other nation in Thedas, and the shadowy thieves called "praesumptor" who are practically treated with respect.

And then there are the slaves. One would think they, at least, see each other as equals, but it is not so. The divide between the freed liberati, those who act as personal servants to magisters, those who work on farms and factories, and the "servus publicus" who do all the tasks proper citizens will not—it is all but insurmountable, but perhaps in emulation of those who own them, Imperial slaves will connive and scheme to try anyhow. Outsiders might see it as futile, but to Tevinter citizens, their nation's social classes are the most mutable and rewarding of merit in all of Thedas.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## **THE AVVARS - ON THE AVVAR PEOPLES**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Driven across the Frostbacks in ancient times, the Alamarri tribesmen split into three groups: one settled the Ferelden Valley, one was pushed into the Korcari Wilds, and the last returned to the mountains. Modern Fereldans bear little resemblance to their Alamarri ancestors, and the Chasind remember few of their traditions, but the Avvars have changed little throughout the ages.

Like the Chasind, the Avvars are not a united people. Each tribe fends for itself and is beholden only to its thane. They still follow their own gods: Korth the Mountain-Father, Hakkon Wintersbreath, The Lady of the Skies, as well as dozens of animal gods never named to outsiders.

Nothing lasts in the mountains. Wind and rain eventually eat away the strongest holds. Valleys that were arable one generation are locked in year-round ice the next. Game is constantly on the move. Even among themselves, the Avvar make no absolute promises: they wed by a tradition in which the groom struggles to untie a tightly knotted rope while the bride sings a hymn to one of the gods. However many knots he has undone by the time her song ends is the number of years she will spend with him. Lowlanders often forget that there is no such thing as a permanent alliance in the Frostbacks.

—*From Ferelden: Folklore and History by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **THE CARTA**

## **SAME AS IN DAI**

The casteless dwarves of Orzammar have few prospects. Consigned to live in a crumbling ruin on the social and economic fringes of the mighty dwarven capital, most resort to begging, prostitution, or crime.

Just as all rivers eventually join the sea, all casteless who turn to crime eventually become part of the Carta. The Hero of Ferelden decimated the ranks of this ancient gang while rallying the dwarves to join in the battle against the Archdemon Urthemiel. Unable to recover the power they once had in Orzammar, they turned their attention "topside," using groups of surface-dwelling dwarves to smuggle weapons, lyrium, surface luxuries, people, and other goods between Orzammar and human lands.

Despite the flow of business, its members are still desperate and violent. With no strong leader to rein in their excesses, they have little sense of dwarven honor, and freely break their word, double-cross allies, and renege on deals.

—*From The Stone and Her Children: Dwarves of the Dragon Age, by Brother Genitivi*

## THE CIRCLE OF MAGI

The Circle of Magi was established centuries ago to protect us, and to protect those without magic from the things we might do. No man in his right mind would disagree that these are noble goals. I refuse to believe that the Chantry intended the injustice and oppression we suffered in the intervening years. Segregation of mages from non-mages within templar-guarded compounds was the best—possibly the only—option available.

We have recently had to face the stark reality that the system failed us. The Circle of Magi in Ferelden's Kinloch Hold was one of the most liberally run, and even there we saw sedition and dissent, resulting in a failed revolt that nearly destroyed the entire tower. Perhaps stringency could work where leniency failed? I would present Kirkwall's Gallows as evidence against such thinking. Knight-Commander Meredith's vice-grip on the Circle in her care backfired, leaving us where we are now.

If the Circles, no matter how they are managed, do not—perhaps *cannot*—function as intended, what is next? There are no easy answers. The events of recent years have forced me to reexamine my views on freedom. As Aequitarians, we have always advocated self-control and cooperation with the Chantry, but this approach may no longer serve. I must consider that our Libertarian brothers and sisters had the right of it all along. Look at the strife and chaos that now consumes our world. Fighting for independence, for a better system, may not improve our situation. But it cannot make it any worse.

—*Letter from Senior Enchanter Vormann Quine of Cumberland to a colleague, dated 9:39 Dragon*

## THE DALISH ELVES

## SAME AS IN DAO

*If the Inquisitor is a Dalish Elf...*

In time, the human empires will crumble. We have seen it happen countless times. Until then, we wait, we keep to the wild border lands, we raise halla and build aravels and present a moving target to the humans around us. We try to keep hold of the old ways, to relearn what was forgotten.

We call to the ancient gods, although they do not answer and have not heard us since before the fall of Arlathan, so that one day they might remember us: Elgar'n'an the Eldest of the Sun and He Who Overthrew His Father, Mythal the Protector, Fen'Harel the Dread Wolf, Andruil the Huntress, Falon'Din the Friend of the Dead, Dirthamen the Keeper of Secrets, Ghilan'nain the Mother of Halla, June the Master of Crafts, and Sylaise the Hearthkeeper.

We gather every ten years for the Arlathvhen, to retell the ancient stories and keep them alive. For when the human kingdoms are gone, we must be ready to teach the others what it means to be elves.

—*Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

*If the Inquisitor is not a Dalish Elf...*

I took the road north from Val Royeaux toward Nevarra with a merchant caravan. A scant two days past the Orlesian border, we were beset by bandits. They struck without warning from the cover of the trees, hammering our wagons with arrows, killing most of the caravan guards instantly. The few who survived the arrow storm drew their blades and charged into the trees after our attackers. We heard screams muffled by the forest, and then nothing more of those men.

After a long silence, the bandits appeared. Elves covered in tattoos and dressed in hides, they looted all the supplies and valuables they could carry from the merchants and disappeared back into the trees.

These, I was informed later, were the Dalish, the wild elves who lurk in the wilderness on the fringes of settled lands, preying upon travelers and isolated farmers. These wild elves have reverted to the worship of their false gods and are rumored to practice their own form of magic, rejecting all human society.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **THE DWARVEN MERCHANTS GUILD**

The Dwarven Merchants Guild is, without question, the most powerful surface dwarf institution. It has become what the Assembly is to the people of Orzammar: a prestigious club that everyone wants to belong to and the surest means to obtain power and fortune. The guild's leaders can always trace their lineage back to Noble or Merchant Caste houses in Orzammar. The guild regulates trade between the dwarven city and the surface and so quietly controls the entire economy of Orzammar, though the ruling king or Assembly would never admit it.

The guild is heavily conservative, but has started to get more of the ascendants—especially banking families—into its membership, which has caused no small amount of infighting in the guild.

—*From The Dowager's Field Guide to Good Society by Lady Alcyone*

## **THE FRIENDS OF RED JENNY**

The Friends? Don't poke them. It's tempting—because what else can you do—but don't. Never know what you'll get. Because Red Jenny, she's been around a long time, she's everywhere, and she hits hard or she hits light, but the choosing isn't up to you. You want someone to get their desserts, save your coppers for a moral Crow and know what you're getting.

—*Notes from Ser Keiter, a traveling merchant, to his son, Erbal*

They're a distraction, whichever they are. Keeps people busy and the lords edgy. And with the assaults not having any bearing, we've been paid to strike at guessed rivals several times now. Bards should pay "her" a commission.

—*Anonymous*

My father went after her once. You want to lose your friends fast? Just say you're tracking hers. He found a report that said she was killed in Nevarra. Everyone in that command, to a man: dead or hobbled or somehow lost their claims during the winter following. Know when that was written? Fifty-two years ago! I'll take a witch over whatever she is. Let her pick at the nobles; I think it's nature.

—*Recommendations of Captain Varn, private militiaman contracted in Denerim*

How's it work? You tell me how to tell. Ask for something bad to happen, eventually something does. Did she do it? Does it matter? Either way, you think you had a piece. Maybe that's enough.

—*Interview at a Montsimnard tavern, no name given*

I know it was her! Keys do not simply go missing! And the horses, I suppose they were loosed quite by accident? And the fires that swept the southern quarter, the flooding in my summer home, the drop in the price of trade goods that just happened to coincide with my plans to sell my investments, the cholera I suffered last season, the weather that is inclement whenever I'm traveling. You cannot tell me all these things were mere happenstance. Perhaps your disbelief is her doing as well. You're dismissed. Everyone is dismissed.

—*The scattered notes of Bann Markal*

## THE GREY WARDENS

The Blight had ravaged the land for months; the armies of the great kings amassed for one last stand. As the sun burst through the clouds that boiled and churned in the dark sky, it illuminated a vast seething horde of darkspawn with the Archdemon at its head.

It was then—when courage seemed to fail and all lost to death and despair—that the Grey Wardens came.

They arrived with the beating of wings like mighty war drums and stood before the armies of men. The Grey Wardens, grim and fearless, marched forth, ever between men and the encroaching darkspawn. They formed a shield of their own bodies and held that line until the Archdemon was dead and the last darkspawn lay trampled in the dirt. Then, demanding neither reward nor recognition for their sacrifice, the Grey Wardens departed. When the clouds rolled back and the sun shone full upon the blighted ground, the great kings knew that they had lost no men, that none of their blood had been spilled.

This is a tale about no battle the Grey Wardens have fought and yet about them all. They have always defended us from the darkspawn, taking losses so we do not have to.

—*Adaptation of a Grey Warden legend*

The tale outlined above is widely told, although subject to regional variations. Free Marchers might substitute "great kings" for titles bestowed in their given city states. In Ferelden, the implied army of Wardens is sometimes replaced with two—representative of the national heroes who fought and defeated the Archdemon at Denerim during the Fifth Blight.

The "beating of wings" is a reference to the griffons the Wardens are said to have ridden into battle. Although griffons went extinct long before the recent Blight, they still appear in numerous stories; sometimes serving as a metaphor for the Wardens' unrestrained courage, but also employed to please an eager audience.

—*From Tales of the Wardens by Sister Manon*

## THE IMPERIAL CHANTRY

## SAME AS IN DAO

There are those who would tell you that the Chantry is the same everywhere as it is here, that the Divine in Val Royeaux reigns supreme in the eyes of the Maker and that this fact is unquestioned throughout Thedas.

Do not believe it.

The Maker's second commandment, "Magic must serve man, not rule over him," never held the same meaning within the ancient Tevinter Imperium as it did elsewhere. The Chantry there interpreted the rule as meaning that mages should never control the minds of other men, and that otherwise their magic should benefit the rulers of men as much as possible. When the clerics of Tevinter altered the Chant of Light to reflect this interpretation of the commandment, the Divine in Val Royeaux ordered the clerics to revert to the original Chant. They refused, claiming corruption within Val Royeaux, an argument that grew until, in 4:87 Towers, the Chantry in Tevinter elected its own "legitimate and uncorrupted" Divine Valhail—who was not only male, but also happened to be one of the most prominent members of the Tevinter Circle of the Magi. This "Black Divine" was reviled outside Tevinter, his existence an offense to the Chantry in Val Royeaux. After four Exalted Marches to dislodge these "rebels," all that the Chantry in Val Royeaux accomplished was to cement the separation.

While most aspects of the Imperial Chantry's teachings are the same, prohibitions against magic have been weakened, and male priests have become more prevalent. The Circle of the Magi today rules Tevinter directly, ever since the Archon Nomaran was elected in 7:34 Storm directly from the ranks of the enchanter, to great applause from the public. He dispensed with the old rules forbidding mages from taking part in politics, and within a century, the true rulers within the various imperial houses—the mages—took their places openly within the government. The Imperial Divine is now always drawn from the ranks of the first enchanter and operates as Divine and Grand Enchanter both.

This is utter heresy to any member of the Chantry outside of Tevinter, a return to the days of the magisters, which brought the Blights down upon us. But it exists, and even though we have left the Tevinter Imperium to the mercies of the dread Qunari, still they have endured. Further confrontation between the Black Divine and our so-called "White Divine" is inevitable.

—*From Edicts of the Black Divine, by Father David of Qarinus, 8:11 Blessed*

## THE MAGISTERIUM

There is a mistaken impression outside the Tevinter Imperium that a 'magister' is simply a mage, and the mere act of being a mage is all that is required to be among the ruling class—a misperception aided, no doubt, by some Tevinter mages claiming the title outside their homeland to take advantage of its reputation. In truth, being a magister requires one hold a seat in the Magisterium, the upper house of the Imperial Senate. This is the body that makes laws, and which chooses the new Archon if there is no approved heir. The Senate's lower house, the Publicanum, consists of elected officials, but it has no true power and is considered a bureaucratic body.

Magisters, meanwhile, come from the ranks of the Circle of Magi and the Imperial Chantry, but most hold their seats by virtue of an Archon having granted it to their family long ago. It is not technically required for a magister to be a mage... indeed, after the Transfiguration that saw the Old Gods abandoned and Andrastianism embraced, most were not. Since the Towers Age, however, non-mages in the Magisterium have slowly been weeded out. A true magister is thus a figure of real power in Tevinter. All other mages serve at their pleasure, and any mage not of proper lineage has no influence outside of that which personal wealth and talent provide.

—*From The Ancient North by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## THE ORDER OF FIERY PROMISE

Consider the time in which the original Inquisition existed. The First Blight had devastated the world, tearing down the mighty Tevinter Imperium and leaving nothing in its place. Just as there were several cults of Andraste vying to become the true inheritor of the prophet's faith, there was more than one group claiming to represent the one true path to deliver the world from chaos. The Order of Fiery Promise was one of these, a band of men and women who decreed that not only was the end of the world nigh, it was *necessary*.

Thedas must be cleansed with fire and reborn as a paradise. This they solemnly promised; they devoted themselves utterly to seeing this come about. Whether they ever drew closer to their goal is unknown.

The Inquisition eventually crushed these "Promisers" during a battle only recorded as the "Cleansing of Churneau." The cult reappeared in the early Divine Age, claiming to take up the Inquisition's mantle after it had transformed into the Seekers of Truth, leading to Chantry hunts that did not see the Promisers eliminated again until the Exalted Age.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## THE ORLESIAN CIVIL WAR

When Grand Duke Gaspard attacked Empress Celene of Orlais in an attempt to claim the throne, we assumed business across the country would suffer greatly. To counter propaganda suggesting she was overly tolerant of the elves, Celene was drawn to crush an elven uprising in Halamshiral, and Gaspard's attack there destroyed her forces and cut her off from Val Royeaux. She escaped back to the Orlesian capital (with a hundred mad stories explaining how), at which point we started closing down the family shops, expecting Gaspard's army to carve a bloody path through the Heartlands and up north toward cities loyal to Celene.

Instead, the humans have been downright reasonable. We made a killing on furs and silver in Val Royeaux as Gaspard's hold on southern Orlais cut off incoming trade goods from Ferelden. The nobles in Montfort and Val Chevin also bought up violets as though their touch killed darkspawn; apparently, Celene declared that wearing purple flowers was a way for humans to show their loyalty to her.

In Ferelden, half of the cities would be on fire; but in Orlais, the nobles make jokes, and the merchants just keep peddling their wares while Gaspard and Celene's armies clash in the Dales. The only people really suffering are the peasants, but then, that's true enough anywhere.

Send extra guards on the next shipment, but save the lyrium for Ferelden. The family's doing good business here as it is.

—*From a letter from Dernal Harrick, dwarven merchant, to his family in Ostwick*

## THE PENTAGHASTS

Allow me to correct you on one important point, my friend: the Pentaghasts *are* Nevarra. Without us, this nation would either still be one of the motley city-states that comprise the Free Marches, or under Orlesian control. More likely the latter, as only Nevarra's strength holds back the empire's expansion... and by that I refer to the brilliance of Pentaghast generals and the influence of Pentaghast coin.

I find it interesting that you mention dragon-hunting as our only significant trait. You do understand, I hope, that dragons disappeared centuries ago, only recently returning at the beginning of this age? Some of our clan have taken up the old trade out of nostalgia—my cousin Ferdinand the most prominent among them—but those days are largely done. Today there are fourteen branches of the family—eighteen, if one counts our relations among the Van Markhams—each consisting of multiple families and twisting bloodlines connecting us to almost every major house across Thedas.

I am fully aware that King Markus wanes in health, and neither he nor Ferdinand have children, but make no mistake: there will be another Pentaghast sitting on the Nevarran throne, and that man or woman will lead us into a prosperous future. There will be no civil war.

—*From a letter by Baroness Alia Pentaghast, Dragon 9:38*

## THE QUNARI

## SAME AS IN DAI

The people of the Qun are, perhaps, the least-understood group in Thedas. The Qunari Wars were brutal, but so was the Chantry Schism. So was the fall of the Imperium. Some of this misunderstanding is an accident of nature: the race we call "Qunari" are formidable. Nature has given them fierce horns and strange eyes, and the ignorant look on them and see monsters.

Some is an accident of language: few among the Qun's people speak the common tongue, and fewer speak it well. In a culture that strives for mastery, to have only a passable degree of skill is humiliating indeed, and so they often keep quiet among foreigners, out of shame.

But much of it is a result of the culture itself. The Qunari view their whole society as a single creature: a living entity whose health and well-being is the responsibility of all. Each individual is only a tiny part of the whole, a drop of blood in its veins. Important not for itself, but for what it is to the whole creature. Because of this, the Qunari most outsiders meet belong to the army, which the Qun regards as if it were the physical body: arms, legs, eyes and ears, the things a creature needs in order to interact with the world. One cannot get to know a person solely by studying his hand or his foot, and so one cannot truly "meet" the Qunari until one has visited their cities. That is where their mind and soul dwell.

In Seheron and Par Vollen, one can truly see the Qunari in their entirety. There, the unification of the Qunari into a single being is most evident. Workers, whom the Qun calls the mind, produce everything the Qunari require. The soul, the priesthood, seeks a greater understanding of the self, the world, and exhorts the body and mind to continually strive for perfection. The body serves as the go-between for the mind, the soul, and the world. Everyone and everything has a place, decided by the Qun, in which they work for the good of the whole. It is a life of certainty, of equality, if not individuality.

*—From the writings of the seer of Kont-arr, 8:41 Blessed*

## **THE SEEKERS OF TRUTH**

The Seekers of Truth aren't templars... not precisely. Once they were called the Inquisition, but upon the signing of the Nevarran Accord, they gave up that name and became the Order they are now, standing over us templars as watchers and enforcers. I honestly cannot claim to know more than that. I don't know how many Seekers there are—a few dozen? If they have a base of operations, I don't know where it is. Certainly not with any of us. The only time we'll see one is when a Seeker is summoned, perhaps in response to a complaint by one of the first enchanter. They'll investigate the problem, and if it turns out a templar did something they don't like, he's disciplined. Severely. Without question. Even the knight-commander bows to their will. If a Seeker of Truth shows up, you know every last templar is sweating, hoping their gaze doesn't fall on him.

Of course, that changed when the Nevarran Accord was broken. I'm told the Chantry broke it, but it was Lord Seeker Lambert who made the announcement. He said the Seekers of Truth and the Templar Order were going to hunt rebel mages, no matter what the Divine commanded. I didn't know he had that authority, that he could just say we would do this and everyone would follow... but we did. I never thought of it that way, but the Seekers have always been our guides. Now they've led us into war.

*—From a letter written by Ser Jonathan Perry, 9:40 Dragon*

## **THE SENTINEL ELVES**

*If the Inquisitor sided with the templars...*

Elves continue to attack. Our strongest wards, our most cunning traps only slow them down, yet they panic. Corypheus warned us that we would face the Sentinels of Mythal's temple, and now we are at their doorstep. We have slain enough elves that they must know we will rip the Well of Sorrows from them. We must be the first true threat they have encountered since they began their long watch, thousands of years ago.



I expected these Sentinels to fight as the Dalish do, but they are a magnitude more dangerous than their cousins. There is a magic about these elves I have felt in only one other thing: the orb Corypheus carries with him. The flavor of their power is all too similar. The Master must have suspicions, but has not shared them with me, promising all understanding when I become the Vessel for the knowledge in the temple. I believe him, but he has not yet forbidden me from making inquiries of my own. Burn this once you are done, and prepare for instructions one week hence. By then I will know enough to set you on the correct path.

*—Encrypted letter from Calpernia to her top operative, sent out before the battle of the Arbor Wilds. Intercepted and decrypted by Leliana's spies.*

*If the Inquisitor sided with the mages...*

Elves ambushed us just when the Master said they would, five days into the Wilds. They move faster than any elf I've seen, and they know the forest like they were born of it. The ones who escape melt back into the shadows. They're strong, and they know no fear; every damn elf we cut down fights 'til the last.

The attacks have slowed since we doubled the watch. We've killed enough to make them pause. Corypheus says the elves call themselves "Sentinels." We were going over the plan for the final assault on their temple, and he told me the elves we're fighting are the last "true" priests of their Old Gods. Before I could stop myself, I asked how he knew. I felt like a damn fool the moment the words left my mouth, but the Master just looked at me, then opened his hand. A second later, that magic orb was floating over it.

He told me it was elven, that events made him believe it came to him for a purpose. The Master turned, and I thought I was dismissed, but his voice stopped me before I left. He said, solemn as I've ever known him, that there were many things he couldn't tell me, that he hid them so I would stay focused on the Well. He said that while I'll sacrifice much, there will be no secrets once I've become the Vessel.

I left then, but I can't stop thinking about it. I'd swear there was regret in those last words. Wish I knew exactly what for.

*—Charred excerpt from a logbook kept by Samson, recovered by Inquisition spies from the wreckage of a red templar camp in the Arbor Wilds. The rest of the book is too blackened by fire to make out.*

## **THE TEMPLAR ORDER: END OF AN ACCORD**

Most Holy,

The Seekers are well aware of the part you played in the rebellion. You call me to the Grand Cathedral in the middle of the night on "urgent" business only to speak of trivial matters? And then, when I return to the White Spire, I discover chaos... and one of your agents in the midst of the apostates.

Did you think I would not notice? Did you believe yourself above repercussions for such acts? It was a dark day when the Chantry placed such an incapable woman upon the Sunburst Throne. I will not stay idle and watch you destroy what ages of tradition and righteousness have built.

In the twentieth year of the Divine Age, the Nevarran Accord was signed. The Seekers of Truth lowered our banner and agreed to serve as the Chantry's right hand, and together we created the Circle of Magi. With the Circle no more, I hereby declare the Accord null and void. Neither the Seekers of Truth nor the Templar Order recognize Chantry authority, and instead we will perform the Maker's work as it was meant to be done, as we see fit.

Signed this day on the fortieth year of the Dragon Age,

Lord Seeker Lambert van Reeves

*—Letter sent to Divine Justinia from the former Lord Seeker*

## TEMPLARS

## SAME AS IN DAO

Often portrayed as stoic and grim, the Order of Templars was created as the martial arm of the Chantry. Armed with the ability to dispel and resist magic in addition to their formidable combat talents, the templars are uniquely qualified to act as both a foil for apostates—mages who refuse to submit to the authority of the Circle—and a first line of defense against the dark powers of blood mages and abominations.

While mages often resent the templars as symbols of the Chantry's control over magic, the people of Thedas see them as saviors and holy warriors, champions of all that is good, armed with piety enough to protect the world from the ravages of foul magic. In reality, the Chantry's militant arm looks first for skilled warriors with unshakable faith in the Maker, with a flawless moral center as a secondary concern. Templars must carry out their duty with an emotional distance, and the Order of Templars prefers soldiers with religious fervor and absolute loyalty over paragons of virtue who might question orders when it comes time to make difficult choices.

The templars' power derives from the substance lyrium, a mineral believed to be the raw element of creation. While mages use lyrium in their arcane spells and rituals, templars ingest the primordial mineral to enhance their abilities to resist and dispel magic. Lyrium use is regulated by the Chantry, but some templars suffer from lyrium addiction, the effects of which include paranoia, obsession, and dementia. Templars knowingly submit themselves to this "treatment" in the service of the Order and the Maker.

It is this sense of ruthless piety that most frightens mages when they draw the templars' attention: When the templars are sent to eliminate a possible blood mage, there is no reasoning with them, and if the templars are prepared, the mage's magic is all but useless. Driven by their faith, the templars are one of the most feared and respected forces in Thedas.

*—From Patterns Within Form by Halden, First Enchanter of Starkhaven, 8:80 Blessed.*

## THE VENATORI

I know what you have been telling the others. You mouth the word "cult," and repeat lies the Chantry has been spewing at us for a thousand years. Look around you, my friend. See what mighty Tevinter is today: a once-proud nation brought low, barely able to hold itself against the oxmen. We neutered our mages at the behest of a foreign religion, exalted their false Maker, and became the laughing stock of all Thedas. Now we have the chance to reclaim what is rightly ours, but only if we act. We cannot wait to see which way the wind is blowing—we must *make* it blow.

The Venatori are hunters, recruited in secret over several years. We will descend with deadly purpose, to spill the blood of the south and make it ripe for conquest; when we return to our homeland, it will be as victors, with a new god as our patron. Then the cowards who refused to aid us will know their mistake in full.

—*Reported as evidence to the Vyrantium Circle of Magi, Dragon 9:40*

## **VASHOTH: THE GREY ONES**

Why do you keep asking me about the Qun? I'm not Qunari. I met a human once who made shoes. Why don't you tell me about shoe-making?

You've met more Qunari than I have. I've lived my whole life here in Nevarra.

No, I'm not Tal-Vashoth. Tal-Vashoth are rebels. You can't rebel against something you've never seen. I'm *Vashoth*.

No, I didn't use the same word. It's "Vashoth," not "Tal-Vashoth." Nobody told me humans couldn't hear speech.

No.

No.

I hate humans.

—*Unused portion of a transcript from an interview with Issala, a Qunari goat herder, found in the notes of Brother Genitivi*

## **HISTORY**

### **A CHANT FOR THE DEPARTED**

The Light shall lead her safely  
Through the paths of this world, and into the next.  
For she who trusts in the Maker, fire is her water.  
As the moth sees light and goes toward flame,  
She should see fire and go towards Light.  
The Veil holds no uncertainty for her,  
And she will know no fear of death, for the Maker  
Shall be her beacon and her shield, her foundation and her sword.

—*Transfigurations 10:1, often sung by mourners as they light candles*

### **A JOURNAL ON DWARVEN RUINS**

I didn't think the Hissing Wastes would be so lively, but there are hunters prowling the dunes. One of them showed me a hidden watering hole, and some fine spots to camp. I asked her about the old thaig, but she didn't even know what a "thaig" was until I explained dwarves had more cities than just Orzammar. She clearly thinks I'm barmy, coming all the way here to study the ruins. Polite about it, though.

The statues here were chiseled thousands of years ago, I'm sure of it. Either these people loved dwarven architecture, or the "commonly known fact" that dwarves never built cities on the surface is wrong. *This* is the stuff world-famous treaties are made of.

The inscriptions on the ruins are all in the old tongue. (Thank you, Grandmother, for teaching this ungrateful brat Old Dwarven.) The writing talks about "the sad parting from the Stone." Hundreds of years ago, several houses left their thaigs to settle here under one leader. They were running from a war, or running so there wouldn't be a war? I read and re-read the pillars until the light faded, but I know I'm missing something.

I'll go back tomorrow. I wish Felicity's sister hadn't talked her out of joining me. I could use an extra pair of eyes to keep watch at night.

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It's a Paragon. The man who lead the people here, who built this city, was master smith Paragon Fairel.

Legend says he died in the Deep Roads during a war between two thaigs who used his runework to build fantastic weapons of destruction. If he escaped up here, that means the records are wrong, or someone a thousand years ago tried to pretty-up the truth about his leaving. The most talented Shaper of Runes in dwarven history, escaping with his entire house to the surface—now *that* will fluff some beards in the Shaperate!

My father said our old family business used to be near an archway that was part of Fairel's Paragon statue. I wish I could have shown him this. He's the one who wanted to believe our ancestors in the Stone were still guiding us. Be nice to think it were true, old man.

---

I was tracing heraldry etched on a wall when I noticed pictures of weapons with winged lizards worked into the decoration. I spent the rest of the day translating the inscriptions. This verse was apparently passed down through Fairel's house, through his father to his father's father and so on for hundred of generations:

"From the Stone, have no fear of anything,  
but the stone-less sky betrays with wings of flame.  
If the surface must be breached, if there is no other way,  
bring weapons against the urtok, and heed their screams."

"Urtok" means "dragon." Why was it part of an ancient crest? Why were these dwarves so worried about a monster they'd never see that they worked it into their weapons?

This place becomes more impossible each day.

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A few days ago, I turned from a statue to find a human woman staring at me. She didn't react when I screamed, or when I ran around picking up my dropped notes. When I asked who she was and how long she'd been standing there, she quoted some verses of the Chant at me, polite as you please. I offered her some water, but she shook her head, pointed to the east, and said "Blessed are those with fortitude, for they persevere in the name of the Maker." When I glanced back, she was gone.

The poor woman must be touched. She seemed harmless, but I don't know how she gets around so quickly in this heat.

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I have just discovered Fairel's tomb in the east. I've never seen something so sodding grand in all my life. I won't write an essay on this place, I'll write a book. Several books. I will be rich and bring a whole expedition here and the University of Orlais will beg me to lecture when I'm not presenting my findings to the empress herself over dinner.

That is, if I can get inside the Fairel's tomb. The doors are sealed tight. It looks like there's a keyhole, but none of the ruins I've seen have anything even hinting at a key. On the way out, I saw I'd missed a few bones on the ground. They were still bloody. Sheer luck that whatever lives there wasn't home when I arrived.

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A group of human mages have moved in. They're digging out buildings deep in the sand. When I tried to approach them, one of the workers dragged me aside and whispered to me to leave before "the Venatori" caught me. I wasn't going to listen until he showed me his cuts. These mages have been bleeding him for their spells!

I ran. I wish there were something I could do. What do these "Venatori" want? the buildings I saw looked like tombs in the ancient style. Fairel was a master runesmith. Maybe the city revered his work enough to seal it away...

---

Not a good day. Sandstorm blew in for hours, and I was almost bitten in half by one of those terrible spiders. Making the fire nice and bright tonight. Wound's wrapped up, but it feels hot to the touch. Dizzy. Rest a few days?

Discovered one interesting thing in all the mess—the name of this place. I puzzled it from some carvings on the doors of Fairel's tomb. Kal Repartha: "A place where we may meet in peace."

I hope they found peace.

## **A STUDY OF THE FIFTH BLIGHT, VOL. ONE**

## **SAME AS IN DAIL**

While some of my contemporaries dispute whether the Fifth Blight was a true Blight or merely a large darkspawn resurgence, historians agree that it began in the swamps of the Korcari Wilds on the southeastern border of Ferelden in the year 9:30 Dragon.

King Cailan Theirin was swift in responding to the threat, gathering the royal army, every Grey Warden in his country, and sending a call for aid to the Ferelden nobility. The assembled armies laid a trap in the ruins of Ostagar, hoping to crush the force before it reached civilization. But they failed.

Darkspawn overran the defenders of Ostagar and decimated the king and his army. They continued their advance into Ferelden unopposed. Only two Grey Wardens managed to escape the slaughter. And somehow, they came into possession of ancient treaties, which compelled the races of men to join arms against the massing horde.

*Broken Circle...*

*If the mages were recruited:* The surviving Wardens made their way to Kinloch Hold, home of the Ferelden Circle, and conscripted the mages.

*If the Templars were recruited:* The surviving Wardens made their way to Kinloch Hold, and assisted in annulling the Fereldan Circle of Magi, which had fallen to abominations. With the end of that tragic disaster, the Wardens conscripted the templars.

*Nature of the Beast...*

*If the Dalish Elves were recruited:* In desperation to find more allies, the Wardens journeyed into the Brecilian Forest, seeking the Dalish. The elves, too, joined the growing army.

*If the Werewolves were recruited:* In desperation to find more allies, the Wardens journeyed into the Brecilian Forest, seeking the Dalish. The elves failed to uphold their treaty, but another answered in their place: Werewolves, straight out of Fereldan folktales, joined the growing army.

*Supported Paragon and Fate of The Anvil of the Void...*

*If the Anvil of the Void is destroyed:* Into the Deep Roads the surviving Wardens went, searching for Paragon Branka in hopes she could settle the unrest in Orzammar and unite the dwarves in the battle against the Archdemon. Branka could not be located, but another Paragon was found: the legendary Caridin, who forged a crown that ended all question of succession.

*If Branka commits suicide:* Into the Deep Roads the survivors went, searching for Paragon Branka in hopes she could settle the unrest in Orzammar and unite the dwarves in the battle against the Archdemon. They found her, and she forged a crown that played a key role in sorting out the royal succession.

*If the Anvil of the Void was reclaimed:* Into the Deep Roads the surviving Wardens went, searching for Paragon Branka in hopes she could settle the unrest in Orzammar and unite the dwarves in the battle against the Archdemon. Not only did the Paragon settle the matter of royal succession, but she also reclaimed the lost secrets of golem manufacture. An army of stone and steel joined the war effort.

*Ruler of Orzammar...*

*If Prince Bhelen is crowned king:* Bhelen Aeducan was crowned king of Orzammar, and the dwarven armies marched for the surface.

*If Lord Harrowmont is crowned king:* Pyral Harrowmont was crowned king of Orzammar, and the dwarven armies marched for the surface.

Despite their successes, though, greater challenges were yet to come.

—From *A Study of the Fifth Blight*, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **A STUDY OF THE FIFTH BLIGHT, VOL. TWO**

**SAME AS IN DAI**

The Wardens sought Arl Eamon, uncle of the late King Cailan, in the hopes of mustering troops from the Ferelden nobility. Upon arriving in Redcliffe they learned that the arl had fallen ill and was near death. His knights had gone in pursuit of the fabled Ashes of Andraste, Eamon's only hope for a cure, and the village surrounding the Keep was beset by a host of animated corpses. The Wardens found and stopped the demon behind the undead before joining the search for Eamon's cure.

*If the Warden stopped the undead and liberated Redcliffe:* The Wardens sought Arl Eamon, uncle of the late King Cailan, in the hopes of mustering troops from the Fereldan nobility. Upon arriving in Redcliffe they learned that the arl had fallen ill and was near death. His knights had gone in pursuit of the fabled Ashes of Andraste, Eamon's only hope for a cure, and the village surrounding the Keep was beset by a host of animated corpses. The Wardens found and stopped the demon behind the undead before joining the search for Eamon's cure.

*If the Warden left Redcliffe without lending their aid:* The Wardens sought Arl Eamon, uncle of the late King Cailan, in the hopes of mustering troops from the Ferelden nobility. But upon arriving in Redcliffe, they learned that the arl had fallen ill and was near death, his knights gone in pursuit of the fabled Ashes of Andraste, as his only hope for a cure. The Wardens immediately set out to join the search for the Ashes.

No one is certain if the Wardens actually located the final resting place of Our Lady Andraste, but whatever they found saved the arl of Redcliffe.

Upon his recovery, Eamon Guerrin called for a Landsmeet and he and the Wardens traveled to Denerim.

*If Loghain was conscripted into the Wardens and Anora and Alistair became King and Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes. He was sentenced to join the Grey Wardens to atone for his deeds. Furthermore, the Landsmeet bore witness to the betrothal of Queen Anora to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric.

*If Loghain was conscripted into the Wardens and Anora remained Queen with Warden Cousland as Prince-Consort:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes. He was sentenced to join the Grey Wardens to atone for his deeds. Furthermore, the Landsmeet bore witness to the betrothal of Queen Anora to Teyrn Bryce Cousland's youngest son, who was one of the two Grey Wardens to survive Ostagar.

*If Loghain was conscripted into the Wardens and Anora remained Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes. He was sentenced to join the Grey Wardens to atone for his deeds. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the vacant throne to Anora, widow of King Cailan.

*If Loghain was executed and Anora remained Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the vacant throne to Anora, widow of King Cailan.

*If Loghain was executed and Anora and Alistair became King and Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet bore witness to the betrothal of Queen Anora to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric.

*If Loghain was executed, Alistair became King and was married to Warden Cousland as Queen:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the throne to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric, and bore witness to his betrothal to Teyrn Bryce Cousland's daughter.

*If Loghain was executed and Alistair became King:* The gathered lords and ladies of Ferelden found Teyrn Loghain guilty of a number of crimes and sentenced him to execution. Furthermore, the Landsmeet granted the throne to Alistair Theirin, the lost son of Maric.

The nobility then pledged their own armies in the battle against the Blight.

*If the Warden perished in the final battle:* The Archdemon clashed with the allied forces at the city of Denerim and was eventually slain, but at terrible cost. Much of the city lay in ruin and the Warden who rallied the armies—later known as the Hero of Ferelden—perished in battle.

*If the Dark Ritual was completed:* The Archdemon clashed with the allied forces at the city of Denerim and was eventually slain, but at terrible cost. Much of the city lay in ruin. The Warden who rallied the armies was named the Hero of Ferelden and accorded the highest honor.

The Fifth Blight ended before most of Thedas knew it had begun. But it left a terrible wound on Ferelden. The losses suffered at Ostagar and Denerim greatly compromised the security of the kingdom. Southern Ferelden from the Korcari Wilds to the edge of the Bannorn are, to this day, a wasteland. It's uncertain how far the ripples from this event shall travel, or what waves it has already stirred.

—*From A Study of the Fifth Blight, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **ANCIENT ELVEN WRITING**

This elven writing found in the Arbor Wilds is so old there seems to be no way to learn what it means.

There are whispers from the Well of Sorrows. It's impossible to understand the entire text, but certain parts suddenly reveal a shadow of their original meaning.

"His crime is high treason. He took on a form reserved for the gods and their chosen, and dared to fly in the shape of the divine. The sinner belongs to Dirthamen; he claims he took wings at the urging of Ghilan'nain, and begs protection from Mythal. She does not show him favor, and will let Elgar'nan judge him."

For one moment there is an image of a shifting, shadowy mass with blazing eyes, whose form may be one or many. Then it fades.

## **ANDRASTE: BRIDE OF THE MAKER**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

There was once a tiny fishing village on the Waking Sea that was set upon by the Tevinter Imperium, which enslaved the villagers to be sold in the markets of Minrathous, leaving behind only the old and the infirm. One of the captives was the child Andraste.

She was raised in slavery in a foreign land. She escaped, then made the long and treacherous journey back to her homeland alone. She rose from nothing to be the wife of an Alamarri warlord.

Each day she sang to the gods, asking them to help her people who remained slaves in Tevinter. The false gods of the mountains and the winds did not answer her, but the true god did.

The Maker spoke. He showed her all the works of His hands: the Fade, the world, and all the creatures therein. He showed her how men had forgotten Him, lavishing devotion upon mute idols and demons, and how He had left them to their fate. But her voice had reached Him, and so captivated Him that He offered her a place at His side, that she might rule all of creation.

But Andraste would not forsake her people.

She begged the Maker to return, to save His children from the cruelty of the Imperium. Reluctantly, the Maker agreed to give man another chance.

Andraste went back to her husband, Maferath, and told him all that the Maker had revealed to her. Together, they rallied the Alamarri and marched forth against the mage-lords of the Imperium, and the Maker was with them.

The Maker's sword was creation itself: fire and flood, famine and earthquake. Everywhere they went, Andraste sang to the people of the Maker, and they heard her. The ranks of Andraste's followers grew until they were a vast tide washing over the Imperium. And when Maferath saw that the people loved Andraste and not him, a worm grew within his heart, gnawing upon it.



At last, the armies of Andraste and Maferath stood before the very gates of Minrathous, but Andraste was not with them.

For Maferath had schemed in secret to hand Andraste over to the Tevinter. For this, the Archon would give Maferath all the lands to the south of the Waking Sea.

And so, before all the armies of the Alamarri and of Tevinter, Andraste was tied to a stake and burned while her earthly husband turned his armies aside and did nothing, for his heart had been devoured. But as he watched the pyre, the Archon softened. He took pity on Andraste, and drew his sword, and granted her the mercy of a quick death.

The Maker wept for His Beloved, cursed Maferath, cursed mankind for their betrayal, and turned once again from creation, taking only Andraste with him. And Our Lady sits still at his side, where she still urges Him to take pity on His children.

—*From The Sermons of Justinia II*

## **ANDRUIL: GODDESS OF THE HUNT**

**SAME AS IN DAO**

Hear me, sons and daughters of the People—  
I am Sister of the Moon, Mother of Hares,  
Lady of the Hunt: Andruil.

Remember my teachings,  
Remember the Vir Tanadhal:  
The Way of Three Trees  
That I have given you.

Vir Assan: the Way of the Arrow  
Be swift and silent;  
Strike true, do not waver  
And let not your prey suffer.  
That is my Way.

Vir Bor'assan: the Way of the Bow  
As the sapling bends, so must you.  
In yielding, find resilience;  
In pliancy, find strength.  
That is my Way.

Vir Adahlen: the Way of the Wood  
Receive the gifts of the hunt with mindfulness.  
Respect the sacrifice of my children  
Know that your passing shall nourish them in turn.  
That is my Way.

Remember the Ways of the Hunter  
And I shall be with you.

—*From The Charge of Andruil, Goddess of the Hunt.*

## **ARLATHAN: PART ONE**

**SAME AS IN DAO**

Before the ages were named or numbered, our people were glorious and eternal and never-changing. Like the great oak tree, they were constant in their traditions, strong in their roots, and ever reaching for the sky.

They felt no need to rush when life was endless. They worshiped their gods for months at a time. Decisions came after decades of debate, and an introduction could last for years. From time to time, our ancestors would drift into centuries-long slumber, but this was not death, for we know they wandered the Fade in dreams.

In those ages, our people called all the land Elvhenan, which in the old Elven language means "place of our people." And at the center of the world stood the great city of Arlathan, a place of knowledge and debate, where the best of the ancient elves would go to trade knowledge, greet old friends, and settle disputes that had gone on for millennia.

But while our ancestors were caught up in the forever cycle of ages, drifting through life at what we today would consider an intolerable pace, the world outside the lush forests and ancient trees was changing.

The humans first arrived from Par Vollen to the north. Called shemlen, or "quicklings," by the ancients, the humans were pitiful creatures whose lives blinked by in an instant. When they first met the elves, the humans were brash and warlike, quick to anger and quicker to fight, with no patience for the unhurried pace of elven diplomacy.

But the humans brought worse things than war with them. Our ancestors proved susceptible to human diseases, and for the first time in history, elves died of natural causes. What's more, those elves who spent time bartering and negotiating with humans found themselves aging, tainted by the humans' brash and impatient lives. Many believed that the ancient gods had judged them unworthy of their long lives and cast them down among the quicklings. Our ancestors came to look upon the humans as parasites, which I understand is similar to the way the humans see our people in the cities. The ancient elves immediately moved to close Elvhenan off from the humans, for fear that this quickening effect would crumble the civilization.

—*The Fall of Arlathan, as told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **ARLATHAN: PART TWO**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

You ask what happened to Arlathan? Sadly, we do not know. Even those of us who keep the ancient lore have no record of what truly happened. What we have are accounts of the days before the fall, and a fable of the whims of the gods.

The human world was changing even as the elves slept. Clans and tribes gave way to a powerful empire called Tevinter, which—and for what reason we do not know—moved to conquer Elvhenan. When they breached the great city of Arlathan, our people, fearful of disease and loss of immortality, chose to flee rather than fight. With magic, demons, and even dragons at their behest, the Tevinter Imperium marched easily through Arlathan, destroying homes and galleries and amphitheaters that had stood for ages. Our people were corralled as slaves, and human contact quickened their veins until every captured elf turned mortal. The elves called to their ancient gods, but there was no answer.

As to why the gods didn't answer, our people left only a legend. They say that Fen'Harel, the Dread Wolf and Lord of Tricksters, approached the ancient gods of good and evil and proposed a truce. The gods of good would remove themselves to heaven, and the lords of evil would exile themselves to the abyss, neither group ever again to enter the other's lands. But the gods did not know that Fen'Harel had planned to betray them, and by the time they realized the Dread Wolf's treachery, they were sealed in their respective realms, never again to interact with the mortal world. It is a fable, to be sure, but those elves who travel the Beyond claim that Fen'Harel still roams the world of dreams, keeping watch over the gods lest they escape from their prisons.

Whatever the case, Arlathan had fallen to the very humans our people had once considered mere pests. It is said that the Tevinter magisters used their great destructive power to force the very ground to swallow Arlathan whole, destroying eons of collected knowledge, culture, and art. The whole of elven lore left only to memory.

—*The Fall of Arlathan, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **CHAMPIONS OF THE JUST**

Blessed are they who stand before  
The corrupt and the wicked and do not falter.  
Blessed are the peacekeepers, the champions of the just.  
  
Blessed are the righteous, the lights in the shadow.  
In their blood the Maker's will is written.

—*Canticle of Benedictions 4:10-11*

When Andraste preached these verses, she offered her followers a path of virtue. "In their blood the Maker's will is written" is usually interpreted to mean sacrificing one's life for a righteous cause, but like most of the Chant, deeper meaning hides beneath the surface. "In their blood" can be understood as a reference to continuity, an unbroken line of humble behavior required to please the Maker.

Rather than a physical fight against demon or apostate, Andraste meant this verse as a warning that her faithful should judge their heart's intentions, questioning those who would lead them astray. Champions of the Just are those with the courage to admit their wrongdoing, while letting none continue in their sight.

Unsurprisingly, the Fourth Stanza is popular among militant branches of the Chantry, such as the knights-enchanter and the Templar Order.

—*Notes on the Chant of Light, by Mother Bezoria of the Grand Cathedral, 9:39 Dragon*

## **DIRTHAMEN: KEEPER OF SECRETS**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

The twins Falon'Din and Dirthamen are the eldest children of Elgar'nan the All-Father and Mythal the Protector. The brothers were inseparable from the moment of their conception, known for their great love for each other. That is why we often speak of Falon'Din in one breath and Dirthamen the next, for they cannot bear to be apart, not even in our tales.

When the world was young, the gods often walked the earth, and Falon'Din and Dirthamen were no exception. Both were delighted by the many wonders of our earth. They played with the animals, whispered to the trees, and bathed in the lakes and streams. Their days were filled with bliss, and they did not know sorrow.

And then one day, while passing through the forest, Falon'Din and Dirthamen came across an old and sickly deer resting beneath a tree. "Why do you sit so still, little sister?" asked Falon'Din.

"Play with us," said Dirthamen.

"Alas," spoke the deer, "I cannot. I am old, and although I wish to go to my rest, my legs can no longer carry me."

Taking pity on the deer, Falon'Din gathered her up into his arms and carried her to her rest beyond the Veil. Dirthamen tried to follow them, but the shifting grey paths beyond the Veil would not let him. Separated for the first time from Falon'Din, Dirthamen wandered aimlessly 'til he came across two ravens.

"You are lost, and soon you will fade," the raven named Fear said to Dirthamen.

"Your brother has abandoned you. He no longer loves you," said the other, named Deceit.

"I am not lost, and Falon'Din has not abandoned me," replied Dirthamen. He subdued the ravens and bade them carry him to Falon'Din. This they did, for they had been defeated and were now bound to Dirthamen's service.

When Dirthamen found Falon'Din, he found also the deer, who once again was light on her feet, for her spirit was released from her weakened body. Both Falon'Din and Dirthamen rejoiced to see this. Falon'Din vowed that he would remain to carry all the dead to their place Beyond, just as he did the deer. And Dirthamen stayed with him, for the twins cannot bear to be apart.

*—From The Story of Falon'Din and Dirthamen, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **DWARVEN INSCRIPTIONS: HISSING WASTES**

The sun burned above oceans of sand,  
but in the sand was Stone, strong and true.  
Fairel hewed the Stone, and built—as great as any thaig in the deep.  
And with his sons' help, he ensured the thaig prospered and grew.

Fairel, Paragon, fled from the strife his brilliance created,  
the strife that destroyed thaigs, sundered houses, from weapons that clan used against clan.  
His own clan and his two sons followed Fairel to the pitiless surface,  
the surface where they would hide from the war that took their home.

After many years Fairel, greatest of Paragons, could not bear life's burden.  
And with the burden growing, he called his sons to his bedside.  
He bade each son swear he would take care of his brother,  
and the brothers swore, and mourned when their father returned to the Stone.

Fairel's sons built monuments to their father, locking away his great works,  
and worked together, for a time, side by side. Each ruled half the thaig,  
but each ruled differently. They argued, and heated words made the brothers duel,  
And where one brother fell, the other raised bloodied axe in hand, alone.

This is the tale of Fairel, Paragon among Paragons, father of two sons,  
who, against their father's wishes, fought from foolish words and foolish pride.  
For pride these halls were made—to honor a father's deeds, and grieve his loss.  
And for loss these halls were made, to honor a brother mourned.

A father taken by time, a brother dead by my own hand.  
With this work behold my grief, in Stone and shifting sand.

## **ELGAR'NAN: GOD OF VENGEANCE**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Long ago, when time itself was young, the only things in existence were the sun and the land. The sun, curious about the land, bowed his head close to her body, and Elgar'nan was born in the place where they touched. The sun and the land loved Elgar'nan greatly, for he was beautiful and clever. As a gift to Elgar'nan, the land brought forth great birds and beasts of sky and forest, and all manner of wonderful green things. Elgar'nan loved his mother's gifts and praised them highly and walked amongst them often.

The sun, looking down upon the fruitful land, saw the joy that Elgar'nan took in her works and grew jealous. Out of spite, he shone his face full upon all the creatures the earth had created, and burned them all to ashes. The land cracked and split from bitterness and pain, and cried salt tears for the loss of all she had wrought. The pool of tears cried for the land became the ocean, and the cracks in her body the first rivers and streams.

Elgar'nan was furious at what his father had done and vowed vengeance. He lifted himself into the sky and wrestled the sun, determined to defeat him. They fought for an eternity, and eventually the sun grew weak, while Elgar'nan's rage was unabated. Eventually Elgar'nan threw the sun down from the sky and buried him in a deep abyss created by the land's sorrow. With the sun gone, the world was covered in shadow, and all that remained in the sky were the reminders of Elgar'nan's battle with his father—drops of the sun's lifeblood, which twinkled and shimmered in the darkness.

—*From The Tale of Elgar'nan and the Sun, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **EMPEROR FLORIAN**

Grand Duke Florian was not supposed to ascend to the Orlesian throne. His elder brother, Emperor Judicael II, had two twin sons and thus a very secure line. Florian was free to pursue other interests, none of which revolved around the Game. Indeed, the Imperial Court largely ignored him, and that was how he liked it. All that was recorded of that era is that he married, produced a single daughter, and afterwards showed little interest in her.

An outbreak of the Hundred Days Cough in 8:77 Blessed changed his plans. Both of Judicael's sons perished, as did Florian's daughter. Wracked by grief, Judicael lost interest in ruling, turning over all matters pertaining to the rebellion in Ferelden to his advisors and instead spending his time hunting in the country. When Judicael was thrown from his horse during a fox hunt in 8:84 Blessed, Florian was suddenly vaulted into the throne. Famously, his response to the chevaliers delivering the news at his estate is said to be, "This will not do at all."

A private and somewhat eccentric man, Florian limited his appearances at court and dealt almost exclusively with members of his own family. He was extremely particular about his habits of dress and grooming, eschewing current fashion for the sake of comfort and refusing to wear cosmetics or powders of any kind due to an intense dislike of being "dirty." Powerful and connected nobles who had served in the cabinet since his father's time were turned away in favor of his younger brother, Reynaud; his sister, Melisande; and his cousins. Children were banned from the palace, even the children of servants, with the exceptions of his nephew and nieces, who were tolerated only on the condition that they remain out of the emperor's sight.

Regarding suggestions that Florian and his youngest cousin, Meghren, were lovers, the truth is uncertain. If such a relationship existed, it was no doubt kept private due to Florian's aversion to public life and not from any fear of rumors. Such rumors, after all, were likely spread due to the emperor's refusal to sire another child and thus secure his line—many believed this failing would eventually lead to civil war. The only real evidence of a relationship with Meghren is a loud and very public argument the two had prior to Meghren's appointment (or exile, as he saw it) to the throne of Ferelden. Meghren is said to have called Florian "my darling," and neither man chose to explain the argument later.

The predictions of civil war almost came to pass upon Florian's death in 9:19 Dragon. With no clear heir, the throne eventually passed to the only daughter of Grand Duke Reynaud, Celene, after a vicious struggle that threatened to consume the empire.

—*From The Emperors of Orlais, by Brother Harlon Ascari*

## **FALON'DIN: FRIEND OF THE DEAD, THE GUIDE**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

"O Falon'Din  
Lethanavir—Friend to the Dead  
Guide my feet, calm my soul,  
Lead me to my rest."

In ancient times, the People were ageless and eternal, and instead of dying would enter uthenera—the long sleep—and walk the shifting paths beyond the Veil with Falon'Din and his brother Dirthamen. Those elders would learn the secrets of dreams, and some returned to the People with newfound knowledge.

But we quickened and became mortal. Those of the People who passed walked with Falon'Din into the Beyond and never returned. If they took counsel with Dirthamen on their passage, his wisdom was lost, for it went with them into the Beyond also, and never came to the People.

Then Fen'Harel caused the gods to be shut away from us, and those who passed no longer had Falon'Din to guide them. And so we learned to lay our loved ones to rest with an oaken staff, to keep them from faltering along the paths, and a cedar branch, to scatter the ravens named Fear and Deceit who were once servants of Dirthamen, now without a master.

—*As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves.*

## **FEN'HAREL: THE DREAD WOLF**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

There is precious little we know about Fen'Harel, for they say he did not care for our people. Elgar'nan and Mythal created the world as we know it, Andruil taught us the Ways of the Hunter, Sylaise and June gave us fire and crafting, but Fen'Harel kept to himself and plotted the betrayal of all the gods. And after the destruction of Arlathan, when the gods could no longer hear our prayers, it is said that Fen'Harel spent centuries in a far corner of the earth, giggling madly and hugging himself in glee.

The legend says that before the fall of Arlathan, the gods we know and revere fought an endless war with others of their kind. There is not a hahren among us who remembers these others: Only in dreams do we hear whispered the names of Geldauran and Daern'thal and Anaris, for they are the Forgotten Ones, the gods of terror and malice, spite and pestilence. In ancient times, only Fen'Harel could walk without fear among both our gods and the Forgotten Ones, for although he is kin to the gods of the People, the Forgotten Ones knew of his cunning ways, and saw him as one of their own.

And that is how Fen'Harel tricked them. Our gods saw him as a brother, and they trusted him when he said that they must keep to the heavens while he arranged a truce. And the Forgotten Ones trusted him also when he said he would arrange for the defeat of our gods, if only the Forgotten Ones would return to the abyss for a time. They trusted Fen'Harel, and they were all of them betrayed. And Fen'Harel sealed them away so they could never again walk among the People.

—*From The Tale of Fen'Harel's Triumph, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **FROM THE CANTICLE OF THRENODIES**

*An illuminated copy of the Chant of Light. A few of the passages have been bookmarked:*

In secret they worked  
Magic upon magic  
All their power and all their vanity  
They turned against the Veil  
Until at last, it gave way.

Above them, a river of Light,  
Before them the throne of Heaven, waiting,  
Beneath their feet  
The footprints of the Maker,  
And all around them echoed a vast  
Silence.

—*Canticle of Threnodies 8:2-3*

## FROM THE CANTICLE OF TRANSFIGURATIONS

Many are those who wander in sin,  
Despairing that they are lost forever,  
But the one who repents, who has faith  
Unshaken by the darkness of the world,  
And boasts not, nor gloats  
Over the misfortunes of the weak, but takes delight  
In the Maker's law and creations, she shall know  
The peace of the Maker's benediction.

—*Canticle of Transfigurations 10:1*

### GHILAN'NAIN: MOTHER OF THE HALLA

### SAME AS IN DAO

They say Ghilan'nain was one of the People, in the days before Arlathan, and the chosen of Andruil the Huntress. She was very beautiful—with hair of snowy white—and as graceful as a gazelle. She kept always to Andruil's Ways, and Andruil favored her above all others.

One day, while hunting in the forest, Ghilan'nain came across a hunter she did not know. At his feet lay a hawk, shot through the heart by an arrow. Ghilan'nain was filled with rage, for the hawk—along with the hare—is an animal much beloved of Andruil. Ghilan'nain demanded that the hunter make an offering to Andruil, in exchange for taking the life of one of her creatures. The hunter refused, and Ghilan'nain called upon the goddess to curse him, so that he could never again hunt and kill a living creature.

Ghilan'nain's curse took hold, and the hunter found that he was unable to hunt. His prey would dart out of sight and his arrows would fly astray. His friends and family began to mock him for his impotence, for what use is a hunter who cannot hunt? Ashamed, the hunter swore he would find Ghilan'nain and repay her for what she had done to him.

He found Ghilan'nain while she was out on a hunt with her sisters, and lured her away from them with lies and false words. He told Ghilan'nain that he had learned his lesson and begged her to come with him, so she could teach him to make a proper offering to Andruil. Moved by his plea, Ghilan'nain followed the hunter, and when they were away from all of her sisters, the hunter turned on Ghilan'nain. He blinded her first, and then bound her as one would bind a kill fresh from the hunt. But because he was cursed, the hunter could not kill her. Instead he left her for dead in the forest.

And Ghilan'nain prayed to the gods for help. She prayed to Elgar'nan for vengeance, to Mother Mythal to protect her, but above all she prayed to Andruil. Andruil sent her hares to Ghilan'nain and they chewed through the ropes that bound her, but Ghilan'nain was still wounded and blind, and could not find her way home. So Andruil turned her into a beautiful white deer—the first halla. And Ghilan'nain found her way back to her sisters, and led them to the hunter, who was brought to justice.

And since that day, the halla have guided the People, and have never led us astray, for they listen to the voice of Ghilan'nain.

—*From "The Tale of Ghilan'nain," as told by Gisharel, keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves.*



## HARGRAVE KEEP

In 6:52 Storm, Bann Hargrave's knights helped drive Avvar invaders from Ferelden's lowlands. When the king asked Hargrave to pursue the retreating tribes, she refused, demanding funds to build a keep. Caught between a fractured court, Hargrave's knights, and an impending famine, the king reluctantly granted her a large parcel of land to the south.

After defeating the Avvar regrouping in the boglands, the bann built her castle. As the famine grew worse, the wisdom behind her choice of location became clear: Hargrave Keep ate well, dining on a steady supply of fish and game while the farmlands starved.

Hargrave's line died out fighting Orlesian invaders during the Blessed Age. Only the village at the base of the keep remains inhabited as the keep has fallen into disrepair.

*—From Notable Fortresses, Castles, Towers and Other Edifices of Interest in Ferelden, by Henry Lannon*

## JUNE: GOD OF THE CRAFT

## SAME AS IN DAO

We dedicate all our crafts to June, for it is he who taught the People to bend the branches of trees to make our bows, and to fashion coverings of furs and ironbark. Without June, would we have the aravel, or the harnesses for our halla?

When the People were young, we wandered the forests without purpose. We drank from streams and ate the berries and nuts that we could find. We did not hunt, for we had no bows. We wore nothing, for we had no knowledge of spinning or needlecraft. We shivered in the cold nights, and went hungry through the winters, when all the world was covered in ice and snow.

Then Sylaise the Hearthkeeper came, and gave us fire and taught us how to feed it with wood. June taught us to fashion bows and arrows and knives, so that we could hunt. We learned to cook the flesh of the creatures we hunted over Sylaise's fire, and we learned to clothe ourselves in their furs and skins. And the People were no longer cold and hungry.

*—As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## MAD EMPEROR REVILLE

Modern history often forgets that "Mad Emperor Reville" was, at first, celebrated as a military genius. Despite the warnings of his twin brother, Gratien (younger by a mere hour), he committed Orlais to an invasion of Ferelden—an invasion that proved wildly successful. In the breadth of one campaign, Reville had expanded the reach of the empire across all of southern Thedas and allowed the court to dream of achieving even greater heights. The victory came at a cost, however, and when Gratien's prediction of war with an opportunistic Nevarra proved true, the Orlesian chevaliers met spectacular defeat. Everything we know of history states that Grand Duke Gratien had nothing but his brother's best interests at heart. The man was a kind soul, much in love with his wife and many children, and—according to all letters recovered—vastly relieved not to be burdened with the throne.

Reville, however, went from reveling in the approval of his court to being the butt of jokes and the target of whispers. He was surrounded by courtiers who said his brother was behind this criticism, and as rebellion in occupied Ferelden began, things grew worse. There was open talk of placing Gratien on the throne. When Marquise Yvette, Reville's mother and a calming influence, died and threw him into mourning, he snapped. Reville ordered the assassination of Gratien and his entire family at their estate of Sablissent on the Feast of Ascension. Gratien, his wife, their three grown children and eight grandchildren—the youngest, Camille, only eight months old—all slaughtered and thrown into a mass grave, their bodies burned.

The brutal slaughter sent a chill through the Imperial Court, as even the emperor's own children feared to speak out against him. He became increasingly paranoid and began wearing armor every time he left his rooms. His health began to decline, but he refused to allow physicians of any kind into the palace. By 8:50 Blessed, Reville refused to leave his rooms at all. His paranoia had grown so great that only a single cook was permitted to prepare his food, and only under the supervision of ten chevaliers. He no longer ate anything but venison, and his health, unsurprisingly, was poor. In 8:51 Blessed, Emperor Reville finally died, and upon entering his rooms, his sons found that he had boarded up the windows and surrounded his bed with rows upon rows of daggers.

—*From The Emperors of Orlais by Brother Harlon Ascari*

## **MEMORIALS OF THE SECOND EXALTED MARCH**

### **The Path of Flame**

Remember where Andraste's Champions first set foot in the Exalted Plains, called Dirthavaren by the elves.

Halamshiral's dark heart was conquered, but one last challenge came from the elves, who would not submit to the Maker. They gathered upon the plain; our Champions answered their call. Marching in Andraste's Light, on the Path of Flame: Lord Demetrius Aron, Sister Amity, and Ser Brandis of Lac Celestine, called the Silver Helm.

### **Demetrius's End**

Remember Lord Demetrius Aron, the only one of Andraste's Champions to fall.

The forces of the Exalted March met the elves upon the field; our numbers far exceeded theirs. The Champions, kind and fair, gave the elves a chance for peace, but the elves would not lay down their arms. They slew Lord Demetrius in their charge. Maker take him to His side.

### **Lindiranae's Fall**

Remember the victory of the Dales.

The elves were murderous and wild, for the Maker's grace did not touch them. The wildest of them was the she-elf Lindiranae, wielder of the great blade Evanura. Defiant to the last, she met Ser Brandis, the Silver Helm, in single combat, and he bested her. With Lindiranae fell the Dales.

### **Triumph of the Light**

Remember the triumph over the profane.

Sister Amity led the march to the river Tenasir, where stood shrines to the elven gods. There she struck down; standing upon the banks, she sang the Chant of Light. Andraste's Word had come to the Dales, and delivered them from wickedness.

## **MYTHAL: THE GREAT PROTECTOR**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Elgar'nan had defeated his father, the sun, and all was covered in darkness. Pleased with himself, Elgar'nan sought to console his mother, the earth, by replacing all that the sun had destroyed. But the earth knew that without the sun, nothing could grow. She whispered to Elgar'nan this truth, and pleaded with him to release his father, but Elgar'nan's pride was great, and his vengeance was terrible, and he refused.

It was at this moment that Mythal walked out of the sea of the Earth's tears and onto the land. She placed her hand on Elgar'nan's brow, and at her touch he grew calm and knew that his anger had led him astray. Humbled, Elgar'nan went to the place where the sun was buried and spoke to him. Elgar'nan said he would release the sun if the sun promised to be gentle and to return to the earth each night. The sun, feeling remorse at what he had done, agreed.

And so the sun rose again in the sky, and shone his golden light upon the earth. Elgar'nan and Mythal, with the help of the earth and the sun, brought back to life all the wondrous things that the sun had destroyed, and they grew and thrived. And that night, when the sun had gone to sleep, Mythal gathered the glowing earth around his bed, and formed it into a sphere to be placed in the sky, a pale reflection of the sun's true glory.

—*From The Tale of Mythal's Touch, as told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **NOT OF HEROES: DIVISION AND DISTANCE**

For a supposed creature of jealousy and greed, Maferath is less so in deed. For while his word brought low the Bride of the Maker, his prize was quickly divided and distanced. Let us consider the lesser of the sons in this matter.

Of Evrion, we know little. The middle boy, he was tasked with ruling the lands to be the Marches. No claim by the father was made, no "in my name" to humble. And that freedom is shown in the result, for Evrion himself was the least concerned with power. He among all led by example, not demand, and spoke only of sacrifice. When betrayal was revealed, Evrion acts as a man broken, dispersing his holdings to the various tribes. It was a penance that spared him his family, but it also dispersed influence. To this day, the Free Marches are scattered.

Of Verald, more is known, for his actions bring him to the start of our nation. But his folly begins in Nevarra, where we must ask: was this the will of a betrayer father, or a mistake of youth?

Maferath gave rule to the youngest, Verald, and never claimed Nevarra. Never did he sit on the throne, and he is thought to have rarely visited. But his name is hated there most of all, for it was bartered for legacy by the son. Unlike Evrion, Verald spoke not as example but to claim. Never his name was mentioned without that of his mother and father. His claims were bold—their actions were his, and their thoughts all shared. But from the father on his throne in Ferelden, no word is recorded. And we wonder: was it deliberate?

For when the betrayal was revealed, all with ties to Maferath were vilified. And so strong were the ties that Verald had drawn, that his court was killed to a man, and he was forced to flee. Had he kept silent, as seems the will of the knowing father, and had he girded as the father had guided the elder, Isorath, then Verald might have remained to rule.

But that would require that the betrayer not be as he is drawn. And it would have kept Verald in Nevarra. And it would have kept Verald from Orlais. And it would have prevented the further betrayal that truly birthed Orlais.

—*Excerpted from A History Not of Heroes: Readings in the Ugly Heart of Change, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## NOT OF HEROES: MAFERATH AND SACRIFICE

Andraste, Our Lady, the sword and the fire against Tevinter. Betrayed to the empire in exchange for a kingdom. Maferath, now synonymous with treachery. But would Andraste have won, and if not, what would we have lost? Let us look not just at the act, but at the *why* of it.

As the armies of faith pierced the imperial homeland, it was revealed not as a wave but as an arrow. And as any hunter will attest, if your aim is not true, there is no returning to the bow. We must consider: how much of Our Lady's victory to this point was against true Imperium, and how much was against the echoes of empire? Andraste the inspiration may not have considered such. But Maferath the general fought for homeland, not visions. Was it victory or defeat that his betrayal held at bay?

Maferath made the deal that killed Our Lady. That is fact. And when Andraste died, Maferath was gifted everything from the southern plains south. How generous, and impossible to hold, this must have seemed. Let us look on Maferath and the legacy he divided among his sons not with eye for accusation, but from a tactical consideration. For he must have known that mere rivals had never stopped Tevinter. What if he set about creating peers, and none of this was accident?

How then fared Isorath, Evrion, and Verald?

—*Excerpted from A History Not of Heroes: Readings in the Ugly Heart of Change, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## NOT OF HEROES: THE DEATH OF DIVERSITY

What could hold back an empire? Another. What could hold back so defined a people as Tevinter? Another. Let us consider if eldest Isorath was not meant to honor Maferath, for the father's fate was already condemned by hidden betrayal. Let us consider that Isorath was told to turn from ties to Maferath, to look forward, not back. What of his actions then?

Isorath was granted a land of tribes, of scattered alliance. His answer was the grand unification, which most condemn as arrogance. Sweeping changes in trade, relocations to break local allegiances, all to favor centralized trade and power. Cities were leveled to expand a new capital, a powerful and influential city of a new nation: Val Royeaux of Orlais. And all in the name of *not* lost Andraste, but of holding back looming Tevinter.

Power was united, but cultures less so. Investing everyone in the new Orlais stratified the classes, and through it all spread a bitterness that a Fereldan ruled. Isorath avoided the stain of his father, for he was seen as victim, too, but he was still Alamarri. What if, dear readers, the final unifying element came not from accident, or even the deliberate actions of Isorath, but from a common hatred, and not the common hatred of the day? The sons of Maferath would succeed at creating a peer for Tevinter, but only at the cost of themselves.

—*Excerpted from A History Not of Heroes: Readings in the Ugly Heart of Change, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## NOT OF HEROES: UNITED IN HATRED

If we are reexamining the motive, let us not stop at the sons of the betrayer. For the first leader of young Orlais after the sons was Jeshavis, chattel wife of two of them. But examine the facts.

A proud daughter of the Cirean, chosen not unkindly by Isorath to be his bride. It was her reach that granted him power to unify. Consider what she witnessed in the consolidation of her people. She has always been portrayed with sadness, but what if when our nation was born, the Game was born with it? Judge her actions not as property but as master, and what changes?

As victim—Isorath, rumored cruel, breaks the clans in a lust for power. His brother, Verald, exile from his own machinations in young Nevarra, appeals to the saddened wife and promises a new path. The brothers vie, and Verald wins and then demands the hand of Jeshavis. Another Fereldan greedy for power. In a decade, the shy victim Jeshavis is the figurehead of the people's rebellion against the last son of the betrayer.

As master—bound to rivalries far older, she harbors a hatred beyond Tevinter. And while Isorath is distracted (with personal concern or with building a nation to withstand his own people's enemy?), she invites the broken brother and sets him against the driven. While accepting marriage to the victor, Jeshavis seeds rebellion among those who remember how their lands were taken not a generation before.

Both leave her as ruler, as gjöya. But should not the rule of a victim been uncertain? Jeshavis rules for forty-two years. There were no great swings backward, no people's retribution. For she had become accustomed.

If the goals of Isorath were selfish and the goal of Jeshavis was to reverse them, then Orlais is born of the failure of both. But if Isorath built his father's wall and Jeshavis wanted revenge, then we are a nation of two successes. Two parents, in opposition but in partnership.

*—Excerpted from A History Not of Heroes: Readings in the Ugly Heart of Change, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## **OLD CHANTRY TRAIL SIGNS**

The Chantry used these symbols long ago to mark trails to hidden locations. They are often mistaken by passersby as simple carvings in the rock and trees.

## **OLD ELVEN WRITING**

This elven writing found in the Arbor Wilds is so old as to be incomprehensible.

There are whispers from the Well of Sorrows. It's impossible to understand the entire text, but certain parts suddenly reveal a shadow of their original meaning.

"In this place we prepare to hunt the pillars of the earth. Their workers scurry, witless, soulless. This death will be a mercy. We will make the earth blossom with their passing."

For one moment there is a vivid image of two overlapping spheres; unknown flowers bloom inside their centers. Then it fades.

## **ORLESIAN CAPRICE COINS**

Victory in the Grand Game is not merely determined by what one has at one's command, one's connections, and one's machinations, but what one is willing to give up.

The clearest example is the Caprice: each coin is traditionally a gift. They were once tokens of regard, favors for chevaliers from their lovers or patrons. Throwing them into a fountain was rooted in superstition: the token was offered as a sacrifice, a bribe to Andraste to keep the chevalier safe on the battlefield. The more one had to offer to the waters, the better one's chances of escaping the caprices of fate—hence the name. Over time, the superstitious aspects of the custom faded; now the Caprice is a mark of status. The more coins one has, the more public the spectacle of throwing them away: the stronger one's position in the Game.

*—From The Dowager's Field Guide to Good Society by Lady Alcyone*

## PAR VOLLEN: THE OCCUPIED NORTH

## SAME AS IN DAO

In the 30th year of the Steel Age, the first Qunari ships were sighted off the coast of Par Vollen in the far north, marking the beginning of a new age of warfare.

History calls this the First Qunari War, but it was mostly a one-sided bloodbath, with the Qunari advancing far into the mainland. Qunari warriors in glittering steel armor carved through armies with ease. Their cannons, the likes of which our ancestors had never seen, reduced city walls to rubble in a matter of seconds.

Stories of Qunari occupation vary greatly. It is said they dismantled families and sent captives to "learning camps" for indoctrination into their religion. Those who refused to cooperate disappeared to mines or construction camps.

For every tale of suffering, however, there is another of enlightenment deriving from something called the "Qun." This is either a philosophical code or a written text that governs all aspects of Qunari life, perhaps both. One converted Seheran reported pity for those who refused to embrace the Qun, as if the conquerors had led him to a sort of self-discovery. "For all my life, I followed the Maker wherever his path led me," he wrote, "but in the Qun I have found the means to travel my own path."

It has been said that the most complete way to wipe out a people is not with blades but with books. Thankfully, a world that had repelled four Blights would not easily bow to a foreign aggressor. And so the Exalted Marches began.

The greatest advantage of the Chantry-led forces was the Circle of Magi. For all their technology, the Qunari appeared to harbor great hatred for magic. Faced with cannons, the Chantry responded with lightning and balls of fire.

The Qunari armies lacked the sheer numbers of humanity. So many were slain at Marnas Pell, on both sides, that the Veil is said to be permanently sundered, the ruins still plagued by restless corpses. But each year, the Chantry pushed further and further into the Qunari lines, although local converts to the Qun proved difficult to return to Andraste's teachings.

By the end of the Storm Age, the Qunari were truly pushed back. Rivain was the only human land that retained the Qunari religion after being freed, and its rulers attempted to barter a peace. Most human lands signed the Llomerryn Accord, excepting the Tevinter Imperium. It is a shaky peace that has lasted to this day.

—*From The Exalted Marches: An Examination of Chantry Warfare, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## QUEEN ASHA OF ANTIVA

There are those who believe the tale that Antiva owes its independence to the looming threat of the Crows. Yet this story—largely spread by the Crows themselves—is no more credible than the promises of a market-stall huckster. For the truth of the matter, we look instead to the Palace of the Kings in Antiva City. A grand statue of a woman in Rivaini royal garb towers over the entrance, her watchful eyes keeping sight of everything happening within those walls: Asha Subira Bahadur Campana, Queen Mother of Thedas.

When the matriarchs of Rivain arranged the marriage of Princess Asha of Ayesleigh to King Alonzo Campana of Antiva, it went unnoticed and unremarked by their contemporaries; the eyes of Thedas were on the wars of Orlais and Nevarra. The marriage of a minor princess of Rivain to an almost powerless king was beneath their consideration. Yet this wedding was, in retrospect, perhaps the most important event in Thedas's history since the blackening of the Golden City.

Queen Asha was a skilled tactician; seeing the military ambitions of Tevinter, Nevarra, and Orlais, she concocted a plan. Antiva was too prosperous to escape its neighbors' avarice, yet had no means of raising an army capable of fending off both Tevinter and Orlais without impoverishing the kingdom. If she was to safeguard her people, it must be through measures stronger than steel.

The queen spent decades making alliances in the ancient Rivaini way: marriage. She wed her many children and grandchildren strategically into nobles houses across the continent. Within thirty years, Antiva was so well-connected that any hostile action against it would force half the nations of Thedas into war.

The blood of Queen Asha runs in the veins of the Empress of Orlais, the Prince of Starkhaven, the King of Nevarra, and seven of the Dukes of the Anderfels; even some magisters of the Tevinter Imperium have ties to the Antivan royal family. Asha's web of blood ties forces most of the continent to remain at peace with Antiva, or risk terrible consequences at family dinners.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## **RITUAL TOWER**

Many Tevinter structures litter the wastelands of southwestern Orlais. In the age before the First Blight, the Imperium expanded through the South at an incredible rate, and the lands farthest from Minrathous became home to a great many sites dedicated to magical experimentation, taking advantage of natural weaknesses in the Veil as well as the distance from the Archon's oversight to try ever more dangerous fields of study. As with Aeonar in Ferelden, the laboratories of Orlais were set upon by the followers of Andraste during the uprising, and little remains of them now save crumbled stone.

—*An excerpt from Empire and Imperium by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar*

## **SIEGE EQUIPMENT IN THEDAS**

Siege weaponry has been used in Thedas for centuries, with primitive equipment used as far back as the Third Blight. Nevertheless, it occupies a peculiar niche in the tools of warfare due to its requirements. Any army wishing to produce trebuchets or catapults must be funded and organized well enough to procure both the necessary materials and the military experts to construct them. Throughout history, most armies who fulfilled such requirements did not take advantage of such situation. During the Third Blight, for example, Arlesans and Montsimmard constructed catapults to fling flaming debris at the darkspawn, but the expense of the weapons did not justify the limited damage they caused, and the darkspawn were ultimately driven back by the Grey Wardens, not siege weaponry.

Tevinter forces similarly had the resources to construct siege weapons when attacking the Free Marchers or defending themselves against the Exalted Marches of the Black Age. Instead, the Imperium focused primarily upon the power of its magisters, who were less powerful but more flexible than siege equipment, and who could more easily fall back when the tide of battle turned.

As a result, in the battles against the Qunari in the Steel Age, generals found to their chagrin that the great oxmen had left them behind. Qunari blackpowder is, most military experts agree, not magic—it is merely an advanced alchemy that makes their cannons more effective than any trebuchet could ever be.

Nevertheless, there remains hope. As centuries have passed since the last Blight, and mages are now safely held in the Circles where they harm none, the experts of Ferelden and Orlais may once again turn their great minds to learning. We need no magic, not where the minds of men survive unfettered. With our resources and commitment to knowledge, we can easily surpass the brutal Qunari on the field of battle.

—*From Qun, Gurns and Steel: Military Conflict in a Post-Blight Thedas, written 9:29 Dragon, shortly before the start of the Fifth Blight*

## **SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY**

The Valmont family has its quirks. Every family does. But the Valmonts lean particularly toward the occult. Emperor Reville the Mad believed in ghosts; he was certain that his mother continued to advise him after her death, and that the angry shade of his twin brother sought his downfall. He employed the services of soothsayers to convey messages from beyond the grave and to stave off his slain brother's wrath.

His son, Emperor Judicael I, had a fascination for all things ancient and arcane. It is said that his desire to reconstruct the palace of Halamshiral—after an elven uprising destroyed it—was due more to his interest in the site itself than in politics or the Game. They say he chose to spend the winter months at this family retreat because he believed the palace was located at a nexus of elven magic, that spending time there would grant him longer life as with the fabled immortal elves. In the end, the palace did not prevent his death due to heart failure.

His youngest son, Prince Reynaud, has a similar interest in elves and the Dales. He collected carvings of halla—the Dalish beasts of burden sacred to one of their false gods. The statuettes—all the work of Dalish artisans during the Long Walk—were kept in his room in the Winter Palace. When his daughter ascended to the throne, she had them repurposed as keys. But why? And for what? No one can know.

—*An excerpt from Architectural History of Orlais, Volume 1 by Elodie Ferrneau*

## **SYLAISE: THE HEARTHKEEPER**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Sylaise the Hearthkeeper is seen as the sister of Andruil the Huntress. While Andruil loved to run with the creatures of the wild, Sylaise preferred to stay by her home-tree, occupying herself with gentle arts and song.

It is Sylaise who gave us fire and taught us how to use it. It is Sylaise who showed us how to heal with herbs and with magic, and how to ease the passage of infants into this world. And again, it is Sylaise who showed us how to spin the fibers of plants into thread and rope.

We owe much to Sylaise, and that is why we sing to her when we kindle the fires and when we put them out. That is why we sprinkle our aravels with Sylaise's fragrant tree-moss, and ask that she protect them and all within.

—*As told by Gisharel, Keeper of the Ralaferin clan of the Dalish elves*

## **THE COLOSSUS OF ORLAIS**

Emperor Florian, in addition to being notoriously reclusive, was not fond of his own visage. Orlesian emperors and empresses are traditionally immortalized in gilded marble. Florian, forced to commission something, instead chose a red sandstone found only in the Hissing Wastes. He demanded his likeness be carved there - away from where he could see it.



When presented with an official proposal, the emperor idly drew on the paper, adding circles around the royal crest, the statue's eyes, and the dimensions and cost of the project. Florian's signature turned it into an official court document, and he refused to entertain more modest proposals hastily drafted and sent to his chambers, as he considered the matter "over and done with at last." Thus the Colossus of Orlais was born.

Dozens of sculptors, hundreds of miners, and three highly-paid surveyors selected a suitably stable hill in the Wastes to begin carving. A year into the project, workers uncovered an old dwarven ruin near the base of the statue. Believing this to be a sign that the ground was sturdy, the grand work continued—until Florian's death, when Empress Celene took the throne and ordered work on the costly effigy immediately cease. "We must give our subjects working on this noble project time to mourn," she said.

Strangely, Empress Celene never ordered work on the Colossus of Orlais to resume, nor offered a plan to transport it out of the Wastes.

*—From An Illumination of the Art and Artifacts of the Imperial Court of Orlais, by Lady Simone Therese Germaine*

## **THE CONCLAVE**

It has been a year of little more than chaos. Yes, the mages voted to dissolve the Circle of Magi—but I will point out: this vote came only after increased restrictions were placed on them following the unfortunate events in Kirkwall. What other choice did they have? Yes, the Templar Order abandoned their duties and elected to pursue the mages to bring them back in line—but after a thousand years in which their sole role was the mages' keepers, what else could one expect? They envisioned the war over quickly; a single battle that would see the mages' resolve crumble, after which they would meekly return to confinement. That did not happen. This conflict could drag on forever, with advantage on neither side. Both templars and mages see this, and thus they have agreed to come to the Conclave.

This is our chance. Words need to be said which have not been said; a compromise must be reached because there is no other choice. I believe this with all my heart. I am not without fault in all this; perhaps I pushed too hard for reform, or not hard enough. The Maker has seen fit to give me another chance; I will not squander it. The Temple of Sacred Ashes is where together we will make history, and with luck we will be remembered kindly for it.

*—From the journals of Divine Justinia V, Dragon 9:41*

## **THE DALES: A PROMISE LOST**

There, see the Winter Palace at Halamshiral. Gaze upon its white walls and golden spires, built on the broken dreams of a people. Our people.

The human prophet Andraste was a slave in the Tevinter Imperium, as our ancestors were. When she rose up against them, we rose up with her. Together we fought for freedom. In gratitude and kinship, Andraste promised the elves a new land: the Dales. And although she died, her sons kept her promise.

Our people came from farthest Tevinter to claim this new land. Here, our journey ended. This was our Halamshiral. As we laid the first stone for the city, our people vowed that no human would ever set foot on our lands. The greatest of our warriors swore to uphold this vow. One by one they came, invoking the names of Elgar'n'an and Mythal, Andruil and Ghilan'nain. Before all our gods, they dedicated themselves to Halamshiral, becoming our protectors, our Emerald Knights. They would ensure that the Dales remained free.

It was free. For over three centuries. But the humans and their new Andrastian Chantry would not let us be. They pushed against our borders. They sent missionaries to spread the word of their prophet. They sought ways to subjugate the People once more. When we refused, we angered them.

They destroyed us. Even the Emerald Knights could not stand against the might of their army, armored in faith. In the name of their Andraste, they burned Halamshiral, scattering us to the winds. They forgot that once, long ago, Andraste's followers and the elves marched together. They forgot that Andraste called Shartan "brother."

*—A Promise Lost, as told by Keeper Gisharel to the young hunters of the Ralaferin clan on the outskirts of Halamshiral*

## **THE EMERALD KNIGHTS**

Cry for the past—only there does glory dwell.  
For here, the bow was strung, the sword bequeathed, the vows sworn.  
So glory was born within the hearts of elves.

Sing for the past—where rests those who came before.  
For each knight, a seed was sown, roots twisting with their brothers and sisters.  
So the forest grew, a reflection of our might.

Mourn for the past—and all that was left there.  
For we trusted in dreams and perceived immortality. We trusted in promises and in hope.  
So we dreamed in vain, for we lost these gifts long ago.

Curse the past—the place where lies were born.  
For beneath their sun, our people fall. The lands their lady once bestowed now stolen in her name.  
So when these words are read, we shall be gone.

Forget not the past—it is all that remains.  
For each knight, a seed was sown, roots twisting with their brothers and sisters.  
So the forest remains, a reflection of our sorrow.

Cry for the past—it shall claim us all.  
For here rest our saviors newly slain. Others lie beyond our reach.  
So we remember.

Let the true name burn away and enter Din'an Hanin, the place where glory ends.

Andrale, Whose Song Inspired  
Soran, With Bow in Hand  
Siona, Who Kept the Bridge

Talim, Who Saved the Child  
Rin, Who Led Them Out  
Ilan, Who Kept Watch

Elandrin, Whom We Betrayed

*A blank space follows the names, as if more were to be carved.*

## THE EXALTED MARCH OF THE DALES

The Chantry's story of the Exalted March of the Dales paints the picture of the righteous faithful arrayed against heathen savages. But I have long studied the Dales, and I find the "acceptable" version of the tale to be a poor one, laden with overt pro-Chantry and pro-human biases. Thus it is my moral imperative to propose an alternative interpretation: that the Exalted March of the Dales was nothing more than an expansionist ploy hiding behind the mask of faith.

It is easy to see on any map how large the Dales are. More importantly, they stand between Orlais and the rest of the south and would likely have represented a significant obstacle to the empire's expansion into Ferelden. Naturally, we stood to benefit from propagating the narrative of a hostile, unreasoning people attacking innocent missionaries and making blood sacrifices of good Andrastian babies. The likely truth is that the elves merely wished to maintain sovereignty over lands promised to them by Blessed Andraste herself, when the humans showed clear intent to undermine their autonomy.

Of course, the elves reacted by becoming increasingly isolationist, which suited the empire perfectly. Here was a kingdom that spurned diplomatic overtures and that refused to lend aid during the Second Blight when the darkspawn attacked Montsimmard. The Dalish kingdom could not be anything but a dormant threat, one that needed to be crushed before it awoke.

Scholars point to the massacre at Red Crossing as the impetus for the Chantry's declaration of an Exalted March on the elven kingdom in the Dales. They conveniently ignore the fact that no one alive truly knows what happened at Red Crossing or why the elves attacked. The Chantry's response to the elven aggression that resulted in the slaughter of hundreds was predictable. But in light of my thesis, perhaps we should reexamine the events of Red Crossing and wonder if the attack was truly unprovoked. Or whether it is possible that someone saw benefit in sacrificing an entire village to justify the subjugation of an entire people.

*—From A New Perspective on the Exalted March, a pamphlet by an anonymous author, published by the University of Orlais in 9:12 Dragon*

## THE FIRST BLIGHT: CHAPTER ONE

## SAME AS IN DAO

Thedas is a land of fierce diversity, from the assassin-princes of Antiva to the faded griffons of the Anderfels, but in my travels, I have found one tale that unites the people of this land. It is a story of pride and damnation, and although the telling differs, the essence of the tale remains the same.

At the height of its power, the Tevinter Imperium stretched over much of Thedas, uniting the known world under the rule of the tyrannical magisters. It is said that the Old Gods whom the magisters worshipped gave them the knowledge of blood magic, and the magisters used this forbidden power to cement their rule. The blood of elven slaves and humans alike ran down imperial altars to fuel magister greed, the tales of their excesses so horrifying that one can only be grateful that blood magic is prohibited today.

But all that stands tall must eventually fall. Perhaps they foresaw their ruin, or perhaps their pride knew no bounds, but whatever the reason, the magisters dared to open a magical portal into the Golden City at the heart of the Fade. They sought to usurp the Maker's throne, long left unattended in the Golden City after the Maker turned His back on His creations. They would storm heaven itself with their power and become as gods.

This is what the Chantry, in its oft-exercised tendency to understate, refers to as the second sin.

According to most versions of the tale, the magisters did indeed reach the Golden City and walked into the home of the Maker, where no living being before them had dared, or been able, to tread. But humanity is not meant to walk in heaven. The magisters were wicked with pride and other sins, and their presence tainted the Golden City. What once was a perfect, holy citadel became a twisted home of darkness and nightmares. The magisters were expelled back through their gateway and cursed for their treachery. As the Golden City had been tainted, so were the magisters twisted and transformed into things of darkness—the very first of the darkspawn. The Golden City, once a shining beacon at the heart of the Fade, became the Black City, a reminder of all that man's pride has cost.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **THE FIRST BLIGHT: CHAPTER TWO**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

People today have little concept of the consequences of the second sin. Oh, believe me when I say that when asked, pious, Chantry-going folk will curse the use of foul magic, spitting and snapping their fingers—but none live today who actually remember the horror that was unleashed so very long ago. Whatever records might have existed regrettably did not survive the chaos and ignorance that was to follow. We have only the tales of survivors handed down through the murky ages and the dogma of the Chantry to instruct us, and that is precious little indeed.

I believe I am not understating when I say that the second sin unleashed the bane of all life upon Thedas. The darkspawn are more virulent than the worst plague, a heartless force of nature that came into our world like an ill wind. We know from accounts of later Blights (as these darkspawn invasions came to be called—never has a more appropriate name existed) that the darkspawn spread disease and famine wherever they tread. The earth itself is corrupted by their presence, the sky roiling with angry black clouds. I do not exaggerate, my friends, when I say that a mass gathering of darkspawn is an omen of dread cataclysm.

It is said that those cursed magisters who became the first darkspawn scratched at the very earth to find solace in the darkness of the dwarven Deep Roads, and there in the shadows they multiplied. Whether by intelligent design or by some last vestige of worship in their minds, they attempted to locate the Old Gods they had once served. They found what they sought: Dumat, first among the Old Gods, once known as the Dragon of Silence before the Maker imprisoned him and all his brethren beneath the earth for the first sin: usurping the Maker's place in mankind's heart.

The slumbering dragon awoke, freed from the Maker's prison by his twisted followers, and became corrupted himself. Dumat was transformed into the first Archdemon, his great and terrible power given will by a rotting, unholy mind. With the darkspawn horde following, Dumat rose and took wing in the skies once again, bringing ruin to the world the Maker had created. The Old God had become the eye of a dark storm that would ravage the entire world.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **THE FIRST BLIGHT: CHAPTER THREE**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

The world during the First Blight was very different from the one we know today. Aside from the civilized rule of the Imperium, humans as a race were largely barbarous and splintered, divided into clans and tribes and squabbling among ourselves for resources. At the same time, deep beneath Thedas's great mountain ranges spanned a dwarven culture as organized and advanced as ours was primitive.

As the darkspawn bubbled up to the surface from their underground lairs, mankind first buckled and then fought back. The armies of Tevinter attempted to face down the multitudes of twisted creatures and the horrid rotting of the land around them, but they could not be everywhere at once. Human history remembers the First Blight as a time of terrible devastation, and those stories are accurate, but in our arrogance we often forget the price paid by the dwarves in their isolated mountain kingdoms.

The dwarves faced far greater hordes than humanity as the darkspawn challenged them for control of the underground. Despite the might and technology the dwarves brought to bear, the savage darkspawn tore through them, first destroying the more remote thaigs before swallowing up entire kingdoms. Think of it: an entire civilization lost in the space of decades. Compared to the near-genocide that the dwarves faced, what we humans call the First Blight must have seemed a mere skirmish. Against the darkspawn, the dwarven lands have always borne the brunt of the fighting and the majority of the sacrifices.

Four dwarven kingdoms finally managed to combine their might and fight back, and that cooperation saved them. But for the rest of their lands it was too late. The darkspawn had taken the Deep Roads, the majestic underground passages that linked the dwarven lands throughout Thedas. The darkspawn could now attack anywhere on the surface through these tunnels.

Humanity simply was not prepared for such an onslaught. It was clear that the warfare we knew would not avail us. We had to find a new way to fight.

Thus came our salvation: The Grey Wardens were born.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## **THE FIRST BLIGHT: CHAPTER FOUR**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Founded at Weisshaupt Fortress in the Anderfels, the Grey Wardens offered humanity hope in its darkest hour. Veterans of decades of battles with the darkspawn came together, and the best among them pledged to do whatever was necessary to stem the tide of darkness that swept across the land. These great humans, elves, and dwarves pooled their knowledge of the enemy and formed a united front to finally put a stop to the archdemon's rampage.

And stop it they did. Ballads are still sung today of the first Grey Warden charge into the waves of darkspawn at the city of Nordbotten—each Warden facing ten or twenty darkspawn at a time. Squadrons of Grey Wardens mounted on their mighty griffons, soaring through the blackened skies and battling the terrible Archdemon with spear and spell; oh, what a sight it must have been!

Incredibly, the Grey Wardens won that first battle. They raised their arms in victory, and suddenly there was hope. The Grey Wardens led the lands of men and the last stalwart defenders of the dwarven halls against the hordes of the Archdemon Dumat for the next hundred years, gaining and losing ground, but never backing away. From all over Thedas, they recruited whoever possessed the skill and strength to raise the Grey Wardens' banner, making no distinction between elven slave or human nobleman, and finally, nearly two centuries after the first Old God rose from the earth, the Grey Wardens assembled the armies of men and dwarves at the Battle of Silent Plains. It was then that Dumat finally fell and the First Blight ended.

The Tevinter Imperium would face a new challenge with the coming of the prophet Andraste. Thoughts of the Blight grew distant. With Dumat's defeat, the darkspawn were considered no longer a threat—but with the wisdom of hindsight, we know that conceit proved foolish indeed. The task of the Grey Wardens was far from over.

—*From Tales of the Destruction of Thedas, by Brother Genitivi, Chantry Scholar*

## THE FIRST INQUISITION

The birth of the Chantry took place more than nine ages ago; the mists of time have obscured once well-known facts. It is commonly believed the Chantry alone created the templars and the Circle of Magi. Few recall there was ever an Inquisition. Those who do, believe it predated the Chantry, hunting cultists and mages in a reign of terror ending only upon its transformation into the Templar Order. This is not quite the truth.

One must keep in mind the state of Thedas prior to the Chantry's creation: a world where the only source of order—the Tevinter Imperium—had fallen apart. People blamed magic for the death of Andraste, the Blight, the terror they saw every day—and not without reason. Abominations and demons rampaged the countryside. No one was safe. Disparate groups of men and women initially formed the Seekers of Truth, determined to reestablish order because no one else would do what was necessary. The truth they sought, the question they tried to answer, was how to restore sanity in a world gone mad.

Was theirs a reign of terror? Perhaps. Evidence suggests they were as vigilant in their protection of mages as they were of regular people. When they intervened, they convened an ad hoc trial to determine the guilty party. This even application of justice led to their poor reputation; the Seekers came down against every group at one time or another, their "Inquisition" gaining notoriety for being on no one's side but their own. They considered themselves good people, however—followers of the Maker's true commandments. This was never more evident than when they lay down their banner in support of the fledgling Chantry. They believed with all their heart that the Templar Order was the answer a desperate Thedas needed in a terrible time. Ultimately, the Inquisition was composed of independent idealists, not Chantry zealots; that is the truth.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## THE GATE GUARDIANS

And as I walked in the desert, I saw a great armored figure whose form blotted out the sky. At first I took it to be no more than met the eye, a simple spiked statue, but as I approached, this deceptive icon transformed into a warrior as graceful as it was massive, its bladed staff leveled at me with energy crackling from its tip. Though my position was hardly optimal (primal magic burned a few feet from my face), I kept my wits and asked this mighty golem to show me mercy.

The armored figure spoke with a voice to make the sky quake and the stars scream. It sought magic to keep itself alive, it said, and the blood of the earth was the energy on which it survived. Having knowledge of the dwarves and the lyrium they provided to our mages, I directed the golem to the mage Atronis, who lived in nearby Perivantium, and it left without another word.

That is the inspiration for the gate guardians I have designed, as fanciful a tale as it might seem. As for why I have asked that each guardian cast from my designs be inset with a small lyrium rod, I must primarily state that it is mere fancy. If Archon Ishal, gentle autocrat that he is, sees fit to ensure that my statues are known across the empire—I hear that one shall stand in the Western Approach—I would treasure the small hope that someday, I might see one walk again.

—*A tale told by Appius Trius, famed sculptor whose creations all sparked the imagination of those who beheld them, from Artists of Ancient Tevinter*

## THE LION OF ORLAIS

As to your question regarding why a lion is considered the symbol of Orlais, particularly when the lion is a creature native only to eastern Thedas, the answer is quite simple. It adorns the crest of the Valmonts, the family that has ruled the empire since the end of the Exalted Age, and in truth it is the Valmonts which have come to represent Orlais. Before them, the Orlesian symbol was that of the descendants of Kordillus Drakon: a dragon.

As to why the lion adorns their crest? That dates back to the time of Lambert Valmont, a young captain of Orlais who distinguished himself at the Battle of Ayesleigh, that great and infamous battle that ended the Fourth Blight. It is said that young Valmont disregarded orders during the battle, taking his forces to relieve the beleaguered Antivans and saving them from absolute destruction. Though his superiors were at first chagrined, chalking up the captain's actions to an infatuation with a certain Antivan camp follower (this, incidentally, has never been confirmed), it later came to light that the Antivan force had been led by King Azar Adalberto Campana himself. In the political realignment following the Blight's end, Antiva was an important ally to Orlais—and Lambert Valmont was an Antivan hero. He was given the hand of one of King Azar's daughters in marriage and elevated to noble rank, with a valiant lion to adorn his newly created heraldry. The Orlesian emperor was forced to respond in kind, granting Valmont a marquisate. Imagine, if you will, the hero returning to Val Royeaux from the Blight, sporting a wife with royal blood and the honors of two nations. This is why jealous nobles called him the Swaggering Lion, a nickname he embraced.

It was Lambert Valmont's son, Alphonse, who later led the civil war against the usurper, Xavier Drakon. He killed Xavier in single combat, giving rise to the great Orlesian legend of the Lion Slaying the Dragon, putting an end to the Drakon dynasty as he assumed the throne... and changing the Orlesian symbol forever.

*—From a letter by Brother Genitivi to Prince Cailan Theirin, 9:20 Dragon*

## THE LONG WALK TO HALAMSHIRAL

Only sixty-five of our group made it to Halamshiral. Some gave up. Some sickened, especially the little ones. Bandits stalked us. My mother forgive me, I had to steal food. A child fought me for extra scraps of bread. A few days later, I carried her for miles after her legs gave out. She died shivering in my arms.

I used to have a master, a mage. He fed me well, never beat me, even taught me how to read so I could do his accounts. But if he had a theory or a spell he wanted to test out, he'd get out his daggers, have the other servants tie me to a post, and carve furrows into my skin. I was so afraid. Every time, I was sure I would die. But at worst I'd collapse, get bandaged up, and lie in bed too weak to move for days. The other slaves visited me in secret to survey the damage. I'd heal just enough before he needed blood again. That is why I traveled from Vol Dorma to the Dales with nothing but rags on my back.

That is why there were one hundred and five of us when we set out, all elven. That is why I fell to my knees and wept when we crossed through the gates of my new home, a village for my people.

*—Anonymous account of the Long Walk, as told to Brother Pekor of Ferelden, circa -140 Ancient*

## THE MAKER

## SAME AS IN DAO

There was no word  
For heaven or for earth, for sea or sky.  
All that existed was silence.  
Then the Voice of the Maker rang out,  
The first Word,  
And His Word became all that might be:  
Dream and idea, hope and fear,  
Endless possibilities.  
And from it made his firstborn.  
And he said to them:  
In My image I forge you,  
To you I give dominion  
Over all that exists.  
By your will  
May all things be done.

Then in the center of heaven  
He called forth  
A city with towers of gold,  
streets with music for cobblestones,  
And banners which flew without wind.  
There, He dwelled, waiting  
To see the wonders  
His children would create.

The children of the Maker gathered  
Before his golden throne  
And sang hymns of praise unending.  
But their songs  
Were the songs of the cobblestones.  
They shone with the golden light  
Reflected from the Maker's throne.  
They held forth the banners  
That flew on their own.

And the Voice of the Maker shook the Fade  
Saying: In My image I have wrought  
My firstborn. You have been given dominion  
Over all that exists. By your will  
All things are done.  
Yet you do nothing.  
The realm I have given you  
Is formless, ever-changing.



And He knew he had wrought amiss.  
So the Maker turned from his firstborn  
And took from the Fade  
A measure of its living flesh  
And placed it apart from the Spirits, and spoke to it, saying:  
Here, I decree  
Opposition in all things:  
For earth, sky  
For winter, summer  
For darkness, Light.  
By My Will alone is Balance sundered  
And the world given new life.

And no longer was it formless, ever-changing,  
But held fast, immutable,  
With Words for heaven and for earth, sea and sky.  
At last did the Maker  
From the living world  
Make men. Immutable, as the substance of the earth,  
With souls made of dream and idea, hope and fear,  
Endless possibilities.

Then the Maker said:  
To you, my second-born, I grant this gift:  
In your heart shall burn  
An unquenchable flame  
All-consuming, and never satisfied.  
From the Fade I crafted you,  
And to the Fade you shall return  
Each night in dreams  
That you may always remember me.

And then the Maker sealed the gates  
Of the Golden City  
And there, He dwelled, waiting  
To see the wonders  
His children would create.

—*Canticle of Threnodies 5:1-8*

## **THE MASON'S TALES: FREED ARE SLAVES**

I think this one is called "Freed Are Slaves," which is exactly the kind of "saying words but meaning different things" I expect from a Tevinter. There's lies in the carving, too, but I'll come back to that.

Subject aside, I like this. It's workmanlike, but in a good dwarven way. It repeats because the carver knows what she's good at, so she does it again and again. Makes me think she has more than a passing knowledge of the Stone.

That said, there's two sets of hands involved, one old, one new. Take this magister. He's glowing because he's fresh. Newer. Same with his trophies flanking him. Carved down from more complex figures. And the flat next to them - seems plain, doesn't it? The bottom is filled with detail, but this is left an open field? No, that's just what it is now, but there's shadows for a clever eye. So, what was here if not this handsome magister wanting his cod stuffed? Someone else instead of him and his friends, and two more figures on each side. Seven total.

Only the top was changed. The Qunari haven't been touched; that's old wear down there. When it was first done and hundreds of years later, yoked Qunari prisoners still fit. I don't suppose it's for the same reasons.

I can only say the what, not the why. I can guess that someone wanted to be a Tevinter hero and paid to have their face carved on an antiquity. I mean, that's a crime against ancestors where I'm from, but I don't expect Tevinters to obey dwarven honor. Or their own, really. They've been at war a long time, so I understand wanting to seem big. Orzammar's the same with the darkspawn, unfortunately.

Still, shame to lose the original. Not for the seven, for the carver. Good work, this.

## **THE MASON'S TALES: INVASION**

This pretty collection is "Invasion." Big claim for seven people and one castle. Maybe "dreams" aren't as grand as mages claim. Flying looks like fun, though. Like falling, but up. So, not like falling at all.

It's seven here, seven magisters. Only five detailed, but that's because two have been chipped away. Looks like vandals; done with a rock, not chisel. Hard to come up with a reason to do it poorly like that except fear or lack of time. Maybe they had symbols different from the ones left because symbols are always making people angry enough to chip rock.

So these seven invade the Golden City. That's what it's meant to be because it's all fanciful. Needs stairs, if you ask me. Don't care if you can fly; stairs aren't just functional. They lead the eye and ground the structure. Here the sculptor hasn't just left them off, she's made the place too high. Anyone with a sense of Stone will tell you that this place is coming down under its own weight. It's intentional because it's a "god's" house, but I'm not sure what the style mishmash has to do with the "wonder" of that. If this were a real place from that long ago, you'd see only Tevinter in the architecture. But this looks like typical post-empire bluster, adding elven bits like they always owned it. That's an artist for you. A mason would have at least got it the right way round. Tevinter foundation with elven overlay, not muddled.

Anyway, simple message: the carver wants it known that mortals aren't supposed to be there. No stairs.

## **THE MASON'S TALES: SACRIFICE**

From what I can figure, this one is called "Sacrifice." I'll get back to that later. By two sculptors, and I'll get back to that sooner.

The sculptor's gone to the trouble of faces. I'd guess she worked from portraits, which means they were people who considered themselves important enough to need them. The scene is a classic example of "don't do this" because the sculptor hates them. It's in the way it's carved: all fast, hard edges. Uglier than they need to be, even for your average Tevinter who - and this isn't just me, mind - stands like a lanky vein of lyrium. But don't mistake that for sloppy carving. It's natural, practiced. The carver knows Tevinter. Bet she is one, and it's self-hate, probably.

And obvious enough. There's skulls all over, and two big and horned. That brings to mind your Qunari, and fair enough, right? Tevinters hate Qunari and have ever since they showed up. No magister wants his mouth contradicted, let alone stitched. So it makes sense they're there, even that early, I suppose.

Because this is probably that business of readying to invade the Fade, and giants with horns are a good motivator to sodding hurry up. Odd thing, though, is that those two are not the only Qunari in the carving. The one in the middle was sculpted with horns, and someone has gone in later and chipped them off. You can tell by the surface of it. Well, maybe you can't. But I can.

Seen it happen time and again. Tastes change, and the ancestor's nudes are suddenly embarrassing. So in comes a new hand to paint on some clothes. And here, judging by the marks, to cut away the horns and make the victim look human. Some proud new owner didn't want to throw out the antiquity, but also didn't want people to think grandm'ma sliced up Qunari. Looks like they didn't care if she kept their heads around, though.

So! The carvers both wanted to show Tevinter being shits, but the later one didn't want to show what about. And that's usually to avoid blame or deny credit. Or to be an arse, I suppose.

## **THE MASON'S TALES: THE ARCHDEMON**

I gather this one is titled "The Archdemon." Not "The Three Archdemons," and I'll get back to that. Good construction here. A nice balanced carving, if you consider Tevinters to have equal weight to the dragon's arse. Not a bad comparison, you ask me.

Seven magisters and some easy symmetry to give a host something to sound smart about after dinner. If I had to guess, they'd go on about how four lines, and four magisters, are part of the dragon and favored. Two lines are piercing it, so they do more damage than good. And one, that big one farthest out, has missed the thing completely. If this was carved around the Third Blight, that gets you three heads. Doesn't matter, those are all shallow details, probably followed by "and it speaks to me because my soul something regret whatever."

Now, the first thing those spits don't understand is that carving isn't just what you see. They've never made a physical thing and don't know the how of it. Depth is all tricks of shadow and such; the actual cuts are only as deep as the sculptor wants. And if you take a flat edge to this thing, what she wanted is strange. Because what I'm thinking is that this is one Archdemon and the three heads are the reaction to the three lines. Because piercing-line-one is on the same tier as the Tevinter second from left, and the middle head turned away. Piercing-line-two is the same tier as Tevinter fifth from left, and the first head turned away. And the line that misses it, that's the same tier as the big Tevinter, farthest out. And the dragon is looking straight at him. So the ones who did damage, the dragon doesn't care. The one who faked it, the dragon gives him an eyeful.

Now, add to that: artists like to hit big targets, but this carving has no faces. If she wanted to carve specific people, they'd be there, she has that skill. So, what if she's not after the magisters, she's carved Tevinter itself? You've got four ages of the empire where they're part of the dragon, two where they damage it, and one where they miss the point entirely and it gets them eaten. Think about it too much, and I bet you could come up with five different ways match their calendar, including your favorite aunt's birthday.

So, there you go. That's how to go from "balanced" to "not invited next time." At my house, anyway.

## THE MASON'S TALES: THE FALL

Now here's a happy study. "The Fall," and a face that says, "why did we try to go where there were no stairs?" Because you go into an impossible building like that, you're coming out on fire, and then it will flip or something. I still do not see the appeal of dreams.

So, your seven magisters entered, and they came out blighted and not sure which way is up. I'll pass that off to the sculptor trying to represent madness. I mean, towers here, upended over there. You know what kind of force it would take to flip that much stone? It'd do more than burn your beard.

Here's something interesting, though. You've got a hint of pigment and leaf causing some sheen, but there's meant to be more. All of these were painted and repainted at some point, to match whatever lord's three-holer. But there's a type of finishing that you can do, a very fine and time-consuming pass that evens the surface. Do it right, you can get stone as smooth as glass. And that tower, and Beardy's skull, are meant to have it. And only a little is present on the others.

So, the first time this carving was wheeled out, it would have looked like Beardy was the target, so maybe he was first in the door? And the "light," it burns him and spreads to the others. And the polish or leaf would have caught light like a mirror and caused the viewer to squint. They'd have to look down or away, "joining" the magisters in their punishment. Makes them feel part of it.

That's what I figure, anyway. And it would sure keep the children out of the feast hall.

## THE MYSTERY AND MEANING OF EIGHT SILKS

Eight silks drape across Belle Marche. Eight silks that frame the sky and shade the calm of commerce. But why eight? That question is posed time and again by visitor and philosopher. What in the grand history of our capital is displayed in this subtle choice? The ages? But we have had nine, and what fool would have made such a prediction? There is nothing in the Orlesian mindset, in the heart of Orlais, that suggests even a hint of accepting an end to our way.

Perhaps then something less flattering, but veiled? It is opined that the eight represents the twin boys of Empress Yvette, born 7:99 which heralded the Blessed Age, being the entwined loops of the number "8" itself, not its value. The more irreverent suggest that the "8" could as easily be a slight against Yvette's figure, for she was rumored to be stout but determined in her choice of corsetry. Both theories are scoffed at by historians as mere number fetish.

What emerges when we consider the longevity of the question is not that there is meaning to be found, but that it is ingrained in us to search as though there is. For we need to believe that such a prominent detail of the greatest city the world has ever known must be thoroughly rife with meaning. And so certain are we, that we discount even the architect, who grew so annoyed of the question that he had the answer engraved on his memorial:

"There were sixteen rods."

How compares his "fact" to our search for "truth"?

—*From Our Orlesian Heart*, by (formerly) Sister Laudine

## THE MYSTERY OF JUNE

Each elven "god" represents an aspect of their ancient civilization, each story a metaphor for this aspect. June's is least understood. Depictions stretch back to ancient Arlathan, but he appears most seldom of all their deities. Dalish legend says June is a god of crafts and building, but the oldest depiction have none of the tools the Dalish associate with him.

June's role may have changed over time, or simply cannot be understood today. As the elves fell, ancient Tevinter spared little thought to preserving any Dalish culture not convenient or understood.

—*From A Treaty on the Pagan and Heretical Customs of the Elven by Senallen Tavernier of the University of Orlais, commissioned by Empress Celene*

## THE PERENDALE WAR

Not many people take the road west into Perendale for the sake of pleasure. Few living things inhabit the rocky countryside save for silver miners, wyverns, and an astoundingly pugnacious breed of mountain goat. In far-off days, the mountains around the city were full of dragons, and perhaps this was what first brought it to the attention of the Pentaghost kings.

Certainly, it was not the goats.

Although the region has belonged to Nevarra since the late Blessed Age, travelers here will find much that reminds them of a provincial Orlesian town. A great carving depicting the Lions Slaying the Dragon adorns Perendale's gate, and many Orlesian lions decorate the city's buildings. And there are still many citizens who cling to the hope that the empress will restore the city to the empire.

Historians mostly agree that it was not the dragons, nor the silver, and certainly not the goats that began centuries of warfare between Orlais and Nevarra. It was Emperor Etienne Valmont and the Pentaghosts.

In 7:82 Storm, the Pentaghost family, fresh on the throne again for the first time in generations and eager to build up the alliances lost by the Van Markham dynasty, approached the emperor to solidify a peace treaty through marriage. The emperor, who was under great pressure to produce an heir, set aside his empress of 17 years and wed Princess Sotiria Pentaghost, theoretically cementing a promise of peace and cooperation between Nevarra and Orlais.

Promises are hard to keep. By 7:97 Storm Sotiria was still childless, and the emperor sent her to a cloister so that he might marry his mistress. As anyone other than Etienne might have predicted, the Nevarrans took this poorly. Angry letters arrived in the Imperial Palace by the cartload. A small war party of Pentaghosts rode into Orlais and reclaimed Princess Sotiria. But the Nevarrans did not take military action yet. They were strategists, and knew to bide their time.

In 8:46 Blessed, while most of the Orlesian army was committed to a war in Ferelden, the Pentaghosts began their war against Orlais. The Orlesians rallied a defense and drove the Nevarrans from Ghislain and Arlesans, but at the cost of much of their northern territory. Perendale was lost and never recovered. A lingering sign that peace between the two nations was impossible.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar, by Brother Genitivi*

## THE QUN

## SAME AS IN DAI

Long ago, the Ashkaari lived in a great city by the sea. Wealth and prosperity shone upon the city like sunlight, and still its people grumbled in discontent. The Ashkaari walked the streets of his home and saw that all around him were the signs of genius: triumphs of architecture, artistic masterpieces, the palaces of wealthy merchants, libraries, and concert halls. But he also saw signs of misery: the poor, sick, lost, frightened, and the hopeless. And the Ashkaari asked himself, "How can one people be both wise and ignorant, great and ruined, triumphant and despairing?"

So the Ashkaari left the land of his birth, seeking out other cities and nations, looking for a people who had found wisdom enough to end hopelessness and despair. He wandered for many years through empires filled with palaces and gardens, but in every nation of the wise, the great, the mighty, he found the forgotten, the abandoned, and the poor. Finally, he came to a vast desert, a wasteland of bare rock clawing at the empty sky, where he took shelter in the shadow of a towering rock, and resolved to meditate until he found his answer or perished.

Many days passed, until one night, as he gazed out from the shadow of the rocks, he saw the lifeless desert awaken. A hundred thousand locusts hatched from the barren ground, and as one, they turned south, a single wave of moving earth. The Ashkaari rose and followed in their wake: a path of devastation miles wide, the once verdant land turned to waste. And the Ashkaari's eyes were opened.

*Existence is a choice.*

*There is no chaos in the world, only complexity.*

*Knowledge of the complex is wisdom.*

*From wisdom of the world comes wisdom of the self.*

*Mastery of the self is mastery of the world.*

*Loss of the self is the source of suffering.*

*Suffering is a choice, and we can refuse it.*

*It is in our own power to create the world, or destroy it.*

And the Ashkaari went forth to his people.

—An excerpt from *The Qun, Canto 1*

## **THE REBEL GOD**

The Dalish use "Harellan" to mean "traitor to one's kin," but the word does not appear in any elven text before the Towers Age. The ancient root-word is related to "harillen," or opposition, and "hellathen," or noble struggle. The Dalish call Fen'Harel a god of deception, but I posit a far more accurate translation would be "god of rebellion."

What he rebelled against is a story lost to time. In Dalish legends, Fen'Harel seals away the other deities out of love of trickery. If we understood more ancient elven, we might find earlier versions of the Dread Wolf's story give him a more nuanced motivation beyond spite.

—*From A Treaty on the Pagan and Heretical Customs of the Elven, by Senallen Tavernier of the University of Orlais, commissioned by Empress Celene.*

## **THE SECRET TONGUE OF SLAVES**

Despite widespread illiteracy, Tevinter's slaves have developed a series of small pictograms that they scrawl on walls or under furniture, hidden from their uncaring owners. Regional variations make deciphering them a unique challenge. In one city, the sign of a clenched fist means a murderous master. In another, the same symbol indicates a harsh slave owner but not one with a fatal temper.

The ruling class's general indifference to the moods and fears of their slaves makes this pictorial argot an important method of communication. It is therefore all the more strange so many Tevinter comedies center around a farcical misunderstanding of a sloppily written sigil, where witty slaves scramble to subvert blame in time to avoid beheading. Perhaps it comforts Tevinter's well-to-do to believe that their property is only this clever—and human—in fiction.

—*From a lesson book by Besha of Rivain*

## THE WOMEN OF ALL WAR

Regarding the cataloguing of Skyhold: Four Statues of Chasind Influence

Like many features of Skyhold, these four statues are not original to the structure. Scratchings much newer than the sculpture suggest these were placed by Fereldans as representations of Andraste. Typical appropriation; these are not Our Lady. They are altered Chasind figures, and likely had animal heads or some such. The number suggests the barbarian tradition of personifying seasons as female warriors, bearing the typical attributes of renewal and death. Winter is of note for its brutality, as it is tied to their rumored custom of killing those who flee battle. Harsh enough, but more so when you note that killing the fleeing was not left to fellow soldiers, but common citizens waiting to meet them at their camps. Such was their commitment that death at the hands of their people was welcomed over the shame of broken morale. Such is the brutality of their animist gods.

Archivist Banon

Here follows a relevant page from historic examination:

For She of All and War will dade,  
And issue forth as with a spur,  
And welcome home she will the bold,  
Returning them with crowns and brand.  
But knowing runs the empty hand,  
That all that waits is falling cold.  
For such the shame to flee a cur,  
Is glory saved with mother's blade.

—*From Barbarian Blood: Chasind Myth Made Sensible, collections of the University of Orlais*

## TWINS IN SHADOW

Dirthamen and Falon'Din are linked in Dalish legend as inseparable twin brothers. Scraps of elven stories from after the fall of Arlathan—transcribed into Tevinter and recently lent to our fair University—refer to them as “twin souls” but draw no family connection. The oldest stories never even name them directly, referring to Falon'Din as “Dirthamen's shadow,” and Dirthamen as “Falon'Din's reflection.”

The little we understand implies their bond was not romantic, beyond even the strongest friendship. The legends of Dirthamen and Falon'Din may have been an allegory for complex elven relationships we lack context to comprehend.

—From *A Treaty on the Pagan and Heretical Customs of the Elven*, by Senallen Tavernier of the University of Orlais, commissioned by Empress Celene

## UNREADABLE ELVEN WRITING

*Veilfire writing from a ruin in the Arbor Wilds; the script is so ancient it defies translation.*

There are whispers from the Well of Sorrows. It's impossible to understand the entire text, but certain parts suddenly reveal a shadow of their original meaning.

"She shook the radiance of the stars, divided them into grains of light, then stored them in a shaft of gold. Andruil, blood and force, save us from the time this weapon is thrown. Your people pray to You. Spare us the moment we become Your sacrifice."

There is a brief image of an elaborate golden spear, glowing with unbearable heat. Then it fades.

## UNTRANSLATABLE ELVEN WRITING

*This veilfire script was hidden in the Arbor Wilds. It's so old it cannot be translated into any known language.*

There are whispers from the Well of Sorrows. It's impossible to understand the entire text, but certain parts suddenly reveal a shadow of their original meaning.

"We are trapped. The ones born here do not understand the keenness of what we have lost, or why so many of their elders weep as they enter uthenera. The new ones are faithful to Mythall, but do not understand what she was in her fullness. Without the wise to lead them, they will lose what they should have been.

I will teach them. They must serve. We must prepare for those who cast Mythall down. I shed my name the day I began her service. I shed my new one again, now that she rests. I will only be known by the sorrow that cuts my heart."

For a moment, there is a feeling of wrenching loss. Then it fades.

## VILLE MONTEVELAN

Villa Montevelan was the first settlement humans established in the Dales following the victory of the Exalted March. Soldiers were the earliest residents of the village. In 2:21 Glory, Sister Amity, Champion of the Exalted March, laid the foundation stones of the village chantry in a symbolic gesture; the building's construction was completed in 2:22. Laying aside her sword and bow, Sister Amity took on the task of leading Ville Montevelan's flock, becoming Revered Mother Amity. She served the Maker for over forty years, ministering to both residents of the Dales and the many pilgrims to the historic site. Revered Mother Amity died peacefully in her sleep in 2:64; her ashes are interred in the chantry's vault, where dozens of pilgrims still come each year to pay their respects.

—From *Exalted: A History of the Dales* by Lord Ademar Garde-Haut, royal historian.

## WAY OF THE ARTIFICER

*From "Of Mechanical Obscura." The words of Three-Eyes' make one passage stand out:*

"What can this be?" To ask that question is prove oneself a craftsman, one who looks upon the raw and wonders what it can become. The Artificer is not of that ken, for she will look upon the same resource and wonder not how it can be elevated, but how it can be made to serve. There are no more words necessary.

*Multiple schematics follow.*

## WAY OF THE ASSASSIN

*From "Of Granting Death: Blades and Other Means." Heir's words make one passage stand out:*

You misunderstand the point of secrecy. Of course they knew that I was there—one of their number was dead. It is never the aim that they are ignorant to my purpose or presence. Death is, after all, a message, and messages are meant to be received. It is paramount that the arrival remain secret, not the result. They know what may come, but never when—until the answer is "now" and there is naught they can do but receive.

A treatise on cutting edges and other debilitating elements follows.



## **WAY OF THE CHAMPION**

*From "Champions of Note in a Great Tradition." Lord Chancer's words make one passage stand out:*

There is sacrifice in attaining the adulation of others, for the while the Champion is raised above all but their patron, this is done with the weight of expectation. Their shoulders bear the hopes of those they protect, the pride of those they inspire, and the demands of those they lead. And in becoming such a figure, the Champions accepts not just the aspirations of his or her allies, but also the dangerous envy of the enemy.

One must remember the figures of note who have come before, for the glorious tales of their triumphs are often punctuated by steep and sudden tumbles. They burn bright, and draw others to their glory. But as anyone who knows of flames can attest, a simple shift of breeze or landscape can send the fire homeward. Those who seek the title never think themselves joining a hundred bound for obscurity. They know they are the rare few who will permanently be enshrined in glory. If they did not think as such, they would not be fit to try.

*Many heraldic symbols follow, as well as martial instruction.*

## **WAY OF THE KNIGHT-ENCHANTER**

*From "Rank and Role in Victory." Commander Helaine's words make one passage stand out:*

Many are reluctant to include the rank, but that is because it is rare enough that they have not seen it deployed. Most change their mind when they fight alongside. All change their mind when they fight against.

*An account:*

The training was not pleasant for me. When first I exited my Circle, I was as a babe new to the world. And then I was in battle, in defense of nation and name, and the lines did form, and my fellow mages took their positions in the rear.

And I stepped forward.

Then my place in the fray opened, and those of muscle and blade were around me, and I was not afraid. For I knew my role and worth, and soon did all others know them as well. Any concerns I had that the knights would not heed evaporated. All knew their rank, their place, and the value of that to their lives. Our blades were of different ken, but our purpose was clear and defined. On the field, in the battle, I command.

*Detailed principles and examples of command follow.*

## **WAY OF THE NECROMANCER**

*From "Mortalitati: For the Living, the Dead." The words of Speaker Viuus Anaxas make one passage stand out:*

We are of this world, and as with any piece that seeks to leave its element, there is a void when we abandon the mortal. It must be that this would hold our returning to the Maker. It must be that we should seek balance. It must be that the Maker's first children aid the second.

*An account:*

Breath ceased on the hour exactly. We felt his absence in that moment, and were ready. It was gentle, and all were calmed by the signs of spirit entering, knowing there would be no chains on their loved one. Unfettered, he would find the side of the Maker. But that was not the training for the battlefield. I had heard the accounts and knew my role, and I was ready. Then our warriors signaled the charge, and I was not ready. Breath was not stilled by the hour and was not gentle. And I was sore afraid. Then the enemy countered, and I saw blades come for the good men whom I had stood beside, and I would not allow it! The dead who had fallen, I bid their forms to serve, and it was the turn of our foes to know fear. But I had peace, for I had granted the fallen greater purpose, and in doing, had honored life by protecting it.

*Detailed ritual instructions follow.*

## **WAY OF THE REAVER**

*From "A Path of Warning and Harsh Promises." Breaker Thram's words make one passage stand out:*

The blood of the dragon is treated in a way that speaks of dark intent, though motive is left to the temperament of the individual reaver. All of us can be tempted to harsh conduct. It is simply the fate of the reaver that theirs is the power to be brutal above most others. Their destruction is first inward, a commitment and test that spares them the instant distrust of the blood mage - to whom temptation comes with ease and the will of a demon in constant threat.

*An account:*

I cut the beast. It had seared me, but now its blood was the balm that would sooth. Later, I took the smallest amount and, adding it to the rite and ritual I had learned, drank without hesitation. It did not taste like blood as the uninitiated understand it, for they only know the taste of the wound, a flavor of defeat. This was the taste of blood coursing within, of life, of the primal - a burning that is not swallowed so much as it inhabits. To infuse with the blood and life of such a beast is to be changed at the core. Some could see it and knew I was more than I had been. Some could not and had no warning. And some knew, but would not say, for the choice of how to wield it is truly mine. The act of becoming is a defiance of all expectation. I am above. I see where the blade must go. I see through you.

*Several mixtures are detailed, each contributing to the final.*

## **WAY OF THE RIFT MAGE**

*From "Power Bleeds: Harness the Flow." Your Trainer's words make one passage stand out:*

There are no tomes dedicated to this manipulation. There has been no time for academics, only the practical—and not in a manner that mitigates risk. Power in a raw form has found an outlet, both visible and in ways that only we of arcane proclivity can sense. The risk is great.

*An account:*

From this page forward, these are the notes of Thelric. They began as the work of my mentor Julion, and I will continue in the research she began, as she cannot, because she is dead. The rift we were examining did not react well to her last investigation. We believed ourselves prepared for demonic manifestation. We were not prepared for how the energies we expected would be encountered. Well-versed in the forces that magic can produce, my senior was surprised by an alteration, a deviance. That which previously had to be coaxed is now a flood that must be staunched. The same amount in different intensity, quick to expose fault in the way it is accessed. She drew too much, expecting resistance. There was none, and her form suffered the brunt. Tread carefully in studies of new matters, for I cannot unsee the end of her.

*Scattered symbols and sketches follow.*

## **WAY OF THE TEMPEST**

*From "Of Storms: Notes on the Tempest in Practice." Kihm's words make one passage stand out:*

They expect folly in the Tempest and are fooled, for there is no madness in knowing the absolute limit of ability and charging to that edge. Wars may be a tactical affair, but the one-on-one meeting of combatants is decided by the one who first realizes they are in mortal peril and commits fully. Many reach that point; the Tempest starts there. By the time their foes have risen to match, it is too late.

And another:

They asked what type of shot they should encase the mixture in, expecting some trebuchet pot or a vessel fit to pour over a palisade. I bade them make it by the barrel and store it in my quarters with a thousand glass vials. They were afraid, and I smiled.

Another still:

Forward! Ever so! Where you were is dangerous! Where you go is dangerous! Different reasons, both to your advantage! Leap! Then leap again! Looking is for witnesses, not the disaster!

Also one more:

I did not say I was unappreciative, nor unimpressed. That you were a sight to behold is not in question. All I noted is that the Tempest is offensive not just in ability, but in what condition you leave the field. I should like a hundred of you to deploy in the cities of my enemy, and not a one to stand as defense in my own home.

*A series of unstable brews follows.*

## **WAY OF THE TEMPLAR**

*From a treatise on lyrium and its varied forms. Ser's words make one passage stand out:*

The means and usage employed by the templar are far stronger than even the droughts of magi, and are of considerable danger to the uninitiated. It is not something that is introduced in gradual fashion. Rather, it is a great infusion that is daily held in check by ritual maintenance.

*An account:*

We entered the makeshift chantry, and my comrades-to-be were arranged as though an honor guard - the trainer waiting to receive me. I was invited to pass among them, and it seemed important that each step be my will. Any reluctance would have signaled that I was not ready. They were boisterous and encouraging, slapping hands upon my shoulders as I passed. Upon reaching the trainer, he turned to me. Before him was the boxed philter I had prepared. He nodded, as if to ask if I was ready, and I returned the gesture. His eyes were solemn as he raised a mailed hand. It was bathed in the shapeless glow of lyrium far too strong, prepared in a way I did not know.

The hands of my fellows, still on my shoulders, gently turned from welcome to restraint, and my arms were made immobile at my sides. I felt a rising alarm, but my certainty beat it down, as it would many times in my career. The trainer pressed the glow against my chest, and in an instant all was pain and white. When next I had my senses, there was much camaraderie and rejoicing, but also knowing looks. Each day, I felt a hunger deeper than I had ever known, and woe be me if it went unfed. I cannot imagine bearing it without the support of the Order and my certain purpose.

*Several instructions for handling lyrium follow.*

## **WHAT PRIDE HAD WROUGHT**

And as the black clouds came upon them,  
They looked on what pride had wrought,  
And despaired.

The work of man and woman,  
By hubris of their making.  
The sorrow a blight unbearable.

—Canticle of Threnodies 7:10-11

Pride! What other sin wounds us so deeply as pride? It drove the old Tevinter magisters to blacken the Golden City, it pushed Maferath to betray Beloved Andraste, and it has made fools of kings and peasants ever since the Maker formed us from nothing.

Pride disguises itself in surety. Who among us has not looked at our fair country and thought "Surely we are safe here, under protection. Our world will last forever, for we are mighty and wise." These verses say to the faithful: go and look upon the ruins of old, and ask who remembers the faces of those who dwelled there? Only the Maker's knowledge is complete. The words He gave to us through Blessed Andraste are the one true constant in our world. A land without the Chant is doomed to be forgotten by time.

—*Notes on the Chant of Light*, by Mother Bezoria of the Grand Cathedral, 9:37 Dragon

## **WINTER PALACE**

### **The Grand Apartments**

This wing once served as a home-away-from-home for members of House Valmont's four cadet branches, but it has fallen into disuse since Emperor Florian's reign. The late emperor would not allow relatives more distant than his siblings into the Winter Palace; for years the entirety of the Grand Apartments was closed off.

—Excerpt from *Architectural History of Orlais, Volume 1* by Elodie Ferneau

## **The Servants' Wing**

During her reign's fifth year, Empress Celene substantially expanded the palace servants' living quarters. They now encompass a large stretch of garden which the landscape architect Trenou designed; it is considered one of the finest examples of his style in Orlais.

—Excerpt from *Architectural History of Orlais, Volume 1* by Elodie Ferneau

## **The Grand Library of Halamshiral**

The Winter Palace's collection of book is one of the world's largest; only the library of the University of Orlais and the Imperial Palace library compare. Famed cabinet maker Gustav of Val Fontaine designed and built the shelves, the finest examples of his marquetry technique still in existence.

—Excerpt from *Architectural History of Orlais, Volume 1* by Elodie Ferneau

## **The Verchiel Fountain**

Emperor Judicael I commissioned this massive fountain to commemorate House Valmont's historic victory against Xavier Drakon. The four lions represent Emperor Alphonse Valmont and his three younger brothers—Duke Isidore d'Arlesans, Duke Yvon of Savrenne, and Duke Stephan of Val Montaigne—who took the field against the usurper.

—Excerpt from *Architectural History of Orlais, Volume 1* by Elodie Ferneau

## **Le Requiem**

After his coronation in 8:84 Blessed, Emperor Florian commissioned the building of a chapel in the palace of Halamshiral as his first act, to honor his infant daughter Evangeline who died in the Hundred Days' Cough outbreak of 8:77 Blessed. The chapel contains exquisite murals Empress Justinia herself painted, of the life and death of Andraste.

—Excerpt from *Architectural History of Orlais, Volume 1* by Elodie Ferneau

## **WORN PILLARS**

*A sketch of the pillars, followed by another drawing imagining the pillars as part of a grand monument, with appended notes on the subject:*

The remains of the structures surely predate the Second Blight. Perhaps older. My knowledge of ancient Imperium architecture is limited. There are some similarities, but I'm uncertain of their origin. One of the miners thinks they're elven—of course this is based on a few carvings he found that "look sort of elfy." The pillars are unlike the ruins one sees in the Dales. Of course, *these* would be much older than anything found there.

—Excerpt from the journal of Henri Ducett, Envers Mining Company representative and amateur historian

## **WICKED EYES AND WICKED HEARTS**

The Old Gods will call to you,  
From their ancient prisons they will sing.  
Dragons with wicked eyes and wicked hearts,  
On blacken'd wings does deceit take flight,  
The First of My children, lost to night.

—Canticle of Silence 3:6

The Dissonant Canticle of Silence is an alternate creation story to the versions in the Canticle of Threnodies. Much of the Canticle is written from the point of view of the Maker Himself as He addresses humankind, which is why it was ultimately considered a blasphemous presumption and removed from the verses of the Chant. Popularly attributed to Archon Hessarian, Silence depicts the Maker as more sorrowful at the corruption and betrayal of His children—both spirit and mortal. He mourns the fall and corruption of the Old Gods as His own mistake, and urges His mortal children to turn aside from the dark path their elder siblings have led them down.

Most historians agree that Archon Hessarian had indeed likely written this Canticle during the bloody Tevinter Transfiguration. Literary scholars of the Imperium often cite this as one of the oldest recorded pieces of propaganda. In the sixth verse, the grieving Maker calls upon His mortal children to acknowledge that the dragon gods have manipulated and deceived them, and to throw off their corruptive influence and return to the Light. As the people of Tevinter rose up and slaughtered anyone remaining faithful to their Old Gods, this became the rallying cry of the most terrible bloodbath in the history of the Imperium.

—*From The Chant of Light: Literary Analysis and History by Sister Tessaria*

## **IN YOUR HEART SHALL BURN**

Then the Maker said:  
To you, My second-born, I grant this gift:  
In your heart shall burn  
An unquenchable flame  
All-consuming, and never satisfied.  
From the Fade I crafted you,  
And to the Fade you shall return  
Each night in dreams  
That you may always remember Me.

—Canticle of Threnodies 5:7

In passages one through six, His first children wanted for nothing; freed from need, they could only praise. But it was hollow, without cost. We—and all the physical—were created immutable, that our works would require struggle. A wonder created of wood and stone proves more intent than any wish of the Fade.

Here in the gentlest verses of the Chant, we see how great His gift and how stern His punishment. To inspire, He gave us dreams, such that we would strive to make this limited world reflect His glory. Some look upon that nightly memory and feel only desire, as though owed His splendor. We, the second children, were meant to master the wonts and wanes of emotion and childish pursuits, to honor at a distance and move ever forward. We failed in this, and the weakest of us did act as petulant infants, clawing back into His sight. Because we could not master our desire, because we acted on pitiful instinct, because we *dared* look upon our Maker to fulfill our need and not His, He is lost to us.

But He is merciful while stern, and we remember what we have lost. His second children can learn, grow, and change. If we cannot, then we are no better—and no worse—than His first children.

—*From The Word and Challenge of the Chant by Revered Mother Hevara*

## DOOM UPON ALL THE WORLD

And so is the Golden City blackened  
With each step you take in my Hall.  
Marvel at perfection, for it is fleeting.  
You have brought Sin to Heaven  
And doom upon all the world.

—Canticle of Threnodies 8:13

There is very little of the infamous Thirteenth Verse that we can take literally. It speaks in the voice of the Maker Himself; since He has never deigned to speak to His children directly, we can rest assured it is a work of fiction. There are facts, however, that support it, at least in part. Records remain from the time prior to the First Blight saying that, yes, seven magisters did open a portal to enter the Fade physically. These seven—whose true names we have lost either to legend or deliberate obscurity—did so at the behest of the Old Gods, who "whispered from their ancient prisons." We also know that the Golden City, visible from every part of the Fade by any mage at the time, turned black as night the moment these seven breached its gates. Everything else—the accusations of "sin", the suggestion that these seven became the first darkspawn, that they were directly responsible for the Blights to come—all of that is conjecture.

—From *Questioning the Chant* by Magister Vibus Agorian

## HERE LIES THE ABYSS

Here lies the abyss, the well of all souls.  
From these emerald waters doth life begin anew.  
Come to me, child, and I shall embrace you.  
In my arms lies Eternity.

—Canticle of Andraste, 14:11

Chantry sisters have long since debated this section of the Chant of Light. It is tempting to assume that the "well of all souls" is a literal well, but such imagery appears nowhere in Andraste's other works. An examination from Threnodies 1:4 yields clues:

*From the waters of the Fade you made the world.  
As the Fade had been fluid, so was the world fixed.*

It is possible—even likely—that the "emerald waters" Andraste refers to are the substance of the Fade, which began as an "ocean of dreams" (Threnodies 1:1) and was reduced to a well—bottomless but limited in scope—by the Maker's creation of our world.

Is Andraste urging the listener to come to the Fade? Should we take "From these emerald waters doth life begin anew," as literal evidence of reincarnation—or even of life after death, as the Cult of Spirits suggests—or as a figurative benediction indicating that the Maker is the source of all life, and in finding His embrace for Eternity, we will only be returning our souls from whence they came?

—An excerpt from *Reflections on Divinity*, by Revered Mother Juliette

## THE WRATH OF HEAVEN

Those who oppose Thee  
Shall know the wrath of heaven.  
Field and forest shall burn,  
The seas shall rise and devour them,  
The wind shall tear their nations  
From the fact of the earth.  
Lightning shall rain down from the sky,  
They shall cry out to their false gods,  
And find silence.

—Canticle of Andraste 7:19

Who was Andraste? This question has lingered in the ages since her death, not as easily answered as the faithful assume. Born an Alamarri slave in the frontier realm of the Tevinter Imperium, now Ferelden, the Chant says she is the Bride of the Maker—that He told her in a vision of her role leading the rebellion against the corrupt magisters.

Is it true, or, as some early Andrastian cults believed, did a friendly spirit bestow this "vision"? We must remember that legends of Andraste were multitude in the years immediately following her execution, and beliefs we take for granted belong to the "cult" victorious in suppressing all others. Indeed, even to suggest there was once disagreement was considered the direst heresy... until today, when we have lost even the memory of disagreement. All we know for certain is that Andraste inspired a world gripped by tyranny and chaos, that she helped spark a war which tore all of Thedas asunder.

—*From Questioning the Chant by Magister Vibius Agorian*

## IN HUSHED WHISPERS

Those who had been cast down,  
The demons who would be gods,  
Began to whisper to men from their tombs within the earth.  
And the men of Tevinter heard and raised altars  
To the pretender-gods once more,  
And in return were given, in hushed whispers,  
The secrets of darkest magic.

—Canticle of Threnodies 5:11

The fifth stanza of Threnodies is a complete retelling of the creation story appearing in Stanza One. The authors are clearly different, with notable disagreements on the nature of spirits and the ultimate cause of the Second Sin. This stanza lays the blame for mankind's corruption squarely on the Old Gods rather than on a flaw inherent to human nature; therefore, historians believe a Tevinter author, perhaps even Archon Hessarian himself, wrote it.

In the eleventh verse, we see this illustrated most clearly. "The demons who would be gods," can be no one but the Old Gods; they are credited here not only with broaching the Golden City, but with gifting the secrets of magic to humankind. The implication is that without this instruction, these "hushed whispers," no magic would exist.

—*From The Chant of Light: Literary Analysis and History by Sister Tessaria*



## LETTERS AND NOTES

### A CHALLENGE!

You ruddy bastard!

You'd be laying at the bottom of the ocean if it weren't for me. That Marlin would've spiked and dropped you. I save your life and this is how you repay me? That catch was ours—we both worked for it. You're not getting away with this. I'm getting the gold you owe me, even if I have to beat it out of you. Just so you don't run off like the little shit I know you are: I did your sister. That's right.

So if you've got the stones, meet me by the old camp. We'll settle this.

Terrence

### A DIFFERENT DARKSPAWN?

*The journal, penned by an unknown writer, appears to be quite old, with many of its pages damaged by water and dust. The entries that can be read all appear to be about twenty years old:*

We finally found Amuk alive in that passage. Still can't believe it. The only reason I didn't stop digging is because he had the key to the cache—but, after two weeks, I was expecting to find it on his corpse. What story does he come up with? That he was found by a darkspawn, of all things. A talking darkspawn, polite as you please, who fed him and gave him water and evidently chatted with him about surfacers. I don't know what Amuk is thinking, coming up with a story like that, but he swore by the Stone it was all the truth. Crazy as it sounds, I know Amuk, and he's got the imagination of a dull hammer. Why would he make something like that up?

Reminds me of a story my grandsire used to tell, about something *his* grandsire did. Said he once came upon a group of three darkspawn in the Deeper Roads, each twice the size of any dwarf—bigger than humans, even—and dressed up like kings. He watched from the shadows and said they talked, like people, about things he couldn't understand. A city gone black, and they blamed each other for things but could barely remember for what. My mam was like that: never remembered the slight, just that she was angry. Story goes they attacked each other, and one ran off while the second choked the third to death and then ate him.

Don't know about darkspawn having talking kings, never mind polite ones that give you food and tea, but maybe Amuk met one of them. There's strange things in the Deeper Roads, after all, things the Shapers can't even recall. As if smuggling wasn't dangerous enough.

### A FATHER'S LETTER

*This letter never reached its intended recipient:*

My dearest Fennela,

How are you? How is your Aunt Kaitlen? My dear girl would never give trouble, I hope? How are your studies? Perhaps you could read some of this letter to her, to show her how much you're learning.

I am sorry to have been away for so long. I have a duty. Remember when Mother was very sick, and she asked you to fetch her water, and you did it because you loved her? It's like that. Sometimes we have to do difficult things, because they help other people that we love. The country is ill, and I have to try to make her better. Don't worry—I am not alone here, and now we have special medicine that will make us stronger so we can fight better.

It won't be long 'til all the mages are all gone and we're safe again. I will be home soon.

All my love and prayers,

Father

## **A GREY WARDEN'S JOURNAL**

We searched the area but found no sign. If he was here, it was some time ago.

The fishermen in this area are friendly. Unlike some, they remember how the Grey Wardens fought to save Ferelden in the last Blight. Though they had little, they shared some of their catch to give us a better supper than we had tasted in weeks. They even deferred to me once they saw that I commanded the other Wardens, and there are few even in Ferelden who would watch an elf command men without pause.

They are friendly folk. After all this land has suffered in the past years, I hope they find some peace.

---

Still no trace of him, though I feel the darkspawn in the ground below. Could he be lurking close to them, perhaps preparing to die with honor? I doubt it, but it is the only lead we have so far. I confess that this seems a fool's errand at times, given how much is at stake.

We saw bandits harassing the fishermen, and we intervened. The fishermen thanked us, though I fear the bandits will return again in greater numbers, and we will not always be here to help. Nevertheless, as long as we are here, the fishermen are safe.

The dreams continue, as they do every night. They make it hard for us to sleep, but we must persist. Hopefully the others will have found a solution by the time we return. In the meantime, I sing the song of Andruil to myself to clear my mind as best I can.

---

I grow more convinced that if he was ever here, he is now long gone. Still, it would not do for us to miss him through laziness, and he was one of our most skilled warriors. If anyone could hide himself here, it would be he.

One of the fishermen shows promise with a spear and has shoulders like an ox from throwing nets all day. He asked about joining the Grey Wardens. Under other circumstances, I would be honored to take a worthy and willing volunteer. Now... my orders did not say whether I should seek new recruits, even with our circumstances. Or because of them, I suppose. It did not hurt his cause that he was easy to look at, and clearly wished to know more about the Dalish.

The darkspawn are louder than I thought at first. The constant whisper at the back of my mind makes it difficult to sense them as easily as I usually do, but they are near the surface. Perhaps bandits are not the worst these people have to face.

---

He is not here. We have searched thoroughly, and we will now move on. How many days have I wasted here, with whispers lurking at the back of my mind, on this mad assignment? I pray we have more luck as we head south.

After speaking with the other Wardens, I told the fishermen about the darkspawn we sensed beneath the earth. They may not burst forth from the ground today or tomorrow, but I fear it will not be long... and we will not be here when they finally surface. The fishermen were grieved at the news, but they decided to make for West Hill, which is safe for now.

As for the fisherman who was interested in joining, I convinced him that now was not the time. Others might have told him otherwise, but he is too young to make such a sacrifice simply because he does not wish to throw nets into the water all his life. We shared one last night by the campfire, and he went on his way with a smile, humming the song of Andruil as he left.

—From pages torn loose from a journal found on the Storm Coast

## **A LETTER BY A BURNING CANDLE**

Maker, give me strength.

When the darkspawn came to Denerim, I wept so hard that I could not see, but still I fought for You. When demons poured from the sky where the Temple of Sacred Ashes used to stand, my hands shook so badly that I could not aim my bow, but still I fought for You. When Corypheus and his Archdemon destroyed Haven and killed my friends, I screamed until I had no voice, but still I fought for You.

They are sending me to attack Adamant. They say that the fortress is defended by an army of demons, and the odds are grim. We cannot win, but our distraction, our sacrifice may give the important people the chance to do what is necessary. My stomach is knotted, and I see dead friends from old battles reaching out for me every time I close my eyes.

I am so afraid, Maker.

But still, I will fight for You.

—*Writer unknown*

## **A LETTER FROM WARDEN-COMMANDER CLAREL**

Magister Erimond,

I am not an untutored apprentice. The Grey Warden mages who left the Circle just after their Harrowing might take your explanations at face value, but I was an enchanter before I joined the Grey Wardens.

That the sacrifices, the death, are necessary to bind the demons, I grant you. You know more of such things than I, and I make no judgement upon it. But the manner of my mages since binding the demons is still unsettling. They answer my questions readily, but the words are spoken by rote, and several of the non-mages have complained that their comrades seem cold and unfeeling since the ritual. Some of that is natural, I grant you—one cannot kill a brother and come away unchanged—but if there is more to this, I will have it from you.

The Inquisition presses us to action. Continue the rituals. If we must destroy them before we venture into the Deep Roads, so be it. But do not lie to me, Erimond. I stand against the Blight, and no man, no Inquisitor, and no magister will get in my way.

Clarel

## A LETTER FROM THE CARTA

We hired your mercenary organization to facilitate this business venture, not add complications. In order for the Carta to extract the product without attracting undue attention, the area must be free from observation. If the fighting between the apostate mages and the renegade templars is insufficient, your efforts were to dissuade refugees from exploring the area and interfering with our operation.

We are meeting at our primary base of operations in Valammar to determine the next course of action. At your earliest convenience, send representatives to the location marked, to explain the situation and obtain new instructions.

—An unsigned letter found in a remote mountain villa

## A LETTER FROM THE HERO OF FERELDEN

To His/Her Worship, Inquisitor [surname]:

*If the Warden became Queen of Ferelden...*

I wish that I had helpful information regarding Corypheus, but due to my own limited training during the Blight, I know less of ancient darkspawn lore than do most Wardens. I am engaged in a search of my own. All Grey Wardens who do not fall in battle eventually fall to something known as the Calling, a magic that preys upon our own connection to the Blight and the darkspawn. Rather than such foul magic eventually leading to my death, I have determined to find a way to negate this Calling and save all Wardens from its effects.

Part of me wishes that I could help your Inquisition more personally because the danger of Corypheus and the Breach approaches the threat of even another Blight. Regardless, I have my own path to follow, and I must uncover a cure for the Calling if I wish to see my king ever again. I beg you, keep his kingdom safe until I can return to his side.

*If the Warden stayed with the Grey Wardens...*

I appreciate your warning regarding Corypheus. Fortunately, my own search has taken me out of the area where the supposed magister is operating, and while I have encountered challenges of my own, they have not involved any weakness related to my Grey Warden abilities.

As I have little useful information to offer, please accept the accompanying gifts instead. If, in my quest, I find anything that may be of use to you in your fight against Corypheus, I will send it to you immediately.

*If Warden romanced Alistair and he stayed with the Grey Wardens...*

I have also included a note of a personal nature for Warden Alistair.

Please take care of him. Like me, he was instrumental in ending the last Blight. I trust his compassion and his strength above any other's, and I would not go through such effort to overcome our Callings only to lose him to your Inquisition.

*If the Warden romanced Leliana...*

I have also included a note of a personal nature for Leliana.

I was not there for the death of Divine Justinia, but I know it will have hurt her terribly. While her wits and her skill are amazing, Leliana's greatest strength lies in her faith, and to have Justinia die strikes at her very core. I beg you, if she is faltering, help her find her way back into the light.

*If the Warden romanced Morrigan and left with her at the end of Witch Hunt...*

I have also included a note of a personal nature for Lady Morrigan and Kieran.

Please take care of my family. Morrigan is stronger and wiser than anyone else I have met, and I would not go through such effort to escape my own Calling to lose them to your Inquisition.

*Note: If the operation is completed before Wicked Eyes and Wicked Hearts, the note for Morrigan and Kieran will not be included in the Hero's letter.*

*If the Warden romanced Zevran...*

Part of me wishes that I could help your Inquisition more personally because the danger of Corypheus and the Breach approaches the threat of even another Blight. Regardless, Zevran and I have our own battles to fight, and I can only offer my confidence that you have matters well in hand.

*If both the Warden and the Inquisitor are Dalish...*

In closing, I wish you luck. This world of the shemlen is a difficult one for our kind, and I can only imagine the pressure of leading the Inquisition, an organization dedicated to the Chantry, while staying true to the Way of the Three Trees. May Mythal protect you in your quest, and Andruil bless your hunt.

*If both the Warden and the Inquisitor are dwarves...*

In closing, I wish you luck. I came from Orzammar, and not the Carta families, but I know well how easily the humans overlook our kind. Fight well, remember the Stone, and you will do our people proud.

Yours,

Warden-Commander [surname] of Ferelden

## **A LETTER TO HARDING**

My darling Lace:

I hope this letter finds you healthy and happy. Last week, I managed to barter for maps of Ferelden and Orlais from Hugin, the old soldier who rents the place on Mistress Johann's farm—you remember him, don't you? Quiet man, always smoking a pipe in his chair on the porch. He wasn't using the maps anymore, so I gave him some of my jam and patched his coat in exchange for them. Now, whenever you tell me of your travels, I'll be able to track where you've been. I'm astounded, my darling, when I look at the weave of dotted trails I've already marked out on my maps. Oh, the places your feet have touched! How far you've gone, my little Lace. I am so, so proud of you. When I was your age, I'd only ever gone as far as Lothering. My mother never left Redcliffe; she lived and died there. And now here you are, flying so far with so much purpose. My mind can barely comprehend it, but my heart swells.

I shan't take up too much of your time. I know how busy you are. I am looking at the Frostbacks on the map as I write this, because I know you will likely be at your Skyhold. Please make sure to dress warmly. I have included the recipe for your favorite turnip-goat stew. A taste of home to stave off the cold mountain airs.

Kisses and hugs from me and your father.

Mother

## A LETTER TO REVERED MOTHER GISELLE

To my friend and faithful servant, Revered Mother Giselle,

The grand clerics tell me you have requested more aid in tending the refugees who are gathering in and around Redcliffe. Your efforts are indeed most appreciated, although in the future, when you are asked how many refugees will be helped by your efforts for requisitioning purposes, it may help if you provide an actual numerical answer as opposed to the worthy but unspecific, "as many as we can."

It breaks my heart to see this war cross the Maker's land, Giselle. I would that you were here with me at the Temple of Sacred Ashes. Your words have calmed many irate minds over the years, and we will not lack for those at the Conclave. Still, I am glad that the refugees have you to care for them. Too many in the halls of power have forgotten our faithful. If any pressure you to accommodate their views, you must let me know at once.

Maker willing, this war shall all be over soon, Giselle. Be well and go with my blessing.

In service of the Maker,

Divine Justinia V

## A MIDWIFE'S JOURNAL

*This timeworn diary was found amongst more valuable items. It is bound in leather and has a solid silver trim, which might be why it was saved. A few entries can still be made out:*

16 Haring, 9:8

This has been the coldest winter I can remember, even the river is frozen. No one should be out there. Not in this blizzard. So you can imagine my surprise when there was a knock on my gate. A young woman. She's looking for the Fair Banks Cottage. I go out. I say to her, "Nothing fair about this weather. But yes, you are at the right place." She throws back her cloak and I see she is heavy, less than two weeks away. "Please help." She is almost in tears. I bring her into the house and sit her by the fire with some tea and slippers.

She is young, not more than twenty. Her hands are smooth; they have not seen a day of work in her life. Her clothes are travel-stained, but fine. The cloak must be worth at least fifty royals. Beautiful blue, trimmed with fox fur.

Her name is Bernice, but she won't say more. Many girls come here not wanting to say who they are. I understand.

---

25 Haring, 9:8

Bernice has had the baby. A boy. Healthy. Full head of hair! She named him Everiste. She tried to pay me with a heavy gold locket, a falcon on its face. I asked her what it was. It looks valuable. She says it's her father's, and she doesn't care to have it anymore. I tell her she might not, but her son might one day want to know where he's from.

---

1 Wintermarch, 9:9

A new year. Bernice should be healthy enough to leave, but it is still cold and I just cannot turn her out. I will ask her to stay and be my assistant. I have needed help for a while. My fingers are not as nimble as they used to be. Clever girl. She will make a fine apprentice.

## A MINER'S JOURNAL

*Excerpts from the journal of an unknown miner, dated 9:38 Dragon:*

3 Drakonis

Didot wants to know what it means. Didn't we all? But he frets at it. Keep your head low, work like the rest, and shut it out. That's all he needs.

---

13 Drakonis

He feels it. I know he does. We all see it. Still he pushes. I do not want to talk about it; I do not want to know what it means. Some evil magic best left alone—is that not answer enough? He thinks it's more. It's in his head and he won't let it go.

Nug again for dinner. This day never ends.

---

4 Cloudreach

Didot was on the ledge behind the pool. What was he doing? What does he know? If he disturbs it...

Nicco won't talk to Didot at all. He trades shifts so that they will not work together. I should do the same.

---

24 Cloudreach

The boss says *his* boss in Val Firmin will be sending someone to check on operations. Suppose it's just routine. Didot speaks strangely now. Too much time at the door.

Nug again for dinner. Wonderful.

---

1 Bloomingtide

Maker forgive me, but Didot's absence is a weight lifted. Shame about the wife though.

## A PAGE FROM A JOURNAL, EDGES SCORCHED

The templars were attacking the peasants we'd taken food from. They wanted to make certain that everyone fought to the death rather than help us. We took them by surprise with ice and lightning, and several were dead before they even saw us. So much for all that templar discipline—the brutes are off the leash just as much as we are now.

Still, there were enough of them to damp our magic, and the sellswords died fast when it came to blows. We've fallen back into the peasants' home. It's sturdy enough in here, and it looks like the peasants didn't give up all their food after all. The door's locked, and the templars gave up trying to force it after we killed the last fool who tried.

I can hear them out there, doing something out in the trees. Whatever they try, we'll be ready. We're never going back to any Circle. Even real templars couldn't stop us, and these glorified bandits are no better than we are.

*—From a page, scorched around the edges, apparently torn from a journal*

## A SAND-COVERED NOTE

Lephus:

I expected the wagon we sent out to the canyons to return to the watchtower by evening. It is now past noon. That it does not take a half-day to travel from camp to camp should be obvious, but if no one has the sense to be alarmed, look for them immediately upon finishing this letter.

Take archers with you. Those spiders in the canyons seem to fear nothing but that screeching monster to the east. I'll be by the Four Pillars.

Devrenix

## A SUPPLY LIST

A meticulous list of necessary supplies found in a birdwatcher's journal:

Rations

New boots

Rope, several lengths

Sword (for show)

Towel

Tinder and flint

Charcoal

Spare paper

Bedroll

Elfroot

Something missing? Should be fine.

## A TORN DIARY

*A torn diary page:*

It's not fair. I want to go outside. I can hear the guests downstairs. Another party. There's always another party. Mother and Father bought me a present to make me feel better. To make me better. They're just trying to shut me up.

Cook's scared of me. She still calls me my sweets, but she's scared. Still, she hasn't told Father or Mother. She's afraid of me more than she likes them. I don't think Cook likes herself much either, these days.

I have a new friend now.

She understands me.

She'll help make things fair again.

---

*A torn diary page:*

I showed them. We had such fun, we did! Dancing and partying until everyone fell down; it was glorious! The best party ever! Father and Mother went to their room when we were done. Mother was crying, she was so happy. I held out the present. It made me better, just like they said.

I have not left the house. I'm still scared of what's on the other side of the door. But... maybe I'll go out tomorrow.

---



*A torn diary page:*

I had to make myself breakfast this morning. It wasn't very good. When I saw Mother and Father, I couldn't stop crying. I don't know what to do.

My friend says there's a way to be less lonely. She says not to be afraid. There are other games we can try and I will feel better.

## **A WORN DIARY**

*This book appears to be a diary, with strange charts and illustrations drawn beside thin, cramped columns of text:*

At first I thought the rocks that glow fell from the sky, but the spirits whisper that these shards have been here for ages "as you reckon them." Did the tear in the Veil reveal these stones? Is that why the strangely-dressed mages want them? Yesterday they were erecting skulls, of all things, on top of pillars! The spirits warned me to hide, and it was a good thing I listened. I saw one of the mages cut a man open with a dagger, and milk the power of his blood, and I am afraid of a man who could do that to another as if it's nothing.

I thought templars were supposed to stop blood mages, but the ones that came are strange, and red, and are working with the mages. The spirits agree—it's very alarming. They've been urging me to run further into the wastes, but my supplies are low. I'll go in a few days if hunting goes well.

## **AN UNSIGNED LETTER**

*If the inquisition has yet to choose a side in the Mage-Templar conflict:* The Inquisition's growing presence in the area represents a threat to the operation. Focus efforts on discouraging any further exploration in the area, particularly any efforts to give comfort to the refugees at the crossroads. We cannot have people putting down roots here.

*If the inquisition recruits the Mages:* Whoever the red templars are, they have become very interested in the area. Their appearance suggests a familiarity with the product that cannot be coincidence. Focus efforts on eliminating them, ideally in such a way as to place blame on the growing Inquisition forces in the area. If we can get the two groups to kill each other, that should be less work for all of us.

*If the inquisition recruits the Templars:* Whoever the Venatori are, they have become very interested in the area. Whether they are searching for artifacts in old ruins or actually after the product, they are too close to our operations and have proved too dangerous to negotiate with. Focus efforts on eliminating them, ideally in such a way as to place blame on the growing Inquisition forces in the area. If we can get the two groups to kill each other, that should be less work for all of us.

## **AN UNSIGNED LETTER IN THE HINTERLANDS**

Preliminary digs have been more than successful. It's extremely surprising to find such a high quantity of the product this close to the surface. If I didn't know better, I'd think it was growing.

On one hand, this gives us an advantage. Without having to work with the old families back in Orzammar, or even take this through official guild channels, our families stand to make a killing. On the other hand, the proximity to the surface and to the populated areas of Redcliffe raises an interesting challenge. The war between the mages and templars should keep people out of the area for now, but as soon as the humans are done trying to kill each other, any operation we start will be uncovered.

If we're going to take advantage of this opportunity, we need to keep people out of the area. I'd recommend manufacturing some bandits. This part of Ferelden is lousy with them, so they shouldn't attract much attention, and nobody will have trouble believing that bandits would stake out some territory. By the time anyone uncovers the operation, it'll either be tapped out, in which case we'll be gone, or we'll have the operation running smoothly, in which case we'll be wealthy enough to deny everything and throw some money at the throne by way of apology.

Talk to the families and make it happen. This is too good to pass up.

## **APOSTATE WIDRIS'S JOURNAL**

*This thick journal is half-undecipherable. The parts that can be read are splattered with ink, as if the author had written them in a hurry:*

There were years of notes in that book. Years! Who could have taken it? Or deciphered it? Did someone follow me from the Circle? I bet it was Wernam or Clariss! They always were jealous little busybodies. If they saw what I've done, the demons I've harnessed, they'd be green with envy. Who's afraid of spirits now, you simpering ewes!

But I must have my book back. I will write down the cipher again, before I forget. Again. These demons are clever. I can't have them demanding a price for decrypting my own notes. The concoctions I can make with the plants here, in safe amounts, will open my mind to vistas past the Fade. The demons hint it is beyond me, because they wish to undermine me. It's so clear. It's so very clear.

## **BLOOD-SPLATTERED NOTES**

*These appear to be the scribbled notes of a scholar named Erwine Cavy. The elements have ruined most of the writing:*

...ow many times have I sought information on the Dalish only to find that it is, once again, a tale told by "Keeper Gisharel of the Ralaferin clan"? We can't have one Keeper from years ago be our sole source of knowledge on the Dalish. There must be other voices in the Dalish clans. Other perspectives that...

The elves cannot all be as hostile as most would... *a dark smear obscures the writing*... conclude that is it our prejudice speaking, when we repeat these damaging untrut...

...when I return, the university will finally acknowledge my contributions to Thedosian history. Ferdinand Genitivi, step aside!

...remarkably difficult to locate. I'm walking in circles. But take heart, Erwine! This is all for a good cause. There must be someone in this forest who can point me to the Dalish. I'll ask the next person I come...

## **BLOOD-SPOTTED VENATORI DIARY**

The entries in this diary alternate between an elegant, well-rounded script and a slanted scrawl:

I never expected to find such tranquility here. No nattering crowds, no drifts of refuse. I should have been born in the country. I am only disappointed to learn I am here to verify translations—a drudge's work. But in the evenings, there is time for my own studies without distraction or fear of being branded "apostate" for my reading.

It is time to rise to my capabilities.

The Elder One has bound spirits far beyond what I thought a mage could manage. We speak of Him becoming a god, but surely He cannot be considered mortal any longer.

What steps must a man take to become such a being?

It is an excellent question. To bask in His glory must be enough and yet... and yet, I cannot let the curiosity go.

Does the Elder One take power from demons? I've learned much about their summoning and binding. I was surprised to find so many I recognized from the Circle among the Venatori, but they talk freely of rites and rituals forbidden in the Imperium.

They offer such power, for so little blood.

But I must not rush. Tempting as it is.

For have I not grown in skill and measure?

I cannot draw attention to myself. We will leave after we unearth these dwarven relics, not stay to practice binding the Fade's denizen's to our will.

Even though it would be so easy here, in a place where the Veil has grown so thin.

I am tired of this fear. Fear of harm I may do to myself. Fear of letting opportunity slip from me.

I must leave it behind me.

Binding a demon of higher power is dangerous...

Yet my skills have grown.

But what else will show the others what I'm capable of, what I can offer! I am a mage of the Imperium, and I will claim my birthright. The spirits through the Veil will see my power, and they will kneel—or I will make them.

## **CHARRED NOTEBOOK**

This charred notebook contains accounts, details of shipping routes, cargo manifests, and lists of contacts, all shuffled together. The last entry reads:

Remember: C's people arriving tomorrow to discuss new shipment. Must bring up incident with last courier being branded. Losing profits to keep them quiet. Good customer, but she's bleeding me dry. Ask for compensation.

Remember: find bottle of good Ghislain red for meeting with Inquisitor. Should be memorable.

## CONSTRUCTION ORDERS

As you know from the terrible accidents of last week, many passages through the mountain are unstable and liable to collapse at any moment. I do not wish us to lose more brothers and sisters in the search for "lost cultist treasure."

We must seal all entrances into the mountain. The templars have done a careful sweep of the caves; everything of worth was collected. What remains of the Disciples of Andraste will be forgotten, buried in the earth. Once it is done, let us have no more talk of them. This is a new Haven, restored to life by the true Chantry, and Most Holy Justinia V.

Mother Florentine

## CRUMPLED LETTER

*A letter written by a quick hand:*

From everything you've told me, you must get out of Crestwood as soon as you can. I know it's dangerous, but I fear you'll have no chance at all if you don't attempt the trip.

My father said that taking Dead Man's Pass will guide you safely past those filthy highwaymen. If you come at dusk, you should be able to avoid the wolves too.

Hurry, my love.

Cyn

## CRUMPLED MISSIVE

Did you hear? One of the recruits from Val Royeaux said he saw the "famous" Thom Rainier drinking at the Halberd, east of Val Royeaux. I thought you'd be interested, given your history. Although the lad's probably only seen him in sketches. Somehow I doubt the old captain's foolish enough to come within a hundred miles of the capital. I'll let you decide whether you believe it.

Anyway, I heard you might be relieved in a week or two. You could talk to Proulx, see if he'll let you take leave to follow the lead. He'll understand. He did allow you to enlist for our side even after what happened with Callier.

Rosslin

## DAERWIN'S MOUTH

Built into the cliffs of the Storm Coast, the port at Daerwin's Mouth once connected the dwarven thaigs to the Waking Sea. In addition to increasing trade between the dwarves and their allies in the Tevinter Imperium, direct access to the Deep Roads meant diplomats from Orzammar could visit the port without fear of losing their "stone sense." The site thus became a popular meeting place for ambassadors of the two nations.

When darkspawn incursions forced the dwarves to retreat into Orzammar, the Deep Roads leading to Daerwin's Mouth were sealed and the port fell into disuse. At least, all *reputable* use of the port ceased—bandits, smugglers, and pirates are known to use the various caves along the Storm Coast, including Daerwin's Mouth itself, for their own gains.

—From *The Storm Coast and Its History* by Brother Vincent, Chantry scholar

## DEMONS OF THE STONE

Until further notice: do *not* tamper with the torches! Lighting them in wrong order summons demons. The inscriptions on the pillars indicate the correct order, but *wait* until we have confirmed the accuracy of our translations before proceeding.

I have made maps to the other tombs where there are similar structures. Let the same warning stay your hand there.

Magister Gallus

*Below this, someone else has written complicated formulas and scribbled many notes:*

- Demons bound into the rock! How did the ancient dwarves manage it without mages? (Binding runes? Subtle properties of stonework? Investigate!)
- "Gangue" carved into walls. Could be translated from Old Dwarven as "Stone waste" or "Impure spirit-of-the-stone." Dwarven superstition, saw demons as "impure" spirits of rock?
- Study impossible with dormant demons. Ask Sephus and Urathus for help with binding.

## DRAFT OF LETTER TO VENATORI MAGISTERS

*If the Inquisitor sided with the mages...*

Fellow Magisters:

We have been given a chance to redeem ourselves after one of our own failed Corypheus at Redcliffe. The dwarven relics in the tombs are instructions on recreating the masterpieces of one of their finest Paragons. They are to be excavated, replicated, and brought back for study. The Elder One is generous to let us prove our worth. *We cannot disappoint Him.*

Do not spare the slaves. Speed is crucial to our success. Let us set an example to the rest of the Venatori, mages and commoners both, with our obedience to the Elder One's will.

Overseer Jullex

*If the Inquisitor sided with the Templars...*

Esteemed Magisters:

It shames me to notice bickering among some of you. We perform a great work here. The dwarven relics in the tombs are instructions on replicating the masterpieces of one of their finest Paragons. Lady Calpernia wishes us to retrieve them with all haste, and you know she speaks for the Elder One in all things. He remembers a time when this place was not a blasted wasteland, and if He desires its secrets brought up to the light, we shall obey. Gladly. Without strife that delays us.

I trust this will no longer be a concern.

Overseer Jullex

## ENVY'S DOGMA

A whisper, followed out of dream. A beckoning thread of power. At the end of it a figure, crowned in imperial red, seen through a tear in the air. The Elder One, demanding servitude with an offer impossible to resist.

Leader of the Seekers. Commander of knights. Lord Seeker Lucius Corin, master of templars.

Weeks of studying, learning, imitating. The Lord Seeker reveals who he is, what he is, with every sharp-tongued reaction. Lucius Corin abandoned, hidden after taking his face, his armor, his templars. Easy as slipping into new skin.

The Herald of Andraste protests as the templars leave the city. Small. Unimportant. Beneath a Lord Seeker's notice, but for instructions from the Elder One.

Growing disbelief. The Herald, leading nobles, shining men and women whose power chokes a country. The Inquisition, rising larger than the templars. Unbearable envy. What is a Lord Seeker, compared to what the Herald will become?

Seething, consumed with want. Dreaming, wanting, needing to wear the Herald of Andraste's face when next meeting the Elder One.

## **EPITAPHS FOR THE LOST**

*Neat, tight script preserves a final epitaph for the fallen:*

Frail, faltering in the darkness,  
Though imperfect, her voice a balm.  
Andrale, Falon'Din enasal enaste.

Naught but blood and torn flesh,  
But a mother knows her child.  
Soran, Falon'Din enasal enaste.

Fire stirred, ever an impatient heart,  
But she would not be moved.  
Siona, Falon'Din enasal enaste.

Arrows along the spine. The child cried,  
Sheltered by his form.  
Talim, Falon'Din enasal enaste.

Two emerged within an eve.  
As one they fought, as one fell.  
Rin, Ilan, Falon'Din enasal enaste.

## **FEARS OF THE DREAMERS**

### **"The Pilgrim"**

I came to the Temple of Sacred Ashes with the faithful, ready to help at the Conclave. I prayed to the Maker for peace, but the mountains shook and fell and buried me. Alone in the darkness, my legs crushed, I cried in fear of a world with no Maker, fading in and out of dreams of monsters inside the black.

Light my final hours. Let me go to the Maker without the terrors of darkness confounding me.

### **"The Freeholder"**

I watched the Blight take my land. I had nowhere to go. I tended the fields as I had, even as my flock died and my family sickened. My body wracked by pains and chills, I saw too late the poison that had crept into the land. In my fever dreams, the sickness covered this whole world, and I wept in fear for the family I killed with my foolish pride.

Show me that this world survives. Show me that the poison does not take everything.

### **"The Grey Warden"**

I joined the Wardens to serve in glory. No blade could touch me, nor any claw pierce my armor. Still, I was fated by Joining to die. Alone in the Deep Roads, the Calling in my mind, I sat by the last campfire I would see, allowing myself one last night of terror, and cursed the fate that brought me here.

Let it be my choice to have served and died. Let it be nobility rather than the dread hand of fate. Destroy my destiny and let this be my decision.

### **"The Scholar"**

When the darkspawn were new, when the magisters had just brought them to our world with their sin, I was among the first to call myself a Grey Warden and swear to end the Blight that threatened our world. We had seen the Archdemon die from mortal blows, only to rise again from the body of one of its servants. It could not die. I searched in vain for some way to kill the beast and save my world. I slept in fear, with no solution, knowing only that the Blight the magisters had brought would destroy everything because I could not save it.

Show me what must be done to slay the Archdemon. Show me what I need to save my world.

### **"The Child"**

Haven is burned. Mama cries when I'm not looking. It's cold in the mountains, and my feet hurt, but Mama says to hush, that others have it worse. She says a monster named Corypheus came to Haven, and it was only the Maker's blessing that let us escape. I don't feel blessed. The monsters come every night when I sleep, and I don't want to wake Mama crying again.

I miss Ser Snort. Ser Snort always kept the monsters away in my dreams.

### **FOLDED LETTER**

Estoris:

The work goes well, but we're bound to be followed sooner or later. I've set up a watch on higher ground, in the Sunstop Mountains. Obviously named by someone who never beheld a real mountain.

If you're looking for Harmmonum, he is looking for the tomb in the canyons to the west.

Magister Urathus

### **FOLDED NOTE**

Captain Lowen,

I don't want grumbling in the lower ranks that our Lord Corypheus handpicked Grey Wardens to be part of His honor guard over His templars. Our charge is not to understand His will. It is only to obey it.

Besides, our Master's still sore He lost all but a few dozen enslaved Grey Wardens to the Inquisitor at Adamant. If your soldiers are smart, they'll keep quiet about it.

Lieutenant Keldon

## **GARDNER DIARY**

"Property of Ira Gardner" is written in spidery handwriting on this collection of homemade recipes and remedies. The last entry reads:

First sign of the plague is coughing and going pale, like blood's run out of your skin. Elfroot soothes the cough, but doesn't cool the next day's fever. That's where the spindleweed helps. The ones I planted by the old shed came in quick. They seem to like where the soil's dry. I'll try making an ointment with it tomorrow.

## **HEALER'S NOTES AT REDCLIFFE CROSSROADS**

Low on elfroot. Send girl out tomorrow to gather more. Send village boy with her. Fighting closer. Redcliffe closed gates. Refugees staying by crossroads now.

Treated refugees. Illness and stomach trouble from eating spoiled food. Burn marks consistent with magic attacks. One elderly refugee had bone-sickness, made worse by fleeing village when apostates attacked.

More refugee arrivals. Elfroot, spindleweed low. Treated slash wounds, contusions, internal bleeding. Six treated, two eased to Maker. Reported templars attacked them as suspected apostates.

Treated frost-cough at crossroads. Sent letter to Redcliffe asking for blankets. No response. Widow Taine passed in sleep.

Treated hunger shivers at crossroads. More refugees. Burns and contusions, severe bleeding. Caught in fighting between apostates and templars. Amputated arm to save girl. Will die without more elfroot anyway, but too dangerous to gather more.

Girl running high fever. Refugees found merchant wagon burning on way to crossroads. Matched Old Vinn's wagon. No bodies, but everything in wagon taken. No more supplies coming.

Think girl will make it. Used last of elfroot. Making poultices from whatever I can find. Telling refugees to boil anything they eat or drink. Too many sick. Giselle came, said Inquisition help is not far behind.

Fighting outside. Sounds like templars and mages both. Refugees scattered. Someone outside, screaming. Have to help.

*—From a journal belonging to the old healer who lived at the Redcliffe crossroads and was believed to be killed in the fighting*

## **HUNTER'S VIEW OF THE MAGE-TEMPLAR WAR**

The words in this note have many misspellings and are scrawled in a clumsy hand:

Mother Valerie said things I saw won't get out my head 'less I put them somewhere else. She told me write it down. It's a long time since I did letters but I'll try.



I saw refugees in the hills. I was there to hunt. I saw them but did not say hello because I was on the trail. The refugees were going to Redcliffe. They were slow and bent over when they walked like old men.

Templars came. They talked to the refugees. They hit them. The refugees gave food. Then mages came. The mages used fire. Everyone burned. I was in a bush, they did not see me.

Some templars killed the mages. The mages ran. The templars wanted to run after them. A refugee was still burning. His arm went up to a templar. The templar used his sword. It went up and down. Up and down. There were pieces of black.

He stayed while other templars ran after mages. He took things from bodies. One body was moving. It had long hair and burned dress. The templar started to take off his armor and I shot him.

I went down to the lady. She made little noises and her eyes looked at me. Then she died.

I want it to go out of my head please Maker. I been good, I want it to go out of my head.

## **IN DEATH**

"In war, victory. In peace, vigilance. In death, sacrifice."

My brothers and sisters in vigilance,

By drinking of the chalice, you are a Grey Warden. Though you perished, you died with your blood joined with mine. I honor your sacrifice, and carry your memory into battle.

Meline of Arlesans, I remember you.

Leonide de Firmin, I remember you.

Audwen, I remember you.

## **LETTER ABOUT LYRIUM**

*If the Inquisitor sided with the mages...*

To Paxley,

I've seen the transformations. It's a horror to watch your soldiers' faces change, to realize they might not remember you day-to-day; it's a sword in the guts. But the ones who make it through are near invincible.

Feed elfroot to the soldiers hurting, as much as they want. Beyond that, it's just waiting until they stop feeling pain. Remind them they spread the lyrium. It grows at our touch; with the "materials" I've sent, they'll grow enough for a dozen armies. It's proof we're on the right path, that any suffering is worthwhile. Remind them.

Samson

*If the Inquisitor sided with the Templars...*

My fellow captains:

You know as well as I do that we can't cut back on the red lyrium we're feeding the soldiers. Considering how many knights we lost in our failure at Therinfal, we're lucky the Master still has a use for us. If He demands a small army of red templars, we will deliver.

The Venatori's spies have seen Inquisitor [name] him-/herself heading toward the Dales. Show him/her we haven't forgotten our brothers and sisters lying dead at Therinfal.

Captain Paxley

## **LETTER FOUND IN A REDCLIFFE HOME**

Father,

I'm going into the mountains to join the people up there. They're making sense right now, when the rest of the world is not. We can't tend the fields since Master Denet and his wife sent us all away for safety, and I can't just stay here and watch the refugees starve outside our home.

You and Mother should come, Father. You'll be safe up there. The mages have no quarrel with the people in the mountains, and even the templars don't harass them. Nowhere else outside of Redcliffe is safe from this Maker-cursed war or the demons pouring out of the sky.

But you won't come, will you? You'd rather stay on our tiny bit of land, because it's ours. So be it. It's yours until those madmen catch you in their fight, and then you and Mother will just be two more charred corpses in a burned-out village.

I'm not staying to watch you die like a fool.

Hyndel

## **LETTER OF CONFESSION**

Inquisitor:

It was not darkspawn that opened the dam and flooded Old Crestwood ten years ago. I did, in secret, the night they attacked. The undead you have been fighting are people I killed with my own hands.

We'd taken in refugees from the Blight. Many were ill. We moved the sick to the lower part of Crestwood, and the refugees into the caves, to stop the disease from spreading. It didn't work. One confessed he'd seen blight sickness before. It was always fatal. When the darkspawn attacked, I knew the only way the village would survive is if the blight-sick drowned with the monsters. I cannot bear the sight of Old Crestwood now that the water is gone. I cannot stay.

I'm sorry.

Mayor Gregory Dedrick

## **LETTER OF CONFIRMATION**

*If the Inquisitor sided with the mages...*

To confirm: yes, I've heard the reports. The Inquisition is on the rise, but they'll be a toothless hound once our Master deals with them.

We stand between the enemy and Corypheus. He gave us what the Chantry never would: a second chance. I don't want to see a single man let him down.

Sow the lyrium. Let it follow where we walk, take root where we settle. Never forget that your footsteps—yours—mark Corypheus's path to victory.

General Samson

*If the Inquisitor sided with the Templars...*

Paxley:

The Venatori delivered the supplies we needed. At last. The strutting show-offs didn't stay long; they're afraid what the red lyrium could do to them if they get close to the raw vein.

Even "regular" raw lyrium hits mages hard. Raw red lyrium must be like sticking your head into a wasp nest.

Besen

## **LETTER TO SMUGGLERS' WAGON MASTERS**

*Among the papers taken from the red lyrium smugglers in the Dales is a note from the ringleader to his lieutenants:*

Beware that red lyrium. Our mage claims it's much more potent than the blue. "Like serving brandy in an ale tankard," he said. Two nights later, he went crazy, frothing and screaming. We had to lock him in the warehouse. Looks like lyrium madness, but comes on faster.

It's not all bad. Our new client, Samson, has his agents *buying* anyone who gets sick—for gold. When they bought the mage, I asked why; Samson's people said, "To make something better of him." For what they're paying, he must have something bloody spectacular lined up.

Have the men be extra careful around the crates. Tell me if any comes down sick. Keep the why to yourselves.

Kells

## **LETTER TO A SLAVER**

Zhager,

Cancel that order for more field workers. Get me scribes, library slaves: the smartest you can find. They have to be able to read and write. Former runaways are fine, so long as they were clever about it. This Venatori leader, Calpernia, is paying a fortune for our best and brightest stock, delivered to her personally. Don't ask me why.

One thing: don't send any with brands or whip marks. We had a couple branded slaves in the last shipment; her people sent the couriers back with burns on their faces. They said Calpernia doesn't take kindly to damaged stock. Strange tick for a magister, but her gold's good enough.

Vicinius

## **LORD D'ONTERRE'S JOURNAL**

*The journal entry is dated 9:27 Dragon:*

That Circle templar is demanding another payment. Greedy bastard. Taking advantage of us all these years, because we wanted to preserve our good family name. He promised to silence the mage once returned to his Circle... but that doesn't protect us from the templar.

I wonder though. Was it enough? No. The mage was strong. Even I could sense it. It was terrifying. There is no way the child could break through. She doesn't even have training. So long as she stays inside, everything will be all right.

No one will ever know.

## MALIPHANT'S JOURNALS

*Maliphant kept several journals. This one spans the time Maliphant spent as a sergeant in the Imperial Army:*

I see Laurent's death in my mind all the time. The man who killed her—one of the usurper's soldiers—was familiar. I wouldn't be surprised if I once shared a drink with him. Isn't that how it is now? Brother against brother.

The priests tell me to remember Laurent's life, not her death. So I try to recall years past—the countless times she saved me. The day we first met, when I was a young recruit who almost pissed himself at her barked orders. Because of her, I learned discipline and control. She instilled in me pride in what we did. She taught me how to use a sword. More importantly, she taught me how to keep it sheathed.

She was fearless. Strong. Regal. And she was cut down like a common peasant by someone we may have once known. Will anyone remember her? Will Celene?

*Some pages later:*

There is a new soldier in our battalion: Gordian. He's an odd fellow, with an accent I can't place. Like he'd spent time in the Marches. It doesn't matter, in the end. He's been a comfort, listening to me talk about those who died. He also lost friends in Celene's war. And he's tired, like we are. He said a very wise thing: "There is no war without soldiers." The empress can't wage her war if we refuse to fight.

Orlais should belong to Orlesians.

---

*Maliphant kept several journals. This one details the founding of the Freeman of the Dales:*

Auguste and I have established outposts in the Emerald Graves. We are spreading the word to both armies. I'm sick of good Orlesian men and women dying for someone else's cause. It ends now. Orlais should belong to us: the people who defend her borders, who till her fields. If we're to fight and kill for something, let it be that.

*Several pages later:*

Templars approached us. They are not the Order I knew, but they have offered weapons and gold if we help bring their supplies through the Emerald Graves. If we are to free the Dales from the grasp of the nobility, we need what they have to offer. It's a deal with a demon, but our cause is worthwhile.

---

*Maliphant kept several journals. This one appears recently written:*

I don't know what we're doing anymore. Our hearts were pure when we started; I have to wonder if we've lost our way. The templars are... terrifying. When I speak to the knight-captain, I feel uneasy. There is something unsettling about his eyes and voice. They keep making offers: more shipments to guard, more men to be escorted to their keep... I just...

No.

No more grousing. I can't let my doubt show. Others take their cue from me; they must stay strong. It's just for a little while longer, then we'll get what we want. We'll be free.

## MISPLACED NOTES

Notes written by one of the scholars responsible for restoring Haven. The notes have obviously come loose from a ledger of some sort:

It took weeks scrubbing bloodstains from the stone. One of two things is true: either stone is more porous than I thought, or Maker's beard, there must've been a lot of blood. How many people died? I'm so relieved I didn't have to deal with the altars of sacrifice the first arrivals found. Those were tossed off a cliff (I think), so now we just have to deal with the stains on the walls and floors. If this doesn't clean up in a day or two, I'm asking for some fresh plaster—maybe we can cover them up.

Still, it's not all bad. Haven is a beautiful place, and while working in the dungeons, we found scraps of paper with writing that looks like Brother Ferdinand Genitivi's. He was held here for weeks before the Hero of Ferelden found him.

## MONTHLY REPORT

Master Kells:

Numbers are fantastic, ser. Trade's booming with all this lyrium showing up. Maybe it's red instead of blue, but people are still buying. That mage we picked up can look into what the color means; he needs to start earning his keep.

We have more coin on hand, too. No need to pay off some greasy dwarf since the red stuff isn't from the Deep Roads. Must be killing them; someone struck lyrium up here and they're not getting a piece.

Vishlan

## MYSTERIOUS BOOK

*A page from a charred book:*

You offer a sip of water while they provide a feast.  
Know they speak of the same wickedness, but place it in you.

I have heard them speak, and I have listened.  
I hear the whispers of all.

Let them offer silver while you give gold.  
Let them think themselves your betters and know nothing more.

Would you not purge the world of wickedness—of those who speak against you?  
Would they not do the same?

If we do not have an agreement, then I shall depart.  
When I am through, *none* shall speak of treachery.  
When all have given word, then all shall be appeased.

*Written in the margins:*

Must remember the words. The right materials on the flame in the right order. Earth, the vine, the phial, then the blood. The blood comes last. No missteps. One wrong move, and the binding will not work. But if it does—oh, my enemies will quake.

## **NEW CLIENTS**

To Master Kells:

The new client wants double the red lyrium shipped last time. The contact said it was for someone called Samson. I met him during the last trip. Got a templar feel off him., although the armor he wears doesn't look Chantry. Still, his coin's good, and he doesn't preach.

Toby

## **NEW ORDERS**

To Besen,

Maddox needs twice the usual red lyrium to modify my armor properly; taking over as the Vessel means it has to be perfect. Have the amount ready in three days, and you and your squad will get a chance to serve as Corypheus's honor guard.

My own proving goes on. When I first donned the armor, I thought I was drowning in fire. Without Corypheus to stop me, I'd have torn my own skin off. Now the armor's settled, I can march for days without rest, break a man like kindling. I'm finally fit to be the Vessel.

Maddox may come to you to work on my armor's modifications. If he gives you instructions about the lyrium, follow them to the letter. Treat Maddox like you'd treat me.

Samson

## **NOTE FROM THE SILENT QUARTER**

Sellanus:

There are eyes on me when the rest of the camp is asleep, or during the day when the animals rest. The ancient dwarves who inhabited this place could not have known, as they are deaf to the song of the Fade, but the Veil in the Wastes must have been thin even before the Elder One sundered open the sky.

To that end, watch Corix. Your cousin has grown suspiciously quiet since we arrived. He's also been seen leaving the overseer's camp at night. Say nothing, but follow him the next time he wanders, and report to me.

Magister Gallus

## **NOTES FOUND IN A MAGE'S HUT**

An excerpt from a manifesto on mage rights. The page is worn and creased, as though read many times:

Andraste suffered at the hands of magisters. Thus, she feared the influence of magic. But if the Maker blamed magic for the magisters' actions in the Black City, why would He still gift us with it? The oppression of mages stems from the fears of men, not the will of the Maker.

A few personal thoughts are scrawled below:

The fears of men? If they stay away, there will be no fear. This place is remote enough.

Strange to hear no one talking in the other room, to feel no eyes watching me. I miss it sometimes. But if that was not the will of the Maker, then perhaps this is.

## NOTES ON THE STARS

A collection of quickly jotted notes, written in a blocky hand:

- Moon rose a few minutes later today than it did a week ago. I don't think it moves like stars do. Is it because it's closer?
- Wilton pointed out another star in the south quarter of the sky, by one of the Tevinter constellations. Real faint. Boy has good eyes. Have him help me spot next week.
- Notes in book I found not a chart of the air as I thought. Looks like different sky. Stars different in the north than they are here?

The blocky writing of this note looks shaky:

Wilton:

Watching the sky when I heard screams from the old castle. Went to the gate and saw horned figures in the mist. Tell everyone who hasn't got the plague to go. Meet me on the south path. I have a cousin in King's Crossing we can stay with.

Ghin

## OFFICIAL-LOOKING LETTER

*If the Inquisitor sided with the mages...*

To all captains of the red templars:

We're not stopping to deal with these elven fanatics. Press forward, post more guards, and handle the ambushes as they come. Finding the Temple of Mythal is our first and only task. Once I become the Vessel, our Master can finally claim the power waiting for him; no elves, no city, no nation will be a match for a living god.

This is the day we've bled for. The Inquisition and Orlesians are snapping at our heels, and you've sacrificed more than anyone should ask, but if we fall here, the deaths of your brothers and sisters meant nothing. I won't let that happen. I know none of you will, either.

For the glory of the Elder One,

General Samson

*If the Inquisitor sided with the Templars...*

Venatori:

The elves we fight are not Dalish. They are far more dangerous. The last of the red templars will form a bulwark against them. Head to the temple of Mythal; do not engage the Inquisition's soldiers. More important work lies ahead.

When our Master stood in the Golden City, He saw an absence requiring the hand of a true god. I will be the Vessel of His ascension, for the sake of our homeland. Remember that when the Elder One rises, so too will rise Tevinter, returned to the glory it squandered so long ago. This is why we are called together under His will; this is what we must seize or lose forever.

Hold yourselves high, Venatori. Today we are the hope of the Imperium; we will kindle a blazing fire in this dark and savage age.

Lady Calpernia

## OLD JOURNAL

*An old journal, clearly much beloved:*

I weep at what the armies have done. Ditches scar the landscape. There's fire everywhere; all around is the smell of bitter smoke and spilled blood. I remember coming here as a boy. It was late summer and the plains were bright and golden. The earth was warm and felt like home.

All that's gone.

My mother said my father was from these parts. She never told anyone but me that he was an elf. Maybe part of me, the elf-blooded part, feels what the Dalish felt for centuries. This is my home; I would give anything to preserve it.

I'll go now with the others, but when the war is over. I will return. It will be beautiful again.

## PARSON'S BATTERED NOTEBOOK

Beyond Andraste's Mercy, a hundred steps to revelation:

I don't know what it means. Is it allegory? I don't even know where father got this... mess of rambling. He spent his whole life figuring out that it pointed to objects in the Emerald Graves, and now I have to finish the job. This is going to kill me. Why would his dying wish be that I figure it out? What sort of father asks that of a son?

1. Here is my soul, trapped in a cage of bone.
2. Here is my past, forgotten in the bleak winds.
3. Arching above outstretched wings. Even stone can rise.
4. But the sky is a cruel mistress, and wants for my life.
5. A goblet of my blood, on a table of ashes. Where can eye stand?
6. Turn around, face the shadows. Do not blink.
7. Halls of whispers carry secrets even the moon does not know.
8. Roses and daisies for her love. Where he stands, no one can fall.
9. Dragonslayers, four at the northwest, two from the northeast, three from the southeast.
10. They begged mercy from the woman crowned with grace and stars.
11. Cannons at her head, mountains at her feet; she is the Mother of Faith.
12. Beyond Andraste's Mercy, a hundred steps to revelation.
13. Cradle the cat on a sling of silk, and say "Never will the dove call more."
14. An upward pointing finger, there your heart lies.
15. But the spear pierces the eye of the tiger, and the prey is the hunter.
16. Blades of glass beneath my feet; I walk the path of the flame.
17. Beneath the stones of sacrifice, find the truth.
18. On the back of the wind.
19. In the palm of fortune.
20. At the first breath of sighs.

## PATIENT OBSERVATIONS

Vain hope: Someone better at this than me takes over before the survivor expires. Notes in case.

—Day One—

Clammy. Shallow breathing. Pulse over-fast. Not responsive. Pupils dilated.

Mage says his/her scarring "mark" is thrumming with unknown magic.

Wish we could station a templar in here, just in case.

—Day Two—



Pulse normal, breathing normal.  
Still unresponsive; careful drop-feed of prep. elfroot extract to hasten his/her recovery.  
A lot of thrashing. Mutters about too many eyes. Something about "the grey." Encouraging?

—Day Three—

Less thrashing. Some response to stimulus. Vitals seem solid.  
Two attempts so far by locals to break into the chantry to kill my patient.  
All this work to save his/her life, and will they just execute him/her?  
Will inform Lady Cassandra I expect him/her to wake before the morn.

## REPORTS TO CALPERNIA

These papers are dull at first glance: herbal recipes, trade manifests, droning descriptions of local wildlife. Leliana's code breakers deciphered their true purpose: these are messages from Calpernia's spies, hidden behind a cipher:

Managed to slip out another tome, copy the page, and return it before Lord Geresque was any the wiser. Corypheus's vestments definitely match the drawings of ancient Tevinter magisters, my lady. That much of his history seems true. —Veska.

We followed Corypheus and his trusted escort as far as we could, but again the traps defeated us. The shrine cannot be breached, my lady, not without alerting Corypheus. We will try other means. —Serapin.

From she whom you freed: greetings. Corypheus may have seen our faces on the last mission. It might be wise to send a new agent. We have a recruit from Vicinius's stock who could prove useful. —Rhiannon

You were correct, Lady Calpernia; without Samson to lead the templars, Corypheus relies even more on his Venatori. You are well placed. Again: we are not mages, but we stand with you if the moment comes. You are proof of what a slave can become. —Serapin

## SCATTERED NOTES

Amazing creatures, dragons. Every one I've encountered has had a unique personality. This one, for example, enjoys being around water. Saw her splashing about. A remarkable sight. I would joined in her revels had Kalev not held me back. Ah, Kalev. A good porter, but timid. I told Kalev and the others: dragons much prefer to eat beasts of the wilds rather than humans.

Unfortunately, I was proven wrong, a day later; the creature turned away from a gurgut to go after poor Kalev. I hope the brave little soul got to see the magnificent dome of her gullet. I'm certain it's like the inside of the Grand Cathedral.

—The observations of Stephan D'Eroin

## SCRAP OF PAPER

There once was a Sister from Sud  
Begging alms, as a chantry girl should.  
Though she would take gold  
Or clothes for the cold  
She looked first for offers of w—

*It seems the logger was unable to finish his poem*

## **SPIRAL MINE**

We are in agreement that the incident that took place last week in the Spiral Mine was an unfortunate accident. Condolences will be sent to Didot's wife, along with pay owed.

—Official statement, posted by the mine overseer, name illegible

## **STRONGHOLD OF THE APOSTATE MAGES**

Are you tired of letting the witless fools bind you with their fear? Come to the Witchwood. Follow the signs. We will be free to work our craft, free to become the new gods we have always known we truly are.

—*An unsigned letter written in a large and excited hand*

Let the fools in Redcliffe play the good mage, as they always do. We know the truth. This world is ours to conquer, and every worthless peasant who threw a stone, every templar who glared in disappointment at our Harrowing, deserves to know it. Follow the trail to the Witchwood and find your brothers.

—*An unsigned letter, the scratched handwriting almost too sloppy to read.*

They did not want us to dream because they knew we would dream of the truth, of power, of the weakness in the world that will let us break it and forge it anew. We are the chosen ones, we who have the power to enact change in this world and the will to see it through. We have conquered the Circles. We will conquer the templars. Come with us to the Witchwood. None who have the power of the Fade at their hands will be turned away.

—*An unsigned letter, the edge of the page partially burned*

## **SULEDIN KEEP DOCUMENTS**

Do we know anything about that Imshael fellow? Where did he come from? Why are we to defer to him? He's not from the Order, so far as I know, and there's something about him that makes me uneasy.

Hayden

\_\_\_\_\_

Hayden,

Everyone makes you uneasy. Calm down. What I hear is: Imshael was sent to help oversee red lyrium growth in the quarry. He supports the cause, and that's all that matters.

Keep your nose down, do your job, and don't antagonize him.

Conall

\_\_\_\_\_

*Excerpt from the journal of a red templar:*

Writing has become difficult. There is a sharp pain in my hands when I move them, like shards of glass in my knuckles. When I look in the mirror, I don't recognize myself. I remember when Lieutenant Erasmus got this way. He looked like a living corpse, his complexion a facsimile of the blush of life. Instead of blood, it was pulsing red lyrium. It killed him and kept him alive at the same time.

I don't want this anymore. It gave me power, but it goes against everything I was taught. Sometimes I am swept along with the fervor, but in quiet, I remember what I was, and what I believed.

Some say Imshael can cure us. He can pull the red lyrium from our bodies, if we ask him. But there's a price. No price would be too high. I just want to be myself again.

---

*From the writings of Knight-Captain Fornier:*

We arrived in the Highlands at night. I was immediately given the task of overseeing the acquisition and staffing of the Sahrnia quarry. I asked the general why we needed a quarry, if the crystals will grow anywhere. Apparently the Elder One believes the composition of the earth here will ensure that it grows more rapidly and abundantly. I didn't ask why he believes this. The general doesn't like questions. He probably doesn't know.

Some of my men feel we should take the quarry by force. The general did not specify how I was to secure the land, so I am considering a more subtle approach. Any suspicions we raise will increase the chance of a military investigation, perhaps even the newly formed Inquisition. We must operate in secret as long as possible.

I scouted the quarry yesterday. It is quiet. With the war raging, I expect demand for luxury granite has decreased significantly. A thought occurs to me: so much is gained through commerce. Why not exploit that?

---

Someone has made notes about the red lyrium in Emprise du Lion: I was in Kirkwall when Meredith died. She drew upon the red lyrium in her sword, and was consumed by it. Yet here we are, taking power from the lyrium and still alive. Fornier says in the early days, many were lost to the madness too quickly. We must use it enough so that it changes us, but not so much that it destroys us. He thinks Imshael is the key. He knows something about red lyrium; with his help, we can keep the corruption at bay longer.

He called himself a gardener. Is that how he sees it? He tends the red lyrium, keeping it well-fed and growing. Not too quickly, not too slowly.

---

My lord Imshael,

There is a soldier in Sahrnia who calls himself Michel. He arrived last night and has been asking about the keep, and you in particular. He told people you are a demon. Shall we have him retrieved?

Conall

---

Demon? What a frightful thing to call someone.

No. Leave Michel alone. He made his choice; I look forward to his attempts to follow through... although I suspect he'll trip on his good intentions and fall down a well inside a week.

Imshael

## **SUPERSTITIONS**

*A book of superstitions. Several of the pages have been bookmarked:*

How to Prevent Magic Formation in the Earliest Stages

Should mage blood run through your line, no matter how distant the relation, avoid conceiving in winter. While with child, sleep with dried embrium beneath your pillow to ensure good health.

Infants and most small children will show no signs of magic. However, you can purge the body of unwanted elements before they take hold. Place leeches on each of the child's limbs. When done, burn the leeches. Be sure not to inhale the smoke. Afterwards, wrap the child's limbs in cloth blessed by a Chantry sister.

A child showing signs of magic may be submerged in water until the breath is nearly lost. If magic is still weak within them, it will die before the child. Should the trouble persist beyond reason, certain talismans may suppress the child's skill.

## **TEMPLAR ENCAMPMENT**

Brothers, we must listen to the call of the Maker Himself, who has given us the duty to destroy these mages. By their rebellion, they have forfeited their right to live. They are not people, and any order that asks us to end this just and righteous battle is a lie, a test sent by Him to separate the faithful from the foolish. Join us off the West Road and fight for a worthy cause.

—A letter written in a crisp and educated hand

When the Tevinter Imperium said that mages should rule over man, the *Just* rebelled against the unrighteous decree. When the Circle said that mages should be allowed to consort with unholy spirits without care or consequence, the *Just* rebelled against the unrighteous decree. Now the Lord Seeker tells us to withdraw to Val Royeaux. My brothers, I tell you, we are the *Just*, and we must rebel against this unrighteous decree. Our battle must continue until no mage draws breath. Cast aside these cowardly shackles and join us along the river off the West Road.

—A letter written in a crisp and educated hand

We must be ready to fight not only the mages, but those who sympathize with them. Have not the mages blood magic to trick the minds of the unwary? Are not most people as we know them sheep, ready to be led by those who speak with authority? The people must be protected from the mages. It is our right and our duty. But those who supply them with lyrium? Those who offer them comfort and food? Those who shirk their duty to supply us for our worthy fight? They are sympathizers, who have lain with demons and can breed only abominations, and they must be slain as such. We will wage our war from our camp off the West Road, and we will not stop until this world is clean.

—A letter written in a crisp and educated hand

## **THE CONVERSION OF HESSARIAN**

Beloved Andraste, sit well at the Maker's side and know my sorrow. For my heart was weak until it served your greater glory.

As she was my enemy, I heeded the word of the Betrayer and so sentenced her to die. Thus she was bound upon the pyre so that all might bear witness.

But as the Prophet burned, a silence fell. For though flame licked mortal flesh, she would not cry. The hearts of the people filled with shame, and all were silent with her.

I thought it defiance and, though I marveled at her strength, my heart was yet unmoved.

It was then the Prophet raised her eyes, her visage wreathed with sacred flame. It was then I saw her sorrow and her acceptance. I felt the flame eat mine own flesh. I felt its slow death upon me and knew her suffering.

Through flame I walked and drove the sword into her heart. And so the Prophet was released. The Maker whispered in my ear and knew I had become the instrument of His will.

*—An interpretation of the conversion of Hessarian, written in 7:34 Storm. Claims that it draws from a text written by Hessarian himself remain unconfirmed.*

## **THE DIARY OF TROILUS HERTUBISE**

The Great Mission: Day 1

Arrived in the Emerald Graves and located the first instance of the Menace. Set up an observation area close by. This will allow for undisrupted study of the phenomenon.

The Great Mission: Day 2

This particular example of the Menace seems far less active than the one in Lydes. It pulsates at a rate of a mere 427 times per hour. The sound of it here is a nagging drone, as opposed to the frantic whistling of the first one in town. As I recall, Sister Euphorbia described the noise as similar to one heard when "forcing air from a leaky bellows."

The Great Mission: Day 5

Ran out of Sister Euphorbia's honey loaves. Still have cheese, but spent yesterday foraging. Spotted another Menace through the trees by the river. I can only describe it as "stormy." It must be investigated further. For the Mission to succeed, I must learn all I can.

The Great Mission: Day 6

The "stormy" Menace makes noises like a provoked cat at intervals of one hour fifteen minutes. It is surrounded by four swirling wraith-like demons. I have named them Primus, Secundus, Tertius, and Dummy. The first three orbit the Menace like patrolling guards. Dummy follows, but often pauses and heads in a different direction. Very occasionally, he twirls around, like a lost man trying to find his bearings.

The Great Mission: Day 8

Must be careful; a passing deer drew the attention of Dummy. For once, he demonstrated a tremendous purpose. Felt almost proud. That pride was quickly replaced by great distress, observing what followed. Deer should not bend that way.

The Great Mission: Day 10

Another Menace seen farther down the river. It seems in its infancy. No demons. I believe I have enough knowledge of the behavior of the Menaces to attempt to destroy one. I will attempt this with the nascent Menace. Caution is key.

*A final, blood-smeared entry, written in a shaky scrawl:*

The Great Mission: Final Test

Learned so much since that first day on that ridge. Thought I knew enough to try to interact with a Menace, to touch it. This didn't go well. Instruments did nothing. Didn't affect Menace at all. We are all doomed.

Just going to lie here for a while.

## **THE MARKER**

The sand stretched for miles, broken occasionally by a stony outcrop. The monotony was wearing, and the longer we traveled, the more I feared we would never escape it.

Suddenly, my guide pointed, and I caught sight of two distant pillars. As we rode toward them, a statue of a man became visible. Despite his stern countenance—and the fact that he held the head of some vanquished enemy—I have never seen so welcoming a face.

The oasis itself lies within a canyon. From a distance, one might see only more desert. The rocky hills surrounding it look the same as any other rocky hills. Were it not for the pillars and man, the place would not appear remarkable at all. When I expressed these thoughts to my guide, she laughed and said she could find the spot even without them. I conceded the point, not wishing to insult her skill. Still, I am grateful to the bygone sculptor who placed his statue here.

*—Excerpt from the journal of Henri Ducette, Envers Mining Company representative and amateur historian*

## **THE ROTUNDA AND THE FRESCO**

Sister Leliana,

As per your request, I have made a thorough examination of the fresco adorning the rotunda. I first attempted to clarify its intent with Messere Solas. Forgive me, I know he is not titled within the structure of the Inquisition, but the more I learn of his experience, the more awkward I feel not using a formal honorific.

On the mural, all messere would say is, "Skyhold is his/her fortress (meaning of course the Inquisitor). These are his/her actions." He is, of course, correct; the subject of each addition is self-evident.

On the medium and method, it is elven fresco, pigment and plaster, and it is grand. I have rarely been privileged to observe such skill as it is applied. It is considered, with long periods of study before the image emerges, whole cloth and with certainty. It speaks of how I imagine elves view the world, and the measured nature of their step.

I should expect such competence from messere, given his probable years of study. But it is still an amazing work, demonstrating an art with few living practitioners, even among the Dalish.

Archivist Banon

## **THE WEIGHT OF WAR**

*Sketches of the statue from various angles occupy several pages of the journal:*

I have seen the pose before. Often it represents the burdens carried by those who die by the sword. Usually the man—or the head of his enemy—bears some identifying mark, but I can find none here. Perhaps there is some message in their uniformity. No claims to personal glory, only stern acceptance of duty. Given the Approach's association with the Wardens, it is a fitting sentiment.

*—Excerpt from the journal of Henri Ducette, Envers Mining Company representative and amateur historian*

## **TRACING FROM TEMPLE DOORS**

*An inscription taken at the temple doors in the Forbidden Oasis, followed by a translation. The writing is shaky and uneven, as though the writer labored to complete the task:*

Emma solas him var din'an. Tel garas solasan. Melana en athim las enaste.

Arrogance became our end. Come not to a prideful place. Now let humility grant favor.

## **VALESKA'S WATCH**

I have marked areas of interest on the maps provided. I would draw particular attention to Valeska's Watch, an old Grey Warden outpost. It guards a Deep Roads entrance sealed after the Third Blight.

Because of the entrance's size, the Wardens feared darkspawn would find a way through despite their efforts. Senior Warden Valeska recommended they build a fort over the collapsed tunnel, so Wardens could always guard it; they did so for centuries.

The Grey Wardens' disappearance means Valeska's Watch is now unguarded. If the seal over the entrance has degraded, darkspawn may infest it. Be wary when entering this area. The blight is a slow death, and one I would save you all from suffering.

—A missive from Leliana to Inquisition agents bound for Emprise du Lion

## **VIR TANADHAL: THE WAY OF THREE TREES**

"Be swift and silent."

—Vir Assan: The Way of the Arrow

"As the sapling bends, so must you."

—Vir Bor'assan: The Way of the Bow

"Receive the gifts of the hunt with mindfulness."

—Vir Adahlen: The Way of the Wood

## **WATERLOGGED DIARY**

*A diary found in the Fallow Mire. One water-soaked entry, dated 10 days ago, is still legible:*

The dammed roof leaks, and I've been eating boiled roots for a week. I'm squatting in a bog no one's so much as spit in for ten years. Still better than the alienage, thank Andraste. That's the last time I visit the city for a while.

I'm worried about the Gardners. They weren't sick when I left, and now they're all down with a fever and their little boy is at death's door. Nigel Marsh said we should lock them in their home, the sour codger. Maybe I can bring back something to help. Is it deathroot that cures a fever, or elfroot? It can't be deathroot. Can it?

Ask Ira which is right.

## **MAGIC**

### **CONFESSIONS OF A LYRIUM ADDICT**

A prison cell, a scrap of paper for my confession, scarce enough bread and water. All I get for skimming one lousy bottle from the lyrium stores. Knight-Lieutenant Freyan cut my normal rations for "insubordination." Insubordination, my arse. It's because I saw him desert the guard tower to meet his girl. Freyan thought he'd teach me a lesson.

I'm thirsty, but the water doesn't work. It should be more... blue.

You take it like medicine at first, the lyrium. Your whole body sings with it, like the Maker's own fire. You're not scared of anything, not even abominations. After, it even takes away the nightmares.

But the ration's too small. If they don't give you enough, your hands get cold. The sky starts to press down on you. Little things slip away. So you have to stay.

The senior templars all have that look, that cloudy look in their eyes.

"Sign your confession," they said. I'm trying. I can't think of what name to sign.

—Confessions of an unknown templar, found among Montsimnard Chantry records in 8:27 Blessed

## DWARVEN RUNECRAFT

Within the Diamond Quarter of Orzammar lies the Shaperate, a branch of dwarven society so ancient that the dwarves themselves do not know when or where it began. They are the keepers of history for a people who have never known the sun or seasons, and who track time by the lives and deaths of kings. But they are not mere historians. They are craftsmen. For the living history of the dwarves is not written, but forged. "The Memories," as the dwarves call their records, are runes painstakingly crafted from lyrium which contain the actual thoughts of the Shapers who made them.

The making of runes is not restricted solely to the Shapers. The most commonly useful kind are crafted by many members of the Smith Caste from lyrium and other magically reactive metals and can imbue a variety of fascinating new properties to an item when properly applied, just as the runes of Tevinter design do. But runes are found everywhere in dwarven artwork and not all serve a practical purpose - at least, not one that's known. They are carved onto houses and store fronts. They are embroidered on garments. Etched in glassware. Even painted on chamber pots.

The meanings of the symbols themselves are sacred knowledge kept by the Shaperate. They are not, as many surface-folk believe, the written language of the modern dwarves, but rather are remnants of a lost language that predates Orzammar, the dwarven kingdom, and even the tens of thousands of years of history recorded in the Memories. The Shaperate recognizes the meanings of a few dozen dwarven runes. "Memory," obviously, is used for their record keeping. Many have not so much been translated as inferred. Runes which decorate both armor and load-bearing architecture might very well mean "Strength" or "Endurance." New symbols are unearthed now and then in the fallen thaigs, brought back by the Legion of the Dead and jealously hoarded by the Shapers who struggle to find their uses and origins. Were these symbols an earlier version of the written dwarven tongue? A language that fell into disuse, replaced by the modern King's Tongue? It is hard to guess, and the Memories offer us no wisdom.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## ELUVIANS

Let me tell you something: there are mirrors. Old mirrors, from the ancient times when our people ruled every part of this land. Only they're not really mirrors—they're *eluvians*. You find some dusty old scholar, he's going to tell you our people used eluvians to talk to each other. Don't believe it. They're portals. You walk into one, and eventually you come out the other side... or, at least, this is what I'm told.

You ever wonder why they've never found any elven roads, like our ancestors never walked anywhere? That's why! They used eluvians, and there are still eluvians in the old places today. Some of them even work, and Briala knows where they are. If we can get our hands on them, we'll have an advantage that no human could ever hope to counter: the ability to move across half of Thedas in a heartbeat.

—From a letter discovered in the ashes of a building in the Verchiel alienage, 9:40 Dragon



## LYRIUM

## SAME AS IN DAO

Lyrium is the king of metals. Beneath our feet, it sings. When properly refined, it is a smooth, slightly iridescent, silvery liquid. In the hands of the dwarven Smith Caste, it is mixed with steel to produce indestructible armor and blades that hold an edge for centuries. In the hands of the Shaperate, it becomes a repository for living memories. And some scholars maintain this as evidence that lyrium is, itself, alive.

It finds its most lucrative application in the hands of the Formari, who use it in conjunctions with baser metals like gold, silverite, veridium, or even iron to produce enchantments. Although mages, of course, consume it in a diluted form to bolster their abilities, this is not recommended. Overindulgence in lyrium can have disastrous consequences, particularly in more concentrated amounts. It is not advisable, for instance, that any reader handle raw lyrium, which in many cases can kill on contact.

*—An excerpt from An Alchemical Primer of Metallurgy: Volume One by Lord Cerastes of Marnas Pell.*

## OCULARA

*A skull set upon a staff, these macabre artifacts cause magical shards in the area to glow with magical radiance when a viewer looks through the eyes of the skull.*

Alexius was quite clear in his orders. We must scour the countryside to find more of the shards. Without them, the Venatori cannot claim the treasure our master seeks. For that, we need the oculara. Without them, the shards are nearly impossible to find, even if they are no longer cloaked by whatever magic hid them for all these centuries.

There must be more Tranquil in the area — the rebels abandoned most of them when they fled their Circles. Remember, the skull will only attune properly if the Tranquil is in close proximity to one of the shards when the demon is forced to possess him. Even then, the blow must be delivered *immediately*. The oculara produced from Tranquil killed even minutes later failed to illuminate the shards when used.

I trust you to continue your efforts in this matter. Our master expects success.

*—A letter found in an abandoned house in Redcliffe Village*

## PHYLACTERIES

A phylactery is a vessel, often a glass vial, containing the essence of a magical being. The Circle of Magi and the Chantry use small phylacteries filled with blood—taken from apprentice magi—to track down mages that turn apostate to flee the wrath of the templars.

Before an apprentice passes his Harrowing, his phylactery is kept at his home Circle Tower. Phylacteries of first enchanters are stored in the White Spire, an Orlesian Circle and the Templar Order stronghold. Vials belonging to legal, yet powerful and controversial mages are kept in carefully hidden caches in remote locations. For anyone but a member of the Chantry, tracking one down is all but impossible—quite literally like trying to find a needle in a hay farm.

## RED LYRIUM

To answer your question, my lord: yes, I have indeed heard of this "red lyrium" of which you speak. A single piece of it surfaced in the eastern city of Kirkwall, and its influence alone was nearly enough to cause the city's destruction. As near as we can determine, it is regular lyrium that has been somehow corrupted. Those who have touched red lyrium—or even come near it—report that it "sings" to them, like whispers in the mind that slowly drive them mad.

We do not know, however, what might stem from extended contact with red lyrium. Madness, surely, but would there be a physical corruption as well? What would happen if a mage or a templar used red lyrium as they use regular lyrium?

Far more disturbing is the fact that lyrium could be corrupted at all. Treat any red lyrium you encounter as if it were poison. Do not go near it, do not attempt to destroy it... and most importantly, do not attempt to use it.

*—From a partially burned letter by an unknown writer, affixed with the Grey Warden seal.*

## REGARDING THE CALLING

So many refuse to speak of it, but how can we know it, how can we identify it, if we do not share it? The Calling is not a source of shame. The song that whispers in the back of my mind is no evil upon my soul, but the mark of a life well lived in service of a greater good. If all things come from the Maker, then is this too not part of His plan? Could it not be a gift, a final haunting melody to send us into the afterlife with hearts opened? Could this not be His song?

It scratches at my thoughts, the music almost a voice, at once unearthly and beautiful. I found myself humming it aloud a few days past. Where once it intruded, it now feels a natural part of my mind's course. It coils around memories I hold dear—training with Ser Keller, riding in the moonlight, my mother's face the last time I saw her—and inserts itself into them, so that I could almost swear that music, that sense of a presence watching and calling, had always been a part of what I remember.

This is what the senior Wardens warned us of, I imagine. I should not find it beautiful. I must remember the corruption and recognize that my mind is slowly losing the wit to differentiate between this world, and that which would consume and destroy it. I must. I can.

I will tell the Wardens tomorrow. I have seen their looks. They already know, I suspect. I will heed the Calling and go to the Deep Roads to die with the dwarves, fighting as a Grey Warden should.

But if I am to die, after all I have given, can I not at least allow myself the pleasure of the song's beauty?

*—The final pages of To My Fellow Wardens, by Ser Marjorie Berran*

## SPIRIT OF WISDOM

When the summoning ritual was complete, the spirit appeared. Both spirits and demons have no gender as we understand it, but this one, much like the rare and dangerous desire demon, presented as female. Although its form was not threatening, the spirit carried itself with a confidence, an awareness, I suppose, that I have seen only in the most powerful of demons.

This spirit of wisdom was polite and courteous. It answered our questions about the Fade, even acknowledging the difficulty when we could not understand what it meant. There was none of the bargaining one normally associates with a summoned creature, save that the spirit sometimes asked us questions as well. Heras shared a mathematical formula he had recently proven, while Etenne explained her study on magical themes in the Chant of Light, and young Rhys talked a little about his mother.

When we were finished, the spirit thanked us for the conversation and then vanished, although none of us had dismissed it. We soon discovered that the summoning ritual we had devised was critically flawed. The spirit had been under no compulsion to come or remain. All the time it had talked with us, it had stayed of its own volition. Heras was greatly concerned that such a powerful spirit remained free, and has updated the ritual to correct for the weakness in the binding enchantment. I understand his caution, but I also confess that I quite enjoyed the conversation. I am not certain the spirit would have talked so freely had it been shackled at the time.

—*An excerpt from Spirits of the Spire by Senior Enchanter Francois*

## **SPIRITS AND DEMONS**

When first I summoned her, she was a rose,  
Unwithering, unchanging, and unthorned,  
A spirit of the purest love one knows,  
Who never hated, coveted, or scorned.

A second time I drew her 'cross the Veil,  
And shared a walk, a dance, a stolen kiss;  
With such a perfect beauty, pure and pale,  
No woman could compare, no man resist.

Then in my weakness I essayed a third,  
Tho' magisters their warnings did impart.

She broke my binding with a single word,  
And said this smiling as she clutched my heart:  
"Though love I was, your passion's changing fire  
Has forged this spirit into cruel Desire."

—Sonnet 126, "The Lover and His Spirit", from *A Chant for Dreamers* by Magister Oratius

## **THE BLACK CITY**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

No traveler to the Fade can fail to spot the Black City. It is one of the few constants of that ever-changing place. No matter where one might be, the city is visible. (Always far off, for it seems that the only rule of geography in the Fade is that all points are equidistant from the Black City.)

The Chant teaches that the Black City was once the seat of the Maker, from whence He ruled the Fade, left empty when men turned away from Him. Dreamers do not go there, nor do spirits. Even the most powerful demons seem to avoid the place.

It was golden and beautiful once, so the story goes, until a group of powerful magister-lords from the Tevinter Imperium devised a means of breaking in. When they did so, their presence defiled the city, turning it black. (Which was, perhaps, the least of their worries.)

—*From Beyond the Veil: Spirits and Demons by Enchanter Mirdromel*

## THE BREACH

What does it mean to pierce the Veil, that which separates our world from the realm of dreams and demons? For the average man and woman, it is a frightening thought to consider just how fragile this separation actually is.

The Veil is not a physical curtain, not a structure limited to a particular place—it is everywhere. It is in their home, in the streets where they walk, in farmers' fields as well as remote mountain vales. At any moment it could be torn to shreds, allowing demons and other horrors to flood into our world like water through a burst dam.

Known lore tells us that small rifts can be sealed... but what about a large one? What if some catastrophic magical event created a rift so large and horrific, it weakened the integrity of the Veil as a whole? Such a "breach" would threaten our entire world, turning concerns about occasional demonic intrusion into a charming anecdote compared to the monsters we would then face.

If there is anything to be done, any reason we should look at magic with fear, it is for that possibility more than any other.

—*From The True Threat of Magic by Lady Seeker Alandra Vael*

## THE CREATION OF A PHYLACTERY

We let the boy rest, the first night they brought him to the White Spire, I convinced Knight-Commander Belrose to delay the ritual 'til the morning. The journey was long, and the lad could barely keep his eyes open, poor thing. I was certain escape was the furthest thing from his mind. Medine found him a clean cot in with the other young apprentices, and when I came in with his supper, he was already fast asleep.

In the morning, I showed Medine how the phial was to be prepared. First, a simple charm to preserve and protect the glass. Then a spell that to keep the blood from forming dark clots. The last step could only be completed with the apprentice present. I sent a young templar recruit off with the message that we were ready.

The boy was escorted to the chamber by Belrose himself. I could tell he had just been awakened. There was a smear of dirt from his face, perhaps from the road. I called the boy to me and cleaned his cheek with my sleeve as I explained the ritual. "We have to take your blood," I said. "Because you're special and we don't want you to be lost. If it happens, the blood will allow us to find you and bring you home again."

I let Medine take the lancet this time. The tremor in my hands was worse that day, and I didn't want to make too deep a cut. I held the boy close, and Medine made a small, neat incision on his palm, exactly as instructed. I felt the boy struggle and start to cry. He tried to pull away, but Medine gripped his hand firmly, letting the blood run into the phial.

Then Medine cast the spell, like we practiced. Within the phial, the blood churned, and grew bright in the presence of the mage to whom it was bound. It was done. Another phylactery, another link forged. He was leashed to the White Spire.

The boy could not look away from the glow. He was enthralled, and the pain and the tears were forgotten. "See? This is magic," I said to him. "When you are older, I will teach you." Belrose let the boy hold his phylactery for several minutes before he locked it away in the chamber.

—*From The Memoirs of Enchanter Reva Claye, 8:72 Blessed*

## THE LAWS OF NATURE IN THE FADE

It is simple to say that the laws of nature do not apply in the Fade, but while traveling in the Fade is often confusing for mages, it is rarely so chaotic as to defy description. In fact, while the placement of items may seem random, those items usually operate as we would expect them to in the real world. A book opens to show pages, although the pages may be blank or lined with gibberish. A pen and inkwell let a user write, though the pen may write on its own, and the inkwell never runs dry. Those items that float usually hover at the relative height where they would have sat had the objects meant to support them existed—candles suspended in the air as though held by a phantom candlestick, for example.

Why are the laws of the Maker bent but not fully broken? Why does a book not turn into a dragon, or a statue explode into countless shards of energy? The answer, I believe, lies in the fact that the items we see in the Fade were most often made by the hands of men. A statue is a created thing. The mortal hands that shaped it gave it purpose, and it knows what it is meant to do. The objects that strain against the laws of nature are ironically those that are more natural themselves. Great stones, for example, hang in the sky. No hand has ever touched them, no mortal mind shaped them to purpose.

I suspect, though we may never know, that if dwarves dreamt and shaped the Fade with their own perceptions, the rocks would not float.

—*From The Shape of the Fade by Enchanter Ephineas Aserathan*

## THE LOST ART OF VEILFIRE

Though it is an elven magic, I submit that veilfire is worthy of consideration, for they perfected it at the height of their civilization. Certainly, mages often use it as a source of light, for its flame burns without wood or oil. It can also activate dormant spells, which has its uses. Veilfire's true potential, however, is as a medium for writing.

Veilfire runes convey more than the literal meaning of their text. Veilfire can transfer a tangible impression of sights, sounds, and even emotions on the reader. With diligent practice, any mage can learn this astonishing technique, but compared to the ancient elves' examples, current works are crude. I hope this book will guide those who, like myself, would rekindle an interest in this delicate art. Together, let us rediscover subtleties lost to the ages.

—*From Veilfire: A Beginner's Primer with Numerous Teachings, Exercises, and Applications, by Magister Pendictus*

## THE RITE OF TRANQUILITY

We called it the Rite of Tranquility: a mind, branded with lyrium, brought to a state devoid of either emotion or sense of self. The rite was required to achieve the true peace that could draw a spirit of faith from the depths of the Fade. A difficult task, considering a Tranquil mind is all but invisible to these beings. The candidate must be pure. If the candidate proved worthy, the spirit would touch his mind... and he would be freed from Tranquility, as well as made into a Seeker in truth. If he proved unworthy, Tranquility was permanent.

It was only later, when the first mage attempted to join our Order and failed, that we learned Tranquility rendered a mage unable to access his magic, as well as immune to demonic possession. Thus, when the Circle of Magi was born, we gave them the most holy rite we possessed. It was a sacrifice we made for the good of all, so dangerous mages could be spared execution and yet live productive and harmonious lives. What we did not give them was the secret of its reversal. That knowledge, and our ancient bond with the spirits of faith, shall forever be solely ours to keep.

—An excerpt from *Cassandra's tome on the Seekers of Truth*

## THE TRANQUIL

## SAME AS IN DAO

*If the Inquisitor is a mage...*

Although apprentices do not know the nature of the Harrowing, all of them understand its consequences: they either pass and become full mages, or they are never seen again. Those who fear to undertake this rite of passage, or those who are deemed weak or unstable, are given the Rite of Tranquility instead.

The actual procedure, like the Harrowing, is secret, but the results are just as well known. The rite severs connection to the Fade. The Tranquil, therefore, do not dream. This removes the greatest danger that threatens a weak or unprepared mage, the potential to attract demons across the Veil. But this is the least of Tranquility's effects. For the absence of dreams brings with it the end of all magical ability, as well as all emotion.

The Tranquil, ironically, resemble sleepwalkers, never entirely awake nor asleep. They are still part of our Circle, however, and some might say they are the most critical part. They have incredible powers of concentration, for it is simply impossible to distract a Tranquil mage, and this makes them capable of becoming craftsmen of such skill that they rival even the adeptness of the dwarves. The Formari, the branch of the Circle devoted to item enchantment, is made up exclusively of Tranquil, and is the source of all the wealth that sustains our towers.

—From *On Tranquility and the Role of the Fade in Human Society*, by First Enchanter Josephus.

*If the Inquisitor is not a mage...*

The Tranquil are the least understood but most visible members of the Circle. Every city of respectable size boasts a Circle of Magi shop, and every one of these shops is run by a Tranquil proprietor.

The name is a misnomer, for they are not tranquil at all; rather, they are like inanimate objects that speak. If a table wished to sell you an enchanted penknife, it could pass as one of these people. Their eyes are expressionless, their voices monotone. Incomparable craftsmen they might be, but they are hardly the sort of mages to put ordinary folk at ease.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi.

## THE VEIL

## SAME AS IN DAO

I detest this notion that the Veil is some manner of invisible "curtain" that separates the world of the living from the world of the spirits (whether it be called the Fade or the Beyond is a matter of racial politics I refuse to indulge in at the moment). There is no "this side" and "that side" when it comes to the Veil. One cannot think of it as a physical thing or a barrier or even a "shimmering wall of holy light" (thank you very much for that image, Your Perfection).

Think of the Veil, instead, as opening one's eyes.

Before you opened them, you saw our world as you see it now: static, solid, unchanging. Now that they are open, you see our world as the spirits see it: chaotic, ever-changing, a realm where the imagined and the remembered have as much substance as that which is real—more, in fact. A spirit sees everything as defined by will and memory, and this is why they are so very lost when they cross the Veil. In our world, imagination has no substance. Objects exist independently of how we remember them or what emotions we associate with them. Mages alone possess the power to change the world with their minds, and perhaps this forms the nature of a demon's attraction to them—who can say?

Regardless, the act of passing through the Veil is much more about changing one's perceptions than a physical transition. The Veil is an idea, it is the act of transition itself, and it is only the fact that both living beings and spirits find the transition difficult that gives the Veil any credence as a physical barrier at all.

—*From A Dissertation on the Fade as a Physical Manifestation, by Mareno, Senior Enchanter of the Minrathous Circle of Magi, 6:55 Steel*

## **VITAAR**

After extensive study of the Qunari specimens you kindly provided, I've come to the conclusion that the painted markings on their face and body are not, in fact, solely for ceremonial purpose, but provide a practical benefit. Oh, I'm certain there is *some* cultural significance to the patterns and colors they choose, but the Qunari do nothing without purpose, yes?

They call these markings "vitaar," which in their tongue means "poison armor." It's called this because the markings are magical in nature and actually harden their skin to an iron-like quality without hindering flexibility, and my analysis says the paint consists largely of poison. It's mixed with something else—blood, perhaps their own?—and that neutralizes the poison, but only for one with Qunari physiology. Anyone else would perish almost instantly (which reminds me: I'll kindly require another body slave). The process activates the magical qualities of the poison, which provides the protective effects, almost in the same manner that lyrium runes do.

How this works, and whether it can be used for our purposes, will require further study. Perhaps some live specimens this time?

—*From a letter written by Nameria Origanus, apprentice to Magister Varas, Dragon 9:32*

## **PLACES**

### **A TALE OF THE FROSTBACKS**

### **SAME AS IN DAO**

Even mountains had a heart, once. When the world was young, Korth the Mountain-Father kept his throne at the peak of Belenas, the mountain that lies at the center of the world, from which he could see all the corners of earth and sky. And he saw strong men become weak, brave men grow cowardly, and wise men turn foolish for love.

Korth devised a plan that he might never be betrayed by his own heart, by taking it out and hiding it where no soul would ever dare search for it. He sealed it inside a golden cask, buried it in the earth, and raised around it the fiercest mountains the world had ever seen, the Frostbacks, to guard it.

But without his heart, the Mountain-Father grew cruel. His chest was filled with bitter mountain winds that shrieked and howled like lost souls. Food lost its flavor, music had no sweetness, and he lost all joy in deeds of valor. He sent avalanches and earthquakes to torment the tribes of men. Gods and men rose against him, calling him a tyrant, but with no heart, Korth could not be slain. Soon there were no heroes left, either among men or gods, who would dare challenge Korth.

The Lady of the Skies sent the best of her children—the swiftest, the cleverest, and strongest fliers—to scour the mountains for the missing heart, and for a year and a day they searched. But sparrow and raven, vulture and eagle, swift and albatross returned to her with nothing.

Then the ptarmigan spoke up, and offered to find the god-chief's heart. The other birds laughed, for the ptarmigan is a tiny bird, too humble to soar, which spends half its time hopping along the ground. The Lady would not give the little creature her blessing, for the mountains were too fierce even for eagles, but the ptarmigan set out anyway.

The little bird traveled deep into the Frostbacks. When she could not fly, she crawled. She hugged the ground and weathered the worst mountain winds, and so made her lonely way to the valley where the heart beat. With all the god's terrible deeds, the heart was far too heavy for the tiny bird to carry, so she rolled it, little by little, out of the valley and down a cliff, and when the golden cask struck the earth, it shattered. The heart was full almost to bursting, and the pain of it roused the mountain god to come see what had happened.

When Korth neared his heart, it leapt back into his chest and he was whole again. Then Hakkon Wintersbreath bound Korth's chest with three bands of iron and three bands of ice, so it could never again escape. And all the remaining gods named the ptarmigan honored above even the loftiest eagles.

—"The Ptarmigan: An Avvar Tale," from *Ferelden: Folklore and History*, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **ADAMANT FORTRESS**

Of all the decisions we Grey Wardens were forced to make over the lean years, withdrawing from the fortress of Adamant was perhaps the most difficult. It had been built as a bastion against darkspawn spilling out from the Abyssal Rift, a symbol of how we had done the impossible, pushing those creatures back into the shadows where they belonged. We kept the land safe from further encroachment, but as each new Age dawned, memories of our sacrifice became fainter. The entire Western Approach had become a wasteland, and thus the expense of maintaining the fortress became increasingly difficult to justify. There were no griffons to fill its weyrs, too few Wardens to man its battlements, too many good men and women killed by demons creeping through the thinning Veil... each visit of the Warden-Commander made it more apparent that Adamant had become a symbol of our decline. Even if darkspawn still emerged from the chasm, who would they threaten other than the Wardens themselves?

So in the dawn of the Blessed Age, we sealed the fortress's mighty gates. We left the great griffon statues to tarnish in the blowing sand, retreating to Montsimnard with a sense of loss and shame. I returned recently with a small expedition to retrieve supplies, surprised to see it still standing. The dwarves did well by us; I suspect Adamant will remain for ages to come... but should the Order ever return, they will find it difficult to resurrect. Only spirits roam its halls now, alongside the memories of those who gave their lives to protect us all from darkness.

—From the journal of Veldin, Grey Warden of Orlais, 8:58 Blessed

## **ANTIVA**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**



In the rest of the civilized world, it is common belief that Antiva has no king. I assure you, gentle readers, that this is untrue. The line of kings in Antiva has remained unbroken for two and a half thousand years—it is simply that nobody pays any attention to them whatsoever.

In truth, the nation is ruled by a collection of merchant princes. They are not princes in the literal sense, but heads of banks, trading companies, and vineyards. Their power is conferred strictly by wealth.

But Antiva is not primarily renowned for its peculiar form of government nor for its admittedly unparalleled wines. Antiva is known for the House of Crows. Since Antivans are well known for being good at everything but fighting, it is more than a little ironic that Antiva possesses the most deadly assassins in the world. Their fame is such that Antiva keeps no standing army; no king is willing to order his troops to assault her borders, and no general is mad enough to lead such an invasion. The attack would likely succeed, but its leaders would not see the day.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar* by Brother Genitivi

## **ARBOR WILDS**

Cruxis:

For once, look to the elves for guidance. The Dalish shun the Arbor Wilds. When the people who would start a war over a single crumbling wall ignore a large elven ruin to the south, it bodes disaster. There is beauty and curiosity in the forest, such as trees that rise tall as towers, but those who travel too deep into them never return.

You asked if I could identify the elven architecture from the few existing sketches of the outer ruins. They have curious similarities to stonework found in Arlathan, so I would guess it is likely an old elven temple dating two, three hundred years before the Imperium. Anything else is conjecture that I fear will spurn you on in this folly.

—Letter from a scholar of the Tevinter Imperium to Magister Cruxis, a mage of high standing who led a doomed expedition into the Arbor Wilds a year afterwards.

## **CAER BRONACH**

King Brandel erected Caer Bronach in 8:26 Blessed, intending the fort as a stopover garrison for Fereldan soldiers fighting Orlesian invaders. The village of Crestwood takes its name from the fort's first captain Ser Venar Crestwood, who held Caer Bronach longer than anyone thought possible against a vanguard of the Orlesian army.

When the fort's defeat seemed inevitable, Ser Crestwood opened the gates, holding a flag of truce, and challenged every chevalier in the Imperial army to a duel. Amused, one Orlesian officer accepted the offer; Ser Crestwood swiftly cut him down. Eight more followed, honor and the watching soldiers forcing them to fight Ser Crestwood one on one. The tenth challenger finally managed a fatal blow, only because Ser Crestwood had slowed due to blood loss from previous injuries.

Impressed by Ser Crestwood's tenacity and endurance, the remaining officers left the small village around the fort untouched as the Orlesians made for the capital, sparing hundreds of innocent lives.

—From *Notable Fortresses, Castles, Towers, and Other Edifices of Interest in Fereldan*, by Henry Lannon

## **CAER OSWIN**

I worry about Loren daily. Ever since the death of his wife and son in Highever at the onset of the Blight, he retreats further and further into reclusion.

Almost no one is permitted to come to Caer Oswin. The last time I managed to see him, it was only because I bullied my way into the castle and insisted his strange new guards take me to him. And I say "strange new guards" for a reason: almost all the Oswin retainers have been sent away. These men didn't wear Bann Loren's colors, and they struck me more as prison wardens than as protectors. Loren himself was pale and almost delirious. I begged him to see a physic, and he promised he would, but I doubt he ever did.

The guards ushered me out in a hurry, and the last time I returned, I was not even allowed past the gate. It's been months since anyone saw Loren at all. I fear the worst has happened, yet I can prove nothing. All I can do is pray the rest of the Bannorn take notice and act before a good man is lost.

—From a letter by Bann Alfstanna Eremon, Dragon 9:40

## **CORACAVUS**

On the edge of the empire, they erected a prison: Coracavus, the dark pit.

Far removed from the cultural heart of the Imperium, Coracavus held and meted out punishment to local peoples who denied Tevinter's claims to the region and to so-called "loyal" citizens who believed living on the fringes of civilization would grant them immunity from the Imperium's laws.

In a few cases, political prisoners who could not be sentenced with execution were sent to Coracavus instead. It was widely known that bribes bought nothing there and having the right name would not be rewarded with leniency. It's said that upon hearing their judgments, these individuals begged for death.

—From *A Brief History of the Imperium, Vol. 3* by Tyrus Altim

## **CRESTWOOD**

Crestwood is a small village of no real consequence to the lords and ladies who ride through on their way to Val Royeaux or Denerim. The people are glad for visitors, however. Residents tend livestock and grow what crops they can, but their chief income comes from trade.

I was dining alone at the local inn, which is quaintly perched on the top of a dam, when I overheard the barman mention tunnels beneath the village. I was surprised to learn that a vast cave system riddles the land surrounding Crestwood. The locals told me tales of strange noises and eerie lights, of entire expeditions swallowed by underground fissures, of screams in the dark that come from nowhere and return, just as swiftly, to nothing.

I scoffed, then went for a stroll around the area. The night was clear, and I was wending down a pleasant glade in the hills when I heard a rasping hiss. Dropping my walking staff, I spied an overgrown opening to a small cavern. Were those footsteps padding away into the dark I heard then, or a startled animal?

That night, I let the candle in my room burn longer than usual.

—From the diary of a traveler from Val Chevin, dated three months before the start of the Fifth Blight

Three Trout Pond hides a sinkhole hundreds of yards deep. Darkspawn emerged from this and other caves to attack Crestwood during the Blight. The flood that wiped out Old Crestwood drowned the blighted ones, and the excess water created the pond we see today.

If the dam was not damaged, we would have never survived the darkspawn. Was the Maker's hand in this? I cannot believe He would be so purposefully cruel to His children, flawed though we are.

—From the memoirs of Sister Vaughn of Crestwood

## **DEEP ROADS**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

There isn't a dwarf alive who remembers the Deep Roads as they once were. They were the network of tunnels that joined the thaigs together. To be honest, it isn't even right to give them such a simple term as "tunnels": they are works of art, with centuries of planning demonstrated in the geometry of their walls, with the statues of the Paragons that watch over travelers, with the flow of lava that keeps the Deep Roads lit and warm. The cloudgazers up on the surface talk of the Imperial Highway built by the magisters of old, a raised walkway that crossed thousands of miles, something that could only have been built by magic. Perhaps it is comparable to the Deep Roads, although we dwarves didn't need magic.

I suppose it doesn't matter any more. The darkspawn rule the Deep Roads now. When Orzammar sealed off the entrances to the Deep Roads, abandoning everything that lay out there, we handed over the kingdom-that-was to those black bastards forever. To think that there are genlocks crawling over Bownammar now, tearing down our statues and defiling our greatest works! Corruption covers everything we built out there. Every dwarf who goes out and comes back says that it gets worse with each passing year, the foulness spread a little further.

And the cloudgazers think the darkspawn are gone just because they aren't spilling out onto the surface? Huh. One day, when Orzammar is gone for good, they'll find out differently. Those darkspawn won't have anywhere else to go but up, and they'll do it. The surface folk will have themselves a Blight that will never end.

—Transcript of a conversation with a member of the dwarven Mining Caste, 8:90 Blessed

## **EMPRISE DU LION**

The ancient name of these craggy highlands has long been lost to time. When the first Valmont emperor was crowned in the Exalted Age, the mountains were renamed Emprise du Lion to honor the House of Valmont, which bears a lion upon its crest.

Wandering through these remote hills, I discovered remnants of a forgotten past, mingled delightfully with signs of the present. Charming villages dotted the landscape, and, scattered among them, relics of the lost elven nation. Young women sold wild berries at a market nestled in the shadow of a sinister, crumbling fortress, which may once have been the seat of a Dalish lord. Children played in fields, watched over by the silent statues of gods whose names they did not know. I walked quiet lanes bordered with wildflowers, the high arches of an ancient bridge soaring above me, majestic even in their ruin.

Sadly, my time in the mountains was short, and I soon continued on to Halamshiral. I found myself thinking back on the Emprise du Lion, however, and how gracefully she bore the passing of the ages. I wondered what the future held and dreamed of how it might leave its mark. Whatever comes can only add to her beauty: delicate lines on the face of a gentlewoman, which speak of a life well-lived.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar* by Brother Genitivi

## **FERELDAN CULTURE**

The Fereldans are a puzzle. As a people, they are one bad day away from reverting to barbarism. They repelled invasions from Tevinter during the height of the Imperium with nothing but dogs and their own obstinate disposition. They are the coarse, willful, dirty, disorganized people who somehow gave rise to our Prophet, ushered in an era of enlightenment, and toppled the greatest empire in history.

There are few things you can assume safely in dealing with these people: First, they value loyalty above all things, beyond wealth, beyond power, beyond reason. Second, although they have nothing in their entire country which you are likely to think at all remarkable, they are extremely proud of their accomplishments. Third, if you insult their dogs, they are likely to declare war. And finally, the surest sign that you have underestimated the Fereldans is that you think you have come to understand them.

—Empress Celene I of Orlais, in a letter to her newly appointed ambassador to Denerim

## **FERELDEN AFTER THE BLIGHT**

One need only stroll through the Denerim market to appreciate Ferelden's resilience. You would be hard-pressed to believe that darkspawn ravaged the city within our lifetime. Scars remain for the people who lived through it, but life moves forward.

Now children play in the streets—children for whom the Blight is a story their parents tell. I once heard a small boy ask what a darkspawn was; to him, it was only a word he heard from the older youths. We teach that "a learned child is a blessing upon his parents and unto the Maker." Andraste forgive me, but I felt joy at his smiling ignorance.

The actions of our rulers are thus a puzzle to me.

Despite the events at Kirkwall, Ferelden continues to offer refuge to the rebel mages, which will only bring trouble to our doorsteps. It already has. Rumors among the merchants suggest that Starkhaven places sanctions on trade as a sign of protest. One hears of conflict in the Hinterlands between templars and mages.

Mother Diana says I am to accompany her to the Conclave in Haven. She says to have faith in Divine Justinia, and that, whatever comes, we shall see the Maker's will done. I think of those smiling children who have not grown up with death and fear, and I pray it is so.

—A letter from Sister Kira of the Denerim chantry to her sister in the Free Marches

## **FORT CONNOR**

Fort Connor was constructed by a young Arl Eamon after the Orlesians were driven from Ferelden. It was named in honor of Eamon's father, who died at the battle of West Hill—and after whom the arl named his son.

Eamon was determined for Redcliffe to stand as shining example of Fereldan strength. He constructed Fort Connor to watch the King's Highway and protect the Hinterlands against all enemies. It proved its fortitude against darkspawn during the Fifth Blight, suffering damage only when the darkspawn deployed emissaries. Eamon said proudly at the time that Fort Connor was "unbreakable by anything short of magic, and for that, thank the Maker we have templars."

—Excerpt from *Living Redcliffe*, by Sister Dorcas Guerrin

## GRAND FOREST VILLA

That the lush and beautiful Grand Forest Villa is so far from Redcliffe Castle seems odd only until one learns the history behind its construction. More than an age before the Orlesian occupation of Ferelden, Arl Jacen Guerrin ordered its construction to serve as comfortable living quarters for his "close friend," famed singer and swordsman Ser Corram the Bard. Arlessa Marguerite, Jacen's wife, evidently understood and supported her husband's relationship with Corram—only stipulating that the bard not live at the castle to avoid any public scandal.

"Arl Jacen's Ride" was a popular tavern song for many years, jokingly honoring the arl's attempts to return from the villa before the sun rose. Ser Corram lived happily there until his death in bed at the age of ninety, several years after the death of Arl Jacen himself. The aged Arlessa Marguerite ordered Corram's body burned with full honors in a hunting cloak that belonged to the arl.

After Ser Corram's death, the villa was used by the arl's family for guests and as a summer home for younger family members. It was abandoned during the chaos of the Fifth Blight.

—Excerpt from *Living Redcliffe* by Sister Dorcas Guerrin

## HALAMSHIRAL

After the glorious reclamation of the Dales, the elven capital lay empty and in ruins for years, a haven for bandits and highwaymen and all manner of miscreants. The land lay unused until the Exalted Age, when Alphonse Valmont, the very Lion himself, declared that a palace should be built there in honor of the valiant actions of his brothers in besting the armies of false Emperor Xavier Drakon. Originally called Chateau Lion, it was designed as a grand retreat for the emperor's brothers and their families.

The city of Halamshiral grew around the palace. The first records of its existence appear in the Storm Age, when Emperor Cyril granted the title of marquis to Ser Reginald Montclair for "administration of Halamshiral."

An elven uprising destroyed Chateau Lion in the Blessed Age. When Emperor Judicael I rebuilt it, he named the new retreat the Winter Palace. It was designed more for the emperor and his immediate family than for any cadet branches of House Valmont, and became the heart of the Imperial Court in the darkest months of winter.

—An excerpt from *Architectural History of Orlais, Volume I* by Elodie Ferneua

## HAVEN

I would like to speak to you of Haven—the village in the Frostbacks, close to the Temple of Sacred Ashes. We are all aware of its past. It was home to the "Disciples of Andraste," as they called themselves. Descended from the people who built the temple itself, they had strayed, over years of isolation, from their once-noble roots to become dragon worshippers. After the Hero of Ferelden discovered the Temple of Sacred Ashes, which the Disciples guarded jealously, what remained of the cult moved on, and Haven was abandoned to the ice and the snow.

I passed through Haven on my pilgrimage to see the Temple of the Sacred Ashes. There was a storm, and I took shelter in the hall of Haven's chantry. Though they were dusty from neglect, the walls of that lonely place were strong and shielded me from the biting winds. Peace came upon me, and my eyes were opened to Haven's incredible beauty. It could not be overcome by the pain and the horror of the past. It could not be masked by decay and disuse. It would not be forgotten.

Haven is precious to Orlais, to the Chantry, and to the Sunburst Throne for its historical and religious significance. It is my will that Haven be restored, rededicated to the service of Andraste, and preserved for the ages. Let it be a sanctuary for the pilgrims who seek out the Temple of Sacred Ashes. May they rest here beneath the cold, bright skies. May the glory of the Maker be revealed to them, as they gaze upon the grey peaks that are the work of His hand. Now and forever more, let this be a Haven for the faithful.

—From a speech by Divine Justinia V in 9:35 Dragon

## **LORNAN'S EXILE**

Arl Tiranon Guerrin's eldest son came late in the arl's life, and there was much hope for the young man to follow in the footsteps of his successful father. Unfortunately, Lornan Guerrin proved to be profoundly lazy in his youth, more interested in spending his father's money than tending to his lands. In frustration, the arl ordered a fort constructed in the mountains. He sent Lornan there, stating that his son could return to Redcliffe only when the bandits that lurked in the mountains had been brought to heel.

Accepted history says that Lornan reformed, routed the bandits, and returned to Redcliffe a changed man. Whispers in the family, however, suggest that the man who returned to Redcliffe was in fact a soldier who bore some resemblance to Lornan, and who fought well against the bandits in the mountains, while Lornan rested comfortable in his mountain keep for the remainder of his days.

—Excerpt from *Living Redcliffe*, by Sister Dorcas Guerrin

## **MIROIR DE LA MÈRE, REVILLE'S FOLLY**

Miroir de la Mère was cut from Val Royeaux in 8:49 Blessed. It was the will of the mad Emperor Reville, who demanded a reflecting pool large enough to draw his vain deceased mother back across the Veil. Many shops and vendors were evicted to make room for his folly, and several memorials to the heroes of the first four Blights were simply toppled. The reservoir supports little in the way of life, as the bottom was lined with lead to increase its reflective properties. Reville intended it for divination, using boats as massive planchettes, but work was not finished until the week of his own death. The waters see little use today, save for lazy—or fornication—sojourns by the nobility aboard decorative gondolas.

—Excerpted and torn from *A Disposable Walking Tour of the Capital* by Philliam, a Bard!

## **NEVARRA**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

The fourth time I attempted to cross the border into Navarra from Orlais and was turned back by Chevaliers, I decided to take the more roundabout path: a ship back to Ferelden, and then another to Navarra. The outcome was more than worth the trouble.

The whole country is filled with artistry, from the statues of heroes that litter the streets in even the meanest villages to the glittering golden College of Magi in Cumberland. Perhaps nowhere is more astonishing than the vast necropolis outside Navarra City. Unlike most other followers of Andraste, the Nevarrans do not burn their dead. Instead, they carefully preserve the bodies and seal them in elaborate tombs. Some of the wealthiest Nevarrans begin construction of their own tombs while quite young, and these become incredible palaces, complete with gardens, bathhouses, and ballrooms, utterly silent, kept only for the dead.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi

## ON SKYHOLD

*A page from an enchanter's journal, scorched to near-illegibility. the style is an old Fereldan dialect, circa mid to late Divine Age:*

Experiments in ambient lingerings, first staging:

The question isn't "is it special?" The question is "how special?" We found relics, but there are always relics. Elves ranged far before their empire was crushed, but rarely did they return where they did not build. This place, they visited again and again. I see it in the fragments—clays from different *nations*, not just craftsmen. Styles from different *centuries*, not just clans. And yet no record of a ruin. The structures here are all Fereldan, with stone ferried up by a typical madman. Whatever was here, whatever natural spire, it was flattened for a floor. But I know the common shapes, and I will erect them as was custom. And we shall see what the elves wished to see.

*The note below is in a different, uneducated hand:*

I finish this for Master Ganot. His workings brought lightning. Much lightning. The rods are pools of metal now, and all his workings burned. Master was also struck. I write for him his last words because his fingers are ash and he did not live the night.

"The Veil is old here."

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Skyhold has not just been claimed time and again, but sacked as well. We've managed to uncover some remnants, including a scratching *under* a pillar that mentions the name given by your witch. Old but still long after the place had been built over. But the author knew something of its first purpose, or at least, something of a legend.

Var'landivalis him sa'bellanaris san elgar  
Melanada him sa'miras fena'taldin (word missing)  
Nadasalin telrevas ne sulit elsethenera  
Tarasy'l'an te'las vehn'ir abelath'vir (word missing)

Even with assistance from your elf, we managed only a partial translation. Elven is often a game of intents, not direct mapping of phonetic meaning. That means it's a mess.

Our belief transformed into everything. (assertation/problem? uncertain)  
All time is transformed into the final/first death (uncertain),  
Inevitable/threatened victory and horrible/promised freedom in the untorn veils, (uncertain)  
Where the sky is held up/back, where the people give/gain love that is an apology/promise  
from/to....(missing subject, uncertain)

Mostly complete, as fragments go. The rhythm is strange, not like others I've recorded. Perhaps less a poem than a statement? The elven language does tend to meander.

—Notes from the archivist

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Possible references to Skyhold in the readings of the great library of Val Royeaux.

What follows are the names of the powers that may have held a fortress in the region. Unfortunately, time and records are such that for many, the name is all that is known, and some of those are merely as reference in other works. Your fortress is a vagabond, but years will do that to stone well made.

- The Tan Empire: Passing mention of an unseen trading partner occupying "where Hold the Sky" in the Rivaini *Ballad of Kin'tam of Nol*, thought fictional, date uncertain.
- Father of Rast: "...and that Fereldan built upon the Sky..." Mentioned as a possible destination of the spirit of the dead bann, a Fereldan lullaby dated to the Exalted Age.
- Lady Bander of She: Fereldan Highwayman banished in 4:83 Black, thought to use "a place in the clouds" as refuge.
- Spire: Orlesion tavern song mentioning "skyholde" by name as a fanciful utopia, but also claiming nugs with wings and a dragon that blows bubbles.
- Ti O'rn Vi: Possible etching of major Skyhold features, but no context available. Unknown language; the tile has never been translated. Pre-Glory?
- Tevinter carving: A broken relief that matches the outline of the main gate, but all possible scholarship suggests a structure outside Minrathous pre-Divine. Possible shared inspiration, but it is not known in what direction.

Study continues. We will apprise you of any other references of worth.

—From the office of Lord Ghippin, archivist of the University of Orlais, Val Royeaux

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Inquisitor,

Your archivists have asked me how I came to know the name and location of Skyhold. To the latter, I may speak easily: when one walks in the Fade, any fortress that has seen enough battle shines as a beacon for spirits drawn to death and struggle, even after centuries of disuse.

As to the former, I myself cannot say for certain. The whispers of old memories carry a thousand such names upon their breath, and it is possible that this name belonged to some other keep in some other land. Still, it seems an auspicious name, for there is one peculiarity of language that your scholars seem to have missed. When the words reached my dreaming mind, *Skyhold* was not simply a fortress near the sky, nor was it some simplistic allusion to holding up the sky. *Skyhold*—Tarasy'l'an te'las—was "the place where the sky was held *back*." Given your efforts against the Breach and our battle against a madman who seeks to assault the Black City in the Fade, I can only hope that the Inquisition's new stronghold lives up to its name.

Solas

## REDCLIFFE

King Calenhad Theirin once famously declared, "The fate of Redcliffe is the fate of all Ferelden." Certainly, the castle is the first and last defense for the sole land route into Ferelden, and the country has never fallen to any force that did not first capture Redcliffe.

The castle, which despite being three times captured is popularly described as "unassailable," also guards one of the largest and most prosperous towns in Ferelden. Redcliffe village is well situated near the mountain pass to Orzammar and the Orlesian border, and so serves as a center of foreign trade. For these reasons, Redcliffe is accounted an arling despite the smallness of the domain.

The inhabitants of Redcliffe village are primarily fishermen or merchants who ship dwarven goods through the pass from Orlais to Denerim. When the entire village smells of smoked fish on certain late autumn mornings, the merchants in their finery do their utmost to pretend otherwise.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi.

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The events of the Fereldan civil war left Redcliffe in tatters. Its reconstruction has been a slow process, but the city has made a remarkable recovery after its ordeal at the hands of young Lord Connor Guerrin.

After the Battle of Denerim, Arl Eamon gave the arling over to his younger brother in order to devote his full attention to advising the throne. He left the new Arl Teagan with the monumental task of rebuilding the town and perhaps the even greater challenge of dealing with the influx of mages into the area following the breaking of the Circles.

—From *The Changing Face of Thedas* by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## **RIVAIN**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

Nowhere in my travels, not in the heart of the Imperium nor the streets of Orzammar, have I felt so much an outsider as in Rivain.

The Chant of Light never truly reached the ears of these people. The years they spent under the thumb of the Qunari left most of the country zealous followers of the Qun. But resistance to the Chant goes deeper than the Qunari War. The Rivaini refuse to be parted from their seers, wise women who are in fact hedge mages, communicating with spirits and actually allowing themselves to become possessed. The Chantry prohibition against such magical practices violates millennia of local tradition.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of A Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi

## **SEHERON**

The goal is fear.

The Qunari in Seheron's markets must fear that everyone who serves their food is a rebel looking for a chance to slip poison onto a Qunari's plate. The rebels must fear that every farmer they pass in the fields is a Ben-Hassrath spy ready to bring soldiers running. And the commoners, the peasants? They must fear everyone. They see rebels light fires that kill Qunari and commoner alike. They see Ben-Hassrath arrest commoners who all know are innocent. When these events do not occur naturally, it is our duty to catalyze the process.

Only when the commoners of Seheron fear the rebels and hate the Qunari will the Imperium be seen as the preferable option. The actions we take here may seem cruel, but to succeed, we must agitate until all of Seheron hates both the rebels and the Qunari for their actions.

Only when the people are broken can we save them. Only when they fear all others will they accept the aid of the Imperium. Any good soldier would kill ten men to save twenty. We must bring terror to Seheron so that we might one day bring peace.

—An excerpt from a training manual given to Tevinter operatives joining the Siccari, whose existence has been officially denied

## **TEMPLE OF SACRED ASHES, REDISCOVERED**

According to legend, the Sacred Ashes of Andraste were carried out of the Imperium by Havard, disciple of Our Lady. Wounded by Tevinter soldiers when he tried to stop Andraste's capture, Havard was too late in coming to Minrathous to stop the execution. All he found was her ashes, left out in the elements. As soon as Havard touched them, Andraste appeared in a vision.

"Rise," she said, "Aegis of the Faith. The Maker shall never forget you as long as I remember."

The Aegis of the Faith, so named by our Prophet herself, stood at her word and found his wounds healed and his spirit renewed. He gathered the ashes of Andraste and returned to the lands of the Alamarri tribes, which are now Ferelden. It's said that Andraste's song led him to a holy site, where Havard and his followers built a temple to house her remains.

There the legend ends. For centuries, men searched for the Temple of Sacred Ashes, finding only rumors and tall tales. Chantry scholars concluded that there was no temple. There were no Sacred Ashes. It was all a myth, allegory intended to inspire and feed the fire of faith.

Then the Hero of Ferelden came. Seeking to cure a dying arl with the miraculous powers of the ashes, the Hero, with the help of renowned scholar Brother Ferdinand Genitivi, traced the steps of the ancients and came to a remote ruin, high in the Frostback Mountains. There, the Urn of Sacred Ashes waited, as the legend said it would.

*If the Urn of Sacred Ashes was defiled and the Warden had fought Leliana...*

But the Hero had no reverence for what had been found, and destroyed the urn. Sister Leliana, left Hand of Most Holy Divine Justinia V, lashed out at the Hero in retribution, but was struck down. Days later, thanks to the grace of Andraste, she awoke. Still gravely injured, she made her way down the mountain to share the temple's discovery with the world.

Upon his return to Denerim, Brother Genitivi shared what he had seen with other Chantry scholars. Sadly, his stories of snowbound ruins, spirit guardians, and the Hero of Ferelden's sinister blood pact with a dragon-worshipping cult were deemed too outlandish to be true, and his account was dismissed. Brother Genitivi died by his own hand shortly thereafter. Maker guide him.

The Chantry's treatment of this dedicated scholar will forever be a stain on its history. Several years after Genitivi's passing, we began reexamining his writings. Templars searched the Frostback Mountains, following in his footsteps, and found the temple. The Sacred Ashes, however, were long destroyed - as Genitivi had written.

After the triumph of the righteous over the Fifth Blight, the temple's discovery was shared with the world. Much to our dismay, however, by the time our soldiers arrived at the temple, the urn had disappeared. To this day, we do not know who took them or why. All that is certain is that it was the Maker's will.

*If the Urn of Sacred Ashes was kept secret and Brother Genitivi killed...*

The Hero of Ferelden did not share the discovery with the world, and Brother Genitivi, whose research made it possible, had disappeared without a trace. Truth, however, will always out and rumors circulated about the cause of Arl Eamon Guerrin's miraculous recovery. Agents of the Chantry investigated claims about the Urn of Sacred Ashes and were eventually led, as the Hero had been led, to the temple. By the time our soldiers reached it, however, the urn was nowhere to be found.

Though the ashes were gone, the temple itself stood, and it has since become a source of hope to the faithful. If the Grand Cathedral is the beating heart of our Chantry, then the Temple of Sacred Ashes is her soul. Here, we honor the Chantry's past even as we forge bravely into our future.

—From a lecture delivered by Chantry scholar Mother Clothilde at the University of Orlais in 9:38 Dragon

**THE ANDERFELS**

**SAME AS IN DAO**

The Anderfels are a land of shocking extremes. It is the most desolate place in all the world, for two Blights have left great expanses of the steppes so completely devoid of life that corpses cannot even decay there—no insect or grub will ever reach them.

It is a land filled with wonders like the Merdaine, with its gigantic white statue of Our Lady carved into its face, her hands outstretched and bearing an eternal flame, or Weisshaupt Fortress, with its walls of living rock towering over the desolate plains below.

The Anders, too, are a people of extremes: the most devout priests and the most deadly soldiers, the poorest nation in the world and the most feared.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar*, by Brother Genitivi

## THE CITY-STATE OF KIRKWALL

From the office of Provisional Viscount Bran of Kirkwall: Please circulate to all functionaries. Swap in the names of our newest "benefactors" and let us be done with their endless attempts at cleverly veiled intentions.

To the forces and/or diplomatic representatives of (copy their names and meaningless honorifics here),

Thank you for your kind offer of (tiresome insistence), but I assure you that we are quite inundated with similar inquiries at the moment. It falls to me, as provisional viscount, to draw your ire, and for that, I sincerely apologize. I assure you that I do not wish this to be the case: neither the refusal, nor my place in the delivery of it. Perhaps you will join the chorus of those questioning whether I possess the authority to deny you? Rest assured, when arrows are still in the air, it is common for those who desire stability but who lack the will to fight for it to impose the opportunity onto others deemed expendable. And as I was one of the few remaining who knew the relevant protocol, representing "freed" Kirkwall apparently falls to me. Or, rather, with the role left open, I was pushed in by unpopular vote. In either case, there is falling, but the precedent is well tested.

I expect the previous in no way will deter you from continuing your aggressive inquiries. Kirkwall has always been a valuable port, the nexus of nearly all trade that flows between the Free Marches and Ferelden. It has changed hands many times before, and I expect (posturing leader's name) would see it do so again. On this point, I would urge caution for a number of factors have deviated from the historical norm.

*If Hawke became Viscount:* While our legitimate viscount has indeed vacated his/her office (temporarily, I am promised), much of his/her short reign was spent girding our wounded home. No doubt your leaders heard this is where the ripples of rebellion began. That is true, but it is also where that rebellion was first opposed. As those ripples travel outward, our viscount and Champion contends that the center has earned some calm.

*If Hawke was not made Viscount:* While the office of viscount has been vacant since the unfortunate end of the Dumar line, we have not been without effective leadership. The role of the Champion in stabilizing Kirkwall cannot be minimized, despite the actions that have been more widely circulated. No doubt your leaders heard this is where the ripples of rebellion began. That is true, and violently so, which makes any stability we have earned precious guarded. As those ripples travel outward, our Champion and others have committed to the continued calm of the center.

As such, we are eager to resume commerce and will entertain any and all promises of trade. I do assure you, "offers" of protection and the extension of foreign borders or troops are not necessary.

But I am nothing if not a realist. If your inquiry was made with genuine intent, then this appeal should suffice to end the matter graciously. If, however, your offer was mere formality before attempting a disguised occupation, I'll refer your first to the examples of (cite the two most recent fools who would not listen) who made similar assumptions that we would be a desperate target. I would then direct you to the person who ensured that the forces of (those same two idiots) were summarily expelled in various states of dismemberment.

Because, (deluded new interloper), despite the fact that my underwhelming name carries the "provisional viscount" honorific, Captain of the Guard Aveline [Vallen/Hendyr] has spontaneously and effectively assumed matters of defense.

*If Aveline stayed with Hawke and Hawke was not Viscount:* While we were temporarily without such guidance, she ensured that the guard were well prepared, and I have welcomed her return.

Her activation of the Kirkwall militia has been spirited and fearless, two things I do not care to be known for, so I stay out of her way.

For the sake of your health, I advise that you do the same.

In greatest respect to you, (newest invading crowned prick),  
Provisional Viscount Bran

## **THE CRADLE OF SULEVIN**

When our people ruled the Dales, the blade's purpose was to defend our borders. When the Chantry marched against us, its purpose was to protect the innocent from those who would oppress us. More than one great hand wielded it in battle.

Yet few know its name. Fewer still will speak of it.

The Exalted March stretched on, and the Chantry's forces were nearing victory. A band of elves could not bear the loss. Desperation drove them to take the Sulevin Blade. A wish for vengeance gave the sword a new purpose.

"If the Chantry thinks us monsters," they thought, "then who are we to argue?"

They spilled innocent blood to power their magic. With it, they would defeat their enemies. Only — the ritual failed. The elves stood in the darkness, blood on their fingers, bodies at their feet. Then they heard the sound of footsteps. The elves' wish for vengeance was granted to those they had slaughtered. Spirits reached beyond the Veil and claimed the elves where they stood.

As for the Sulevin Blade, the sword lies broken in the accursed place where the elves attempted their ritual. Perhaps one day it will be reforged and given a new purpose. But at what cost? The location was lost long ago. Those who seek the sword never return. Some say they are claimed by the same spirits who were angered so long ago.

As much as we long for our past, there are some memories better left buried.

—Story recited by Neria, First to Keeper Elindra of Clan Ralaferin, to Mathias Laren, Inquisition scribe

## **THE EMERALD GRAVES**

Our people call this place the Emerald Graves. Long ago, before the fall of the Dales, a tree was planted for every warrior who pledged themselves to the guardianship of the Dales. Together, these warriors were the Emerald Knights of Halamshiral, and the forest of their trees was named the Emerald March.

When the humans began encroaching once again on our borders, the Emerald Knights banded together to protect us from the incursion. But the humans were many, and their Chantry powerful, and they eventually conquered the Dales. The Knights fought in defense of our land, and almost all perished. The trees that once represented a might army were now living symbols of sacrifice—the Emerald Graves.

I hear that most humans in Orlais do not call this place by its true name. They find it an inauspicious one and refer to the forest only as the Greatwood. They refuse to see anything but wood and moss and leaves, and hope to remain ignorant of the blood that was spilled. But we of the People remember. We feel the weight of what was lost, and we see, not trees, but lives given for freedom.

—As told by Keeper Gisharel of the Ralaferin Clan

## **THE EXALTED PLAINS**

It is appropriate that we pick the Exalted Plains as our field of battle. It was here, centuries ago, that the Dalish kingdom met its bitter end. The holdouts of the elven army making their last stand, refusing to surrender, against the champions of Andraste: the templar, the sister, and the nobleman patron. The champions' cause was just, and their faith led them to victory. The plains were henceforth called "Exalted."

Someone once said that these fields are characterized by equal measures of beauty and strife. This description will hold true for the foreseeable future. The strife we bring to the Dales will be quickly forgotten, however, if we fight hard and fight well and earn a definitive victory. Let the knowledge that you strike in the name of the true emperor encourage and guide you. Truth and righteousness prevailed on the plains, long ago. Maker willing, it will again.

—A message from Marshal Bastien Proulx to his soldiers before battle was joined

## **THE FADE**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

The study of the Fade is as old as humankind. For so long as men have dreamed, we have walked its twisting paths, sometimes catching a glimpse of the city at its heart. Always as close as our own thoughts, but impossibly separated from our world.

The Tevinter Imperium once spent vast fortunes of gold, lyrium, and human slaves in an effort to map the terrain of the Fade, an ultimately futile endeavor. Although portions of it belong to powerful spirits, all of the Fade is in constant flux. The Imperium succeeded in finding the disparate and ever-shifting realms of a dozen demon lords, as well as cataloging a few hundred types of spirits, before they were forced to abandon the project.

The relationship of dreamers to the Fade is complex. Even when entering the Fade through the use of lyrium, mortals are not able to control or affect it. The spirits who dwell there, however, can, and as the Chantry teaches us, the great flaw of the spirits is that they have neither imagination nor ambition. They create what they see through their sleeping visitors, building elaborate copies of our cities, people, and events, which, like the reflections in a mirror, ultimately lack context or life of their own. Even the most powerful demons merely plagiarize the worst thoughts and fears of mortals, and build their realms with no other ambition than to taste life.

—From *Tranquility and the Role of the Fade in Human Culture*, by First Enchanter Josephus.

## THE FALLOW MIRE

I spent the last week in the Fallow Mire. The bog stretches forever, and it's slow riding at night when the mists get thick. You can still travel along the old roads, and there's enough good hunting to make the trip worthwhile. Fish, birds, even a few harts.

There's one thing to look out for, though. When anything dies in the water, the mire preserves it. I was stalking a magnificent buck when a *corpse* clawed out of the water at me. I'm not afraid to say I ran. No rack of antlers is worth fighting a demon. My cousin in Fisher's End thought it was funny. Says he has to look out for undead every time he goes outside the village! I don't know how he stands it.

—Diary of a hunter from Denerim

## THE FORBIDDEN OASIS

I met Bayard in Val Firmin. From here, we will travel with the miners to the Western Approach. I already miss the sound of your voice, but the contract they offered will provide for us, and what is a year if I know you are waiting at the end of it?

Bayard says the miners call the place the "Forbidden Oasis." I feared perhaps the water was poisonous—you hear of such things—or that the area was home to one of the beasts in Joaquim's books. Bayard simply laughed and told me not to worry so much. When I asked how the oasis earned its dramatic name, Bayard replied, "Don't ask about the door."

—Excerpt from a letter written by Saul Didot to his wife, Lynette, dated 9:38 Dragon. No further correspondence was sent.

## THE HINTERLANDS

My lord Arl Teagan,

I retired to the Hinterlands for peace and quiet away from the politics, and because the wide open spaces were perfect to let my horses run. Instead, the war between the mages and the templars has turned your beautiful hills into a series of burning battlefields.

The farmers who live in the Hinterlands are good folk. Many of them left Redcliffe village because they couldn't bear to be there anymore, not after the Blight and the walking dead left so many bad memories. Now we've got apostates running around setting fire to anyone who looks at them sideways, and templars looting houses and cutting down those who protest as mage sympathizers.

My wife Elaina sent off our field hands to stay with her family in the east, but there are a lot of poor people here with nowhere to go. We get more refugees every day: this village attacked by mad mages or that farmstead burned to the ground by templars who can't tell a hoe from a staff.

I suppose you're stretched thin, but anything you can do to lessen the burden of these poor folk would be much appreciated. I'll do as I can, and if your men need better mounts, say the word.

Best of luck to you, my lord. Remember not to let Duchess puff out her gut when you saddle her.

Yours in service,

Dennet

—A letter from Redcliffe's former horsemaster to Arl Teagan of Redcliffe (undelivered)

## **THE HISSING WASTES**

Felicity:

You're chasing nonsense. Even if there were an old city buried in the Hissing Wastes, what makes you think the university would send you there on the chances you'll dig up an interesting slab of rubble? I skirted the edge of it once. If the wildlife isn't venomous, it's filled with fangs. The days bake, the nights freeze, and the only other souls you meet have even worse reasons for being there than you do. I haven't even mentioned that dragons like to nest in the rocks. (Ask Alphonse how he got the scar on his arm. He'll tell you.)

Leave that desert to the treasure hunters, my dear. Our Empire is full of ruins. Let us find one in a more hospitable climate, such as Montsimmard in the spring.

—Letter from a third-year University student in Val Royeaux to her younger sister

## **THE MARQUISATE OF SERAULT GLASSWORKS**

"Glass so clear and worth the price, as kicks of light catch color twice."

Such is the literary whimsy Seraultine Glass inspires, with beauty all but the sunless see. Perhaps be less quick to recklessly rhyme. On the quality, have no doubt, though some claim the multicolored echo bizarre or imagined. Like the challenge of grace notes and the discerning ear, the educated eye finds ever more to appreciate. But be mindful whom you approach when seeking deals in the Marquisate of Serault. As far west as one can still call civilized, it attracts exactly the type you would expect: those who fail better than most—agitators of various intent seeking remote sanctuary. A gathering that creates a nexus of stories. The one who dismisses de Serault tricksiness out of hand misses plenty. Care, rivals, for they are as skilled in the Game as their glassworks, though they have been considered outcast since the great Shame of Serault. Mind their welcome as you would a smiling cardsharp, or risk attending your last court. And remember the promise and threat of "PAYMENT IN GLASS."

—*From On the Glassworks of the Marquisate of Serault, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## **THE ORLESIAN EMPIRE**

## **SAME AS IN DAO**

There are many lords and ladies in Val Royeaux.

And I mean this literally. Once, the system of noble titles in Orlais was labyrinthine: there were barons and baronnes and baronets and sur-barons and a horde of others, each with its own origins and its own nuances of comparison. The Orlesian aristocracy is ancient and much given to competition. All the nobility play the Grand Game, as it is known, whether they wish to or not. It is a game of reputation and patronage, where moves are made with rumors and scandal is the chief weapon. No gentle game, this. More blood has been drawn as a result of the Grand Game than any war the Orlesians have fought. Of this, I am assured by almost every gentleman here.

As far as titles went, everything changed with the coming of Emperor Drakon, who established the Orlesian Empire as it exists now, and who created the Chantry. There is no more venerated figure in Orlais; in Val Royeaux, the statue of Drakon stands as tall as the statue of Andraste. Drakon determined that the Grand Game was tearing Orlais apart, so he abolished all titles besides his own, and lord, and lady.

I am told, with some twittering amusement, that this action did not end the Grand Game as Drakon had intended. Now the lords and ladies collected unofficial titles rather than official ones, such as "the exalted patron of Tassus Klay" or "uncle to the champion of Tremmes." It is a headache to remember such titles, and one winces to think of the poor doormen at the balls who must rattle them off as each guest enters the room.

The aristocracy is different from Ferelden in other ways, as well. The Orlesians' right to rule stems directly from the Maker. There exists neither the concept of rule by merit nor the slightest notion of rebellion. If one is not noble, one aspires to be—or at the least aspires to be in the good graces of a noble, and is ever watching for a way to enter the patronage of those better placed in the Grand Game.

And then there are the masks. And the cosmetics: I have not seen so much paint since the kennels at Highever. But that is another story.

—From *Beyond the Frostbacks*, by Bann Teoric of West Hill, 9:20 Dragon

## THE PENITENTS' CROSSING

Pilgrims seeking to visit the Temple of Sacred Ashes are allowed to ride as far as the bridge known as "Penitents' Crossing." Then, whether they be sick or healthy, young or aged, the pilgrims are expected to walk by the temple sisters who supervise the bridge. All but the very sick and old are asked to shed heavy coats as they cross the bridge, allowing the cutting winds to strip prideful fixation upon this world from the flesh.

The bridge is also of significant military value, used especially for these purposes in the years since the Fifth Blight. As a chokepoint against bandits, rebels, or even darkspawn stragglers, the bridge serves as a defensible fortification to protect the Temple of Sacred Ashes from threats.

—From *Walking the Chant*, by Sister Dorcas Guerrin

## THE STILL RUINS

24 Harvestmere

A pair of hunters arrived today from the Western Approach. They carried a third between them, unconscious. The hunters found the man wandering the Approach. He collapsed at their feet before they could learn his identity. The rough stories you hear, I'm surprised they didn't slit his throat and call it mercy. Instead, they lay him alongside their prizes and took him from that place.

Serise forced him to swallow water with a mixture of herbs. Alain says he will show me how to make it tomorrow.

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26 Harvestmere

Serise and Alain left the patient to my care. They believe the man will die, so what harm could *I* do?



Still, I prepare the herbs with care. I do what I can to make him comfortable. The man murmurs in his sleep. Something about there being no wind. I would open the window, but the air is chill, and I fear it would weaken him.

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5 Firstfall

My patient opened his eyes.

"Varghest took the rest. Then I found it. Everything so still. There was no wind." He seemed quite intent.

"In the Western Approach?" I asked.

"Oh, a soldier..."

This last about the figurine I placed on his bedside table for Satinalia. Foolish, but I thought it might cheer him.

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8 Firstfall

My patient took a simple meal. Speaking wearies him, but he tried.

"Everything was so still. There was no wind."

I told him that sounded peaceful. His eyes widened in fear.

"The demons were still there."

I tried to comfort him, but he was desperate to explain the disturbing images in his mind. Later, I saw him staring at the little soldier. "They couldn't move," he murmured. I said I could take the toy away, but he shook his head.

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20 Firstfall

Serise and Alain declared my patient well enough to travel. He left before I returned from visiting my sister.

I suspect his "still ruins" were a delusion brought on by his trials in the Approach, but I will never know. I wish I could have said goodbye. Serise says he took the soldier with him. Perhaps it was a comfort after all.

—From the journal of Nicolette Envers, healer's apprentice

## THE STORM COAST

I cannot say whether the Storm Coast receives more inclement weather than any other stretch of northern Fereldan coastline. That hasn't stopped the region from boasting more than its fair share of tragic tales. If all are to be believed, rich merchant ships blanket the depths due to the follies of their proud captains. The infamous—and likely fictional—pirate, Denel of Salle, gave up the sea to become a Grey Warden while standing on these shores, and countless young women pine for grooms lost to the waves.

I witnessed nothing so fanciful on my brief sojourn to the coast. However, the area is sparsely populated, and as I watched the Waking Sea strike the shore, I could see why such tales are born.

—From *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar* by Brother Genitivi

## THE SUMMER BAZAAR

We rededicate this jewel of Val Royeaux as the Summer Bazaar of the First Lion, to reflect the spirit of renewal that is at the heart of the capital and of our people. Let the strength of the four always guard the Grace of the Empire. Let the blossoms and promise of the changing seasons be a tribute to trade and public gathering. For here, in the name of the Lion Valmont, we will be an example to the world of how Orlesians respond to adversity.

Our way cannot be threatened, for it embodies the truth of tradition and the promise of progress. The Blight finds no purchase in the heart of commerce.

—A plaque dedicating the Summer Bazaar, "for victories earned and to come," placed in 5:30 Exalted.

## THE TEMPLE OF MYTHAL

Once again, Genitivi is completely at odds with reality! Ancient elven "temples" were no simple shrines. Extensive digging shows that buildings radiated out of the main edifice, much like a city wrapped around a palace. Indeed, these temple complexes must have been cities once, with a veritable army of functionaries running them. Each cult had different rituals, ablutions, and prayers to their chosen patron that ran all hours of the day. The time and effort devoted to them must have been staggering.

Perhaps it's best we have lost knowledge of these pagan rites. The "deities" that the old elves worshipped, if they existed at all, were clearly demons masquerading as higher powers. One shudders to think of what went on before their thrones.

—From an essay by Atronus of Antiva, scholar and naturalist to the Antivan royal court

## THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM

## SAME AS IN DAIL

For good or ill, the Imperium has put its stamp on Thedas forever.

The old Imperial Highway is still in use across most of Thedas. The ruins of Tevinter fortresses and centers of magical study still litter our landscape, long after the glory of the Imperium dimmed. But the influence of that ancient empire goes deeper than this. Without Tevinter, there would have been no Blights, no Andraste, no Chantry. Every aspect of our world would be altered.

The might and majesty of the Imperium may have faded, but it still makes its presence known, even in the most distant corners of Thedas. Every child has been brought up on stories of Tevinter as it is now: a decadent nation, ruled by the archon and his court of magisters — great, and no doubt corrupt, mage-lords. Their Chantry a mockery of our own, their Black Divine a man chosen from the ranks of the Minrathous Circle of Magi. The Maker's most hallowed law, "Magic exists to serve man, and never to rule over him," perverted. Mages in the Imperium say their most sacred duty is to serve man, and they serve best by wielding political power.

And the worst, that which Blessed Andraste must weep to see: All of it is built on a foundation of slavery. While most nations forbid the buying and selling of slaves within their own borders, nearly everyone ships her people to the Imperium for sale, skirting the prohibitions against such atrocities, and feeding the Imperium's endless hunger for bodies: To fight the Qunari, to work the mines and quarries, to build the palaces of the magisters, to sweep the crumbling streets and turn the middens and serve at the whim of their mage overseers.

—From *Black City, Black Divine: A Study of the Tevinter Imperium*, by Sister Petrine, Chantry scholar

## THE WESTERN APPROACH

Once these wastes were a land of plenty. Can you believe it? The rain came north over the Gamordan Peaks, turning the plains green and verdant for three months of the year. Eight hundred years ago, that changed. During the Second Blight, darkspawn spilled out of an enormous crack in the earth, corrupting it with their foul blood... and it never recovered, even after they were driven back underground. The Grey Wardens built Adamant Fortress to stand watch over that chasm, but eventually even they abandoned it to the wind and the biting sand.

What few of us eke out a living in this Maker-forsaken place do so knowing that any number of deaths await us: darkspawn raids, dragons, bandits—not to mention starvation from the lack of water and game. If we stay, it is because we know there are treasures buried in the bones of this place, ruins from the time when Tevinter ruled, and even earlier. We pass tales around our campfires of the things we have seen shrouded in the dust storms. My favorites are the ones about relics that could restore the Western Approach once more... but I don't believe them. Truth be told, on nights when the wind is calm, I can stand on a hilltop and see for miles in the moonlight over a stark beauty of which no other Orlesian can claim to know the equal. On those nights, I hope it will never change.

—From *Lands of the Abyss* by Magistrate Gilles de Sancriste

## THERINFAL REDOUBT

"I have heard the complaints. Some of you do not understand why we train in a castle in the wilderness when you're to seek out corruption among the masses. You question the Seekers' foresight. Doubt assails you. Why have you come to Therinfal? What can you learn here you could not on your own?

"Patience is what you will learn. With no city to distract or tempt you, you will practice. You will fail. You will suffer. And when we are done, you will be a rock upon which demons break.

"Now let us begin."

This transcription of a speech by Lord Seeker Alderai to a batch of students beginning advanced lessons is dated 7:70 Storm. The Seekers used Therinfal Redoubt as a training ground until around 8:99 Blessed, when their finances were insufficient to keep the fortress in desirable condition.

—From *Notable Fortresses, Castles, Towers, and other Edifices of Interest in Ferelden* by Henry Lannon

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The throne in the Great Hall of Therinfal Redoubt is not for mortal men. It is the Throne of the Maker, a reminder of His absence from our world caused by our sins. Its seat will be kept empty until He returns to His children. It is a reminder we must win back His favor with vigilance, faith, and absolute servitude.

Anyone caught sitting in it again will be disciplined severely.

—Note from Lord Seeker Alderai to his students, 7:72 Storm

## VAL ROYEAUX

Val Royeaux. Any resident, a "Royan," will say it is the greatest city in the world. Many take such pride for arrogance, but they do so through smiles as they nod in agreement, for such is the cost of doing business in the capital. Val Royeaux is in every way a world leader—in commerce, culture, and its own exaggerated beauty.

The site was founded during Evrion's grand unification, the result of a mix of influences not such much balanced as driven together. And while such an amalgamation would be cause for chaos elsewhere, the prosperity of the region has enabled an upward spiral of indulgence. The capital has endured the ages to become a beacon of civilization, and its citizens the measure of modernity. Just ask them.

An element of Val Royeaux is notoriously risqué, and it exists harmoniously beside the aristocracy and the palace bureaucrats. Indeed, the aristocracy tends to indulge in the city's darker side quite frequently (if discreetly), and that only adds to the mystique. Nobility elsewhere tend to be much more conservative and concerned about their reputation, even if a trip into the capital to indulge a few private pleasures is not completely out of the question.

In Val Royeaux, transgressions are suffered and forgiven with flamboyant urgency. That is not to say the city is without lasting scandal or hardship; but one must squint past the gilding to be allowed even a glimpse, as Royans are very careful about the face they present. Such it is with the masks of nobility and the underbelly of their streets.

—Excerpted from *Val Royeaux: Excesses Grand and Otherwise* by (formerly) Sister Laudine

## TALES

### "EMPRESS OF FIRE"

Empress of fire,  
In the reign of the lion,  
Eclipsed in the eye of  
The empire of we Orlesians.

Empress of fire,  
What season may come,  
We fight for the day  
You'll restore our heart  
And bring us to glory.

We are forever  
In your graces.

Empress of fire,  
Save us, everyone.  
The nation reviles,  
The course is but run, and end has begun.

Empress of fire,  
Believe in us all.  
Embrace us with arms,  
And dress us with swords,  
And light up our hearts with blood so bold.

We are forever  
In your graces.

Empress of fire,  
In the reign of the lion,  
Eclipsed in the eye of  
The empire of we Orlesians.

Empress of fire,  
What season may come,  
We fight for the day  
You'll restore our heart  
And bring us to glory.

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

## **"ENCHANTERS"**

Enchanters!  
The time has come to be alive  
With the Circle of Magi, where we will thrive  
With our brothers.

Enchanters remind  
That time will not unwind.  
The dragon's crooked spine,  
Will never straighten into line.

Our plea will be  
A faithful end decree,  
Where a man will not retreat  
From the defeat of his fathers.

Enchanters!  
A time has come for battle lines.  
We will cut these knotted ties,  
And some may live and some may die.

Enchanter, Come To Me  
Enchanter, Come To Me  
Enchanter, Come To See  
Can-a you, can-a you come to see,  
As you once were blind  
In the light now you can sing?  
In our strength we can rely,  
And history will not repeat.

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

## **"I AM THE ONE"**

I feel sun  
Through the ashes in the sky.  
Where's the one  
Who'll guide into the night?

What's begun  
Is the war that will  
Force this divide.

What's to come  
Is fire and the end of time.

I am the one  
Who can recount  
What we've lost.

I am the one  
Who will live on.

I have run  
Through the fields  
Of pain and sighs.

I have fought  
To see the other side.

I am the one  
Who can recount  
What we've lost.

I am the one  
Who will live on.

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

## **"MAKER"**

Maker  
Have you left me here

Temple  
Sacred Ashes

Tragic  
Mark upon our land

Sky fall  
Let darkness reign on thee

Now flee  
From the dragon's heart

Warring  
Battle-scarred eyes

Breach  
Into the Fade has come

Demon  
Please spare my life  
And our sons

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

### **"NIGHTINGALE'S EYES"**

Nightingale's eyes—  
What secret lies  
In their worth?

Raven's tears they cry,  
But all the while  
They softly lie and spy on you.

Nightingale's eyes—  
What will they find  
Left behind?

Craven master spy,  
With heart remiss  
For those who could not find the truth.

We're blinded,  
So we're hiding  
Dying to be.

We're hiding  
From the fighting,  
Longing to see.

We're waiting  
For someone to speak  
And set us all free.

Nightingale's eyes  
Can free the ties  
On our hands.

Craven master spies—  
Can they find  
The key that can unlock the past?

We're hiding  
From the fighting,  
Longing to see.

We're waiting  
For someone to speak  
And set us all free... free.

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

### **"OH, GREY WARDEN"**

Oh, Grey Warden,  
What have you done?  
The oath you have taken  
Is all but broken.

All is undone.  
Demons have come  
To destroy this peace  
We have had for so long.

Ally or Foe?  
Maker only knows.  
Ally or Foe?  
The Maker only knows.

The stronghold lives on,  
And the army's reborn,  
Compelled to forge on.  
What will we become?

Can you be forgiven  
When the cold grave has come?

Or will you have won,  
Or will battle rage on?

Oh, Grey Warden,  
What have you done?  
The oath you have taken  
Is all but broken.

All is undone.  
Ash in the sun,  
Cast into darkness  
The light we had won.

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell



## **"ONCE WE WERE"**

Once we were  
In our peace  
With our lives assured.

Once we were  
Not afraid of the dark.

Once we sat in our kingdom  
With hope and pride.

Once we ran through  
The fields with great strides.

We held the Fade  
And the demon's flight  
So far from our children  
And from our lives.

We held together  
The fragile sky  
To keep our way of life.

Once we raised  
Up our chalice  
In victory.

Once we sat  
In the light of our dreams.

Once we were  
In our homeland  
With strength and might.

Once we were  
Not afraid of the night.

- As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

## **"RISE"**

Find me  
Still searching  
For someone  
To lead me  
Can you  
Guide me  
To the revolt inside me

Promise  
Surviving  
The Breach

Promise  
Surviving  
The Breach  
In the sky

Templar  
Igniting  
Fire inside me

Maker  
Remind me  
Gone are the days  
Of our peace

Now we reside  
In the great divide

No promise  
Surviving  
The Breach  
In the sky

- As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

### **"SAMSON'S TALE"**

Samson templar fame,  
Raise your shield of shame.

Samson's letter caught,  
Left unfought defamed.

Armor laced with blood  
Shall reclaim his name.

Samson's broken heart  
Shall revoke his claim.

Samson knight in red,  
He hath lost his way

Samson martyr rage.  
Soon the world will pay.

- As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

## **"SERA WAS NEVER"**

Sera was never quite an agreeable girl—  
Her tongue tells tales of rebellion.  
But she was so fast,  
And quick with her bow,  
No one quite knew where she came from.

Sera was never quite the quietest girl—  
Her attacks are loud and they're joyful.  
But she knew the ways of nobler men,  
And she knew how to enrage them.

She would always like to say,  
"Why change the past,  
When you can own this day?"  
Today she will fight,  
To keep her way.  
She's a rogue and a thief,  
And she'll tempt your fate.

Sera was never quite the wealthiest girl—  
Some say she lives in a tavern.  
But she was so sharp,  
And quick with bow—  
Arrows strike like a dragon.

Sera was never quite the gentlest girl—  
Her eyes were sharp like a razor.  
But she knew the ways of commoner men,  
And she knew just how to use them.

—As performed by the bard Maryden Halewell

## **A COMPENDIUM OF ORLESIAN THEATER**

The most unusual part of Orlesian theater, appropriately enough, revolves around our southern neighbor's love of masks. Every actor wears a mask, and every mask follows a hierarchy of shape and colors that indicates to the audience the character's importance. Half-face green masks indicate a leading male role, for example, while half-face purple masks are for primary female characters. Full white masks are reserved for roles of no clear gender, such as spirits, except for demons, whose masks must always be black and red. Further complicating matters for those new to Orlesian theater, an actor's race or sex has no bearing on the parts they can play.

If a director believes they can sell the part, men can play dowagers, women can play dukes, and even an elf can play a king. Once donned, the mask is understood to be absolutely them. None of the actors I spoke to could explain to me the history behind this tradition, but bristled when I suggested other nations find it strange. There is a strong bond of trust between Orlesian theater troupes and their viewers. Indeed, I have rarely attended such attentive audiences than in Val Royeaux. It is my guess that Orlesians, surrounded as they are by masks in their daily lives, both require and fully respect a place where the objects boldly display their wearers' intentions for a change.

An appendix at the back of this volume lists the appearance and meanings of Orlais' theatrical masks. These conventions are vital to understanding the history of its finest theater, a journey I hope you will find as rewarding as I have.

—From *A Compendium of Orlesian Theater, Volume I: Introduction* by Magister Pellinar

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*A tent. King Drakon turns his crown in his hands.  
Enter his trusted cousin, Captain Ashan.*

Captain Ashan: Hail, Your Majesty. The armies wait on you.

King Drakon: What of the enemy?

Captain Ashan: The blighted ones mass on the hill, in larger numbers than ever we've seen.

King Drakon: We are outmatched on the field.

Captain Ashan: Andraste armed us with faith.

King Drakon: Our allies are a week from Cumberland.

Captain Ashan: We are aided by the Maker's word.

King Drakon: I do not doubt.

Captain Ashan: Yet your brow is vexed.

*Drakon throws down his crown.*

King Drakon: Pride killed our Prophet. Her sacred words are all we've left! If victory spurns us, who will carry them forward? Who will bear the Chant of Light?

Captain Ashan: Cousin! The army waits!

King Drakon: Maker, for a soul fit to lead them!

—From *The Sword of Drakon: an Examination of the Life and History of the Father of Orlais*, by Marquise Freyette

It's little wonder King Drakon's life is one of the most popular tales in Orlais. After founding both Orlais and the Chantry, the charismatic young noble battled the Second Blight for the rest of his reign. Freyette's plays are notable for being the first to portray Orlais' founder as a man beset by doubts, as are we all, instead of an idealized cipher. A few grand clerics attempted to ban the play, saying it criticized the current state of the Chantry, but *The Sword of Drakon* proved too popular among the masses and the nobility and remains a staple of Orlesian theater to this day.

—From *A Compendium of Orlesian Theater, Volume II: Classics of the Storm Age* by Magister Pellinar

Countess Dionne: You mock me.

Duke Le Seuille: It's what I do best, I'm told.

Countess Dionne: He cannot be our child!

Duke Le Seuille: I have asked about the town. He wears my great-grandfather's scabbard. The one that went missing that night.

Countess Dionne: Impossible.

Duke Le Seuille: Then you have no objections to our visitor?

Countess Dionne: Who else have you informed of this?

*A woman in a black and gold mask with crow feathers on the side enters from the servant's door. She bows. The countess pales and puts her face in her hands.*

Countess Dionne: But if the man come to visit the castle is our son—

Duke Le Seuille: As you said, he cannot be. For both our sakes.

—From *The Heir of Verchiel* by Paul Legrand

Rife with betrayal, revenge, and a thundering climax, *The Heir of Verchiel* is performed each year in the city that gave it its name, a lavish production put on for the nobility who visit from nearby Halamshiral. The first performance of the play featured the noted actor Victor Boyet as the Duke Le Seuille. A city elf from Val Royeaux, Boyet took smaller roles for five years before convincing Legrand he was fit for the part. His first performance in the capital was so well received that when the cast came out to thunderous applause, the current emperor rose from his seat when Boyet took the stage.

Elves have done well in Orlais' theaters, much to the surprise of those outside the country, but actors' lives are hotbeds of scandal and intrigue that would make even the bards blush. It is unusual at first to see elves openly tolerated and sometimes even welcomed into their betters' circles, but Orlais treats its actors as a breed apart.

—From *A Compendium of Orlesian Theater, Volume III: Tragedies in the Modern Style* by Magister Pellinar

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The Young Maiden: Come, my lord, let us dance!

The Mayor: No! No, I cannot.

The Young Maiden: Oh, I beseech thee, do not leave me without a dance!

The Mayor: I have imbibed too much!

The Young Maiden: Please, come dance! I must leave soon!

The Mayor: It's too much! I bet you leave me to my circumspection!

*Laughing, the woman pulls the mayor up from his seat. A loud sound stops her.*

The Young Maiden: Do I smell the cook's cabbage stew from noon?

The Mayor: It has rejoined us, alas, from a more southerly direction.

—From *Wilkshire Downs* by A. Pourri

This play enjoys enduring and, some might say, embarrassing popularity, never failing to draw a large crowd during a festival or market. The fictional Fereldan village of Wilkshire Downs is the setting for over three thousand lines of increasingly outrageous situations begun, worsened, or ended by flatulence.

I am told actors go on a special diet to convincingly play the roles. I've not the courage for details.

—From *A Compendium of Orlesian Theater, Volume IV: Comedies and Operettas* by Magister Pellinar

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*Callista paces on the battlement over the lake. The sky is dark. She holds a cup of poison. Camallia is there, face veiled.*

Callista: The dawn is late.

Camallia: It will not come again.

Callista: It must hide 'neath the clouds.

Camallia: It will not come again.

Callista: The queen thinks you dead.

*Camallia, her back to the audience, faces Callista, and removes her veil.*

*Callista moans in fear. She drops her cup.*

—From *The Setting of the Light* by Lumiere Bartlet

These lines are from a play said to have been one of the strangest works of its time. Bartlet was a writer of small repute who died when a fire swept through his pauper's hovel. *The Setting of the Light* takes place in the mysterious city of Demhe, implied to be another world that somehow becomes our own moon. Accidents, madness, and suicide plagued the first production, and some historians claim that the play's conclusion was at once so hauntingly beautiful and shockingly vile it sparked the Great Riot of Val Royeaux in 4:52 Black.

The truth will forever be a mystery. Only fourteen pages of the play remain.

—From *A Compendium of Orlesian Theater, Volume V: Lost or Fragmented Works* by Magister Pellinar

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Lady Cramoisi: The body is not yet cold. Someone in this mansion killed Lord Carcasse!

Blanche, the Chambermaid: Maker's mercy! There's a murderer among us?

Captain Dore: Andraste take it, the woman's right. How do we proceed?

Mother Emeraude: We must search for some hint as to how the foul deed was done.

Captain Dore: With gusto, if one goes by the amount of blood on the walls.

*Blanche faints.*

—From *Death in the Mansion* by Violette Armand

Incredibly, this enjoyable if somewhat predictable melodrama begat a storm of debate. At the end of the piece, the murderer of Lord Carcasse changes into a villain's mask before giving an elaborate confessional speech. At the time, masks in Orlesian theater were fixed to each role. Plays were written with the assumption that the masks gave audiences vital information a play's characters might not possess. *Death in the Mansion* ignored this implicit contract, shocking the audiences at the time.

Armand was nearly destroyed by the attacks on *Death in the Mansion* by both her theatergoers and Orlesian critics. Many accused her of an unforgivable violation of the spirit of the theater. A vogue for "False Face" stories caught on among the foremost writers of the time, however, and today Armand's techniques are seen as wholly unremarkable. It only goes to show how easily the alchemy of time shifts the outrageous into the everyday.

—From *A Compendium of Orlesian Theater, Volume VI: The Plays of False Faces* by Magister Pellinar

## **A FINE TIME TO CLOSE A BORDER**

The news is dire. There are rumors that our Warden brothers and sisters in Ferelden have all perished. Without the Grey Wardens, the Blight will take Ferelden. Then it will undoubtedly spread. It will go north to Nevarra and the Marches. It will come west to Orlais. At the head will be an Archdemon, and in its wake will come thousands upon thousands of darkspawn. We must be ready to stare squarely into the eyes of oblivion.

Many of you have asked why we remain here when such threats are mounting in the east. The problem, you see, is not a new one for us. Politics. To say Ferelden and Orlais have been at odds is an understatement. These two are like dogs and cats. We Wardens are Orlesian by address only, but that does not seem to matter to Ferelden's leaders.

Word is that the King of Ferelden is dead. And his successor, Loghain Mac Tir, decrees that no Warden set foot in the country. Mac Tir, a national hero who helped expel invading Orlesian forces from Ferelden, seems to have it out for our Order, too. Maybe he doubts our abilities. Maybe he is more foolish than the history books make him out to be.

This is why we must wait, even as Ferelden willingly welcomes its fate.

—An address by Warden-Constable Blackwall of Val Chevin to his recruits, 9:30 Dragon

## **A GHOULISH DELIGHT**

My dearest Regine:

Surely you must have heard of the Paget's failing fortunes? They've lost almost everything. The lord made some bad decisions and trusted people he shouldn't. All that's left is La Maison Verte, in the Dales. They have to sell it and move to the city. I was called upon to find someone willing to buy the house. You would be so proud of me. I surpassed all the lord's expectations.

I looked into La Maison's history first. Did you know it was built in the time of the elves? It was a sanctuary dedicated to Andruil, goddess of the forest; the house was built around the ruins. The heart of the shrine was an etched stone altar, now in the grand hall. It's quite spectacular. Any noble in Val Royeaux would be envious of something with such historical significance. I planned a party to show off the house and its elven altar. We had it decorated with white flowers and candles, even brought in some harts to graze in the garden outside. The effect was stunning.

Then, my stroke of genius! Remember when Lady Carine's pastime was reading about elves, and how sympathetic she was to what happened in the Dales? She couldn't stop talking about how we must make contact with the restless elven spirits. All her lady companions were so taken with the idea. Well, I did just that. Or I made the guests believe that's what happened. I had to hire a mage to help, of course—a very discreet fellow from Montsimnard.

During the party, I talked about how the house was a haunt for sad elven spirits. They ate it all up. Romantic, they said. For the final touch, I had everyone join hands around the elven stone and pray, and the mage (no names!) cast a spell that made us dance like puppets on strings and sing "The Little Bluebird of Summer."

It was a triumph! Offers began pouring in! One of them was even from a representative of Grand Duchess Florianne.

Oh, I have so much to tell you. I can't wait to return.

With great love,

Ignatius

## **A MAGISTER'S NEEDS**

Dearest sister:

It's been an age since I've written, but I simply had to thank you! Your advice was perfect. Just a few gossips bought with gold and everyone in Minrathous thought Quirinus and I were the most dreadful rivals. It let us indulge our little love affair without his wretched family interfering, if only for a little while.

Quirinus himself sadly turned out to be less ideal. I caught him carrying on behind my back, with a *soporati* of all things. Can you imagine? There was nothing for it. During the quarrel, I threw boiling water at his face. Let his *soporati* kiss the scars better.

He's cowering in his mansion now, pretending he was hurt in a duel. No doubt he'll want revenge. Don't worry, dear sister. I took precautions. Don't tell anyone, but my master taught me a few secrets that should keep me safe. The ritual cost me the mansion's kitchen slave. Lenna, I think she was called? But I've enough power now to keep Quirinus from trying anything foolish. Kitchen slaves can be bought by the dozen at the market, so there's no harm in it.

I feel wonderful, dear sister. Won't you come for Wintersend this year? I'll have my new slave trained to make your favorite lemon cakes by then. It'll be perfect.

—Letter from Magister Delphine to her sister Aulia, 8:65 Blessed

## **A MISSING SLAVE**

In Tevinter, a slave is invisible, even though the entire empire rests on our backs. Our hands built the walls of Minrathous and carry its wealth along the crumbling roads. Scribes like myself take dictation and write letters that shift the balance of power. My daughter, Leonora, a kitchen slave, works night and day so Magister Delphine isn't troubled by a torn robe or a cold supper.

Normally, I meet Leonora about the kitchens. But it has been days since our paths crossed. No one has seen her.



I can't help but think of the old stories that cross the slave markets like lightning, how, centuries ago, the ancients built their cities with blood magic, raising the very towers and walls with terrible rituals using our lives as fuel. Thousands of slaves were sacrificed as we were forced onto the altars of the Old Gods. Magister Delphine's perfect, marble-faced mansion likely stands on the back of a hundred voiceless elves.

But that was a different time. Andraste's words against blood magic made the practice all but forbidden and shunned. Though we may be punished, few slaves are dragged to the altar or milked of blood without at least some reprimand.

Yet Leonora is missing, and Magister Delphine seems different. She carries an aura she never had before. And rumors fly that a bitter rival has been publicly humiliated in a duel of magic. Through my grief I fear, I know, that my Leonora's life was the price.

I ache to speak as an equal with Magister Delphine, to demand answers. But such an audience would be joke to her. No one sees a slave.

—Written in secret by slave scribe Solvarin Brann, 8:65 Blessed

## **A NUTTY AFFAIR**

Several months after Clemence II died, rumors that she had been a man in disguise began circulating in Val Royeaux. The gossip was eventually traced back to one Sister Constance, who was present when the Divine's body was cleaned and dressed for her funeral. Constance had a weakness for barley wine, and spoke of Clemence II's sensitive matter to a local tavern-keep after having imbibed large quantities of the beverage.

Revered Mother Estelle put the rumors to rest by declaring that she had also aided the sisters in dressing the late Divine's body for her cremation, and knew for a fact that Clemence II was a woman. She went on to say that Sister Constance was mistaken; what she saw was in actuality a squirrel that had clambered in through an open window and come to rest between the Divine's legs.

—From *Secrets of the Most Holy* by Sister Damson

## **A PLEA FROM THE WARRIOR TO THE SPIRITS**

The wolves were our allies. In the old days, before Andraste, before the Maker, we knew this to be so. But man grew tired of the chase, the hunt, the truth of fang and steel and blood. Man put seeds in the ground, tended cattle and chickens, and built fences to keep the wolves away. Man bred hounds that would heel and sit and obey, and told himself that the hounds were just as good.

Now the darkspawn come again. They break our fences, kill our cattle and chickens, burn our crops. Our dogs cower with tails between their legs, or if they fight, they fall to the poison of darkspawn blood. We are dying, and I am shamed by my cowardice.

The ways of man and hound are not enough. I come to you, spirits of the old forest, I who built fences, I who came with fire and steel to drive you away. I come to you because fear has made my arms weak. I ask you for unforgiving rage to make them strong again.

Kill the hound in my heart, and grow strong from the meat on its bones. In its place, give me the wolf.

—Words caught in the bloody ripples of ancient water in the Fade, somehow remembered

## A SEASON OF THE FOUR AFOUL

At this window, the thief Treadwell did witness the attempted assault of Lady Castine. He surrendered his chance for escape to catch and hold he assailant, a bard of Lord Halevine. Hero thief, foiled bard, and conspiring noble were all censured as per their station and relevant action—lashings and labor, disappeared, and ostracized for the social season, respectively.

The scandal played out far longer in the theatrically serialized adaptation, which reimagined the three as siblings separated at birth, competing for Lady Castine's hand at her orchestration. The conclusion was relatively accurate to the original event, save the punishment of the thief and noble being swapped, to comic effect. Generally good reviews received, though some thought the height of the lady's hair to be unrealistic.

—Excerpted and torn from *A Disposable Walking Tour of the Capital* by Philliam, a Bard!

## ANDRASTE'S MABARI

You know Andraste's old mabari.  
He don't show up in the Chant.  
And if you ask those holy sisters,  
Well, they'll say Andraste can't  
Have had some big old smelly wardog.  
But all Ferelden knows it right:  
Our sweet Lady needed someone  
Who would warm her feet at night.

And there's Andraste's mabari  
By the Holy Prophet's side.  
In the fight against Tevinter,  
That dog would never hide.  
They say the Maker sent him special,  
Always loyal, without pride,  
So he could be the sworn companion  
Of the Maker's Holy Bride.

Oh, that dog, he guards Andraste  
Without arrogance or fear,  
Only asking of his mistress  
Just a scratch behind the ears.  
But then old Mafrath gets to plotting,  
Tries to lure that dog away.  
But even as they trap the Prophet,  
Her mabari never strays.

And there's Andraste's mabari  
By the Holy Prophet's side.  
In the fight against Tevinter,  
That dog would never hide.  
They say the Maker sent him special,  
Always loyal, without pride,  
So he could be the sworn companion  
Of the Maker's Holy Bride.

Oh they thought the wounds had killed him,  
But then he limped out toward the fire.  
And Hessarian, he shed a tear,  
As that dog laid on the pyre.

And there's Andraste's mabari  
By the Holy Prophet's side.  
In the fight against Tevinter,  
That dog would never hide.  
They say the Maker sent him special,  
Always loyal, without pride,  
So he could be the sworn companion  
Of the Maker's Holy Bride.

Yes that mabari's the companion  
Of the Maker's Holy Bride.

-A popular, if historically unlikely, Ferelden tavern song

## **ANDRUIL'S MESSENGER**

Long ago, when our people were strong and free, we roamed the world and could do as we pleased. But we were taught by Andruil, Mother of Hares, to respect nature and all of the Creator's creatures. Even though the earth was ours, we did not misuse it. They say the great leaders of the People would pray to Andruil for guidance. Where shall we hunt? Where shall we raise our halla? Where shall we settle and build? Andruil would send her messenger, the owl, to show the People the way, and they would follow him to where the land was blessed.

Always keep an eye out for the noble owl. You never know: Andruil might have a message for you.

—As told by Keeper Gisharel to the children of the Ralaferin clan

## ASTRARIUMS

Regarding your inquiry regarding the so-called "astrariums," it is our considered belief that these are relics from a cult that existed in the pre-Andrastian era of the Tevinter Imperium. Now, what would be considered a cult in a society that worshipped the Old Gods? An order of magisters who believed in the destruction of the Magisterium, the governing body of the Imperium that determines which mages are and are not given the "magister" title. The members of this order wished to return to an earlier period where Dreamers ruled, and evidence indicates they operated throughout Tevinter, though primarily in the frontier areas. There they would lock away their secrets, caches of treasure, and perhaps even secret meeting places (though we have no way of knowing for certain), unlockable only through knowledge of ancient astronomy—a practice that was, we understand, rather out of fashion in the late Tevinter period.

According to our investigations, each of the astrariums could point to the secret cache if one knew the three constellations that mapped to each device present at the site. Connect the dweomers in the correct configuration, and it would be revealed. Many of these relics were sought out by Andrastian cultists in the early Divine Age (the Order of Fiery Promise in particular) and destroyed. Why? Because they believed the astrariums held together the Veil, and that destroying them would destroy the Veil and thus the world. Such is the way of cults of any kind that the true reasons for what they do could never truly be understood by modern minds.

—From a letter written by Magister Pelidanus, head of the Corial Order, 5:12 Exalted

## BATTLEGROUND STATE

It seems a bitter twist of fate to discover that half of Thedas does not consider my homeland a nation at all. Qunari maps depict the island as part of their territory, without any ambiguousness to the claim. I can only assume this is because all islands within the Boeric Ocean naturally fall under their jurisdiction. The Tevinter maps, meanwhile, still proudly show the entire island as part of the Imperium, even though Imperial control outside of small pockets is little more than fiction and changes whenever the Qunari return their attention to the area.

Imperial reports speak of "Fog Warriors" as if we are beasts, little better than darkspawn or dragons. "Dangerous element of the wilderness, best avoided or eliminated, but ultimately of no consequence." It angers me to read these things. Ours is a land that has been shaped by war, as no other. Long ago the Imperium came, and after centuries of trying and failing to turn us into compliant Imperial citizens, the Qunari came instead. They conquered Seheron and attempted to convert us. Neither side succeeded in taking our freedom. And though battle after bloody battle have ground our ancient halls of wisdom practically to dust, we still dream of the land that was.

The fog dancers who travel with each band of warriors regale them with the legends of old and keep the songs our people alive. They say that the griffons of the Grey Wardens came from Seheron. They tell us of the ancient Curse of Nahar that brought the fog, and the promise that will one day lift it. They speak of the March of Four Winds, of the lost people who fled to the northern islands and the great heroes who learned at the feet of elves.

Are the old tales true? We may never know. All that remains of the land Seheron once was is gone. But I know we will make them true someday.

—From *A Land of Fog* by Brother Ashor Vell

## **BEFORE ANDRASTIANISM: FORGOTTEN FAITHS**

The teachings of the Andrastian Chantry have been part of Thedosian lives for over eight hundred years. The Chantry guides us and teaches us. We are made humble in the knowledge that we have sinned, and yet we are inspired and given hope through Andraste's story and her song. But Andraste died almost two hundred years before her Emperor Kordillus Drakon established the Chantry and spread the Chant of Light. In those terrible years, Thedosians were lost. Crying for salvation, they took to anyone and anything they hoped could give them the answers they so desperately sought. Some returned to well-known faiths, like the Tevinter Imperium's cult of the Old Gods, which we hold accountable for the curse of the Blight and the darkspawn. But others found their own paths, following false prophets and making false gods out of men. Many of these religions have disappeared, dying out with their adherents, like the Daughters of Song, or the Empty Ones. Others, like the Blades of Hessarian, may still lurk in the hidden corners of our world.

This book aims to remember them, so that we may find compassion for those who lived in those dark times, and also for they who even now are lost, and turn to shadow, trying find light.

—From *Before Andrastianism: the Forgotten Faiths* by Sister Rondwyn of Tantervale

## **BOTTLES OF THEDAS**

### **Chasind Sack Mead**

A brutishly strong honey liquor, reminiscent of warm summer days, apple blossoms on the wind, with an unexpected aftertaste of Father going off to war, never to return. Bitter, to say the least.

### **Garbolg's Backcountry Reserve**

Likely dropped to avoid seizure by authorities, or because of seizure due to drinking it. Garbolg only brewed from 8:74 to 8:92 Blessed, killed when the vapors in his beard spontaneously combusted.

### **Golden Scythe 4:90 Black**

This battlefield spirit maintains a chill even in direct sunlight, which it appears to absorb. Optimal serving is by the drop. Contact with exposed flesh is discouraged, but likely inevitable.

### **Legacy White Shear**

Peculiar and rare, a single run of this spirit took color and what has been optimistically called flavor from lyrium in the cask's bilge hoop. A sipping whisky if you value your innards. Circa 790 T.E.

### **Sun Blonde Vint-1**

Tevinter-brewed for a very discreet clientele, and strong enough to fluster a Tranquil. An almost weightless spirit best served with a powdering of catsbane as a flavor enhancer and antidote.

### **Aqua Magus**

Fine spirits infused with a bit of refined lyrium. Potentially fatal if ingested in quantity.

### **Dragon Piss**

The name is probably figurative, but no one knows for sure.

### **Hirol's Lava Burst**

"It tastes like burning." Brewed exclusively in Kal'Hirol.

### **Mackay's Epic Single Malt**

This whisky is older than the Maker and smoother than elven baby-butt.

### **West Hill Brandy**

Notes of black currant with a honeysuckle finish. Also, tastes like brandy.

### **Flames of Our Lady**

A wine with hues that range from blood to fire, always in that order. In the South, take a single draught, shout, "She is with us," and throw the remainder into a fireplace. In the North, draw steel and march.

### **Silent Plains Piquette**

An artisanal treatment of a Tevinter slave wine. Grape pomace is soaked and pressed, then buried for a year under the wastes where the first Archdemon fell. One assumes. They keep finding the stuff.

### **Finale By Massaad**

The last bottling from the legendary vintners of Ferelden before lands were divided. Tears on the glass as slow as the turning of a reluctant heir, as quick on the tongue as words that can't be unsaid.

### **Butterbile 7:84**

A hard liquor that is not so much served as it is brandished. Coarse and indifferent, it is to your taste, or it is not. The failing is yours if you cannot raise—or lower—to the challenge of a distiller told not to.

### **Vint-9 Rowan's Rose**

Delicate to the nose, comfort to the tongue, and, strangely, a half-remembered whisper to the ears. It is described as—and inspires—a wistful spirit. A vintner's opus.

### **Absence**

"I am aware of how to spell it. This bottling reflects my wish that the current crop of behatted self-styled cads would disappear. I preferred la fée verte as spirit, not affectation. " —Distiller Emeritus Gaivon

### **Antivan Sip-Sip**

Careful, this one's mean. Attic-raised mean. Popular among highborn who wish to seem dangerous, but more at home grasped by the neck by those who actually are.

## **Carnal, 8:69 Blessed**

An Orlesian liqueur for the daring, or those who wish to seem so. Said to enhance sensation. And at the bottom, an erotically carved peach pit. The design is plain, but the bottler assures that the act of carving was scandalous.

## **Abyssal Peach**

Not so much filtered as dredged. Should be kept in a cold, dark place. Also locked. Forgotten as well, if one is wise.

## **Alvarado's Bathtub Boot Screech**

If you can read this, you haven't drunk it.

## **CASPAR THE MAGNIFICENT**

King Caspar the Magnificent saw one hundred and twenty-seven summers before he finally left for eternal slumber beneath our great kingdom. Even on that last day, the king sparred with his great-grandson, Mathas the Glorious, and bested him. King Caspar showed no signs of weakness or decrepitude in his advanced age, and proved more than a match for the much younger man. Caspar met every blow Mathas delivered, and returned each with twice the vigor.

In the end, the great king threw his grandson to the ground, and with one stroke of his sword, sheared the beard clean off Mathas's chin. "You are a Pentaghast," the king said. "Have some care for your appearance."

Chastised, Mathas sent for his attendants, and bade them to bathe and groom him. Thereafter, his chin was always shaved obsessively close to the skin.

As for the king, he retired to his chambers for his afternoon nap. When it came time for supper, the servants were unable to rouse him. And that is how King Caspar the Magnificent, sixty years the supreme lord of Nevarra, finally set aside his crown.

—From *The Pentaghast Kings of Nevarra*, a growing book of family legends

## **COMMON CURSES**

So, lad—you're getting your sight straight in your first days topside, so here's some advice: you're not just trading with kin. You're selling to all kinds of folk now, with different customs and tongues. As I've learned here, the most important part of any language is the cussing. It gets you trust. It gets you coin.

Most elves you see in the city are servants, and a human looking for a fight might call one "knife-ear." If the elf returns with "shem" or "quick," blood's about to spill. Those Dalish elves use "flat-ear" to insult the ones who live with humans—like our unenlightened kin below calling us Stone-blind up here.

Even the humans who pray to some woman they burned alive—and her god they call "the Maker"—say something when they knock their shins. It's a curse to say "Andraste's..."—well, any body part, really. "Maker's breath!" might get you in with a swaggering fool, but the lady priests won't be pleased. Chantry folk also don't like mages. If you hear a mage called a "spellbind," hide anything flammable.

Then there are all those beautiful words that just mean "Sod it!" When that loose cobblestone flips and the ankle cracks, an elf will cry, "Fenedhis!" while a human might, "Damn it!" A Qunari will mumble, "Vashedan!" I've even heard a couple Tevinters yell, "Kaffar!"

If any of these get aimed at you, hopefully all that gets killed is a sale.

—Note from Hardal, a surface merchant dwarf, to an apprentice adjusting to life outside Orzammar

### **CONSTELLATION: BELLITANUS**

Referred to as "the Maiden" in common parlance, depictions of the constellation Bellitanus vary from one Age to the next. It has always been considered fashionable for prominent women of the day to be declared the Maiden's personification: Queen Madrigal in the Exalted Age, for instance, and Queen Asha before her. None of these women would likely appreciate the fact that Bellitanus is believed to have originally referred to Urthemiel, the Old God of Beauty.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: DRACONIS**

Called "High Dragon" in common parlance, the constellation Draconis is always depicted by a dragon in flight. Recently, it has come into question whether this was the case in the ancient Imperium. Most Tevinter dragon imagery was reserved for the Old Gods, so why would they dedicate a constellation to dragons in general when specific dragons were held in such reverence? This speculation is fueled by older drawings showing Draconis as more serpentine in appearance, perhaps depicting a sea creature or an unknown eighth Old God that was stricken from historical record.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: ELUVIA**

Owing primarily to the popular Orlesian tale of the same name, the constellation Eluvia is commonly referred to as "Sacrifice." During the Glory Age, folklore told of a young woman saved from a lustful mage by being sent into the sky by her father - after which the mage killed him (hence the sacrifice). The daughter became the constellation, depicted as a seated woman with her head in the clouds. Prior to this tale, Eluvia was thought to represent Razikale, the Tevinter Old God of mystery, and the constellation was the source of many superstitions involving the granting of wishes.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: EQUINOR**

Referred to as "the Stallion" in common parlance, the constellation Equinor has historically been depicted either as a rearing horse or a seated griffon. Some scholars speculate that the constellation's original image was that of a halla, which could indicate a deliberate supplantation of the constellation's original representation as Ghilan'nain, the elven goddess also known as "Mother of the Halla." However, as horses had great significance to early Neromenian culture (from which the ancient Imperium descended), this speculation is largely considered unfounded.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius



## **CONSTELLATION: FENRIR**

Called "White Wolf" in common parlance, Fenrir has always been considered an oddity among scholars, primarily because wolves have no special place within ancient Tevinter folklore. To many, this represents the strongest argument that the Imperium deliberately supplanted older elven constellation names—in the case of Fenrir, an alignment with the elven trickster god, Fen'Harel, would be logical. Others claim a much older Neromenian tale of a wolf escaping hunters by fleeing into the sky exists, but the legend's veracity has never been proved.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **CONSTELLATION: FERVENIAL**

Commonly referred to as "the Oak," the constellation Fervanis is generally represented by a towering tree with leafless branches. Many scholars believe this is a representation of nature that harkens back to the lore of the early Neromenians, whose beliefs largely aligned with animism, prior to the rise of Old God worship and the creation of the Tevinter Imperium.

Others, however, believe Fervanis was originally a constellation of the elven people—specifically, a depiction of Andruil, goddess of the Hunt. "Vir Tanadhal," or "Way of Three Trees," is a central tenet of Andruil, and some think that Fervanis originally represented this concept.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **CONSTELLATION: JUDEX**

Depicted as a downturned sword, the constellation Judex is oft-called "the Sword of Mercy" in common parlance—even though the sword image was assigned to these stars long before Andraste's time. "Judex" referred to the concept of justice in ancient Tevinter, and the downturned aspect of the sword indicated a guilty verdict—which, in those times, generally translated to execution.

Obviously, with its modern meaning and use as a symbol by the Templar Order, the old interpretation is frowned upon in scholarly circles.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **CONSTELLATION: KIOS**

Referred to as "Chaos" in common parlance, the constellation Kios is thought to represent the Old God Zazikel. These stars have often been depicted as ill omens; thus, in the Towers Age, a movement within the Chantry sought to change the constellation to a representation of a dove. It did not gain traction. According to folklore, the priest behind the effort fell from a bridge and died shortly after Divine Joyous II made the decision against her. I maintain that this never actually happened and is nothing more than astrological superstition.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **CONSTELLATION: PERAQUIALUS**

Referred to as "Voyager" in common parlance, the constellation Peraquialus is commonly depicted as a ship—no ordinary ship, but rather the primitive vessels sailed by ancient peoples such as the Neromenians. The translation from Ancient Tevene is usually "across the sea," and lends credence to the idea that the Neromenians came to Thedas from elsewhere, although most reputable scholars dispute this, especially considering those ancient peoples would likely to have named these stars long before they undertook such a voyage.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: SATINALIS**

Referred to as either "Satina" (after the moon) or as "Satinalia" (after the holiday) in common parlance, the constellation Satinalis has always been depicted by the Celebrant: a seated man playing a lyre. It should be noted that, in ancient Tevinter, the constellation was known as "Mortemalis," and was represented by a warrior holding aloft a head (usually that of an elf). The movement to officially rename it took hold in the Divine Age, and after eight hundred years, the original is all but forgotten.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: SERVANI**

Referred to as "the Chained Man" in common parlance, the constellation Servani is traditionally represented by a man dragging a heavy chain behind him. This is thought to be an ancient Tevinter representation of both Andoral, the Old God of slaves, and of the Tevinter system of slavery itself. The representation of Servani has been used by the Trisalus guild for well over two thousand years (according to their claim), and is visibly imprinted upon the armor of both Juggernauts, the giant golems guarding the gates to the city of Minrathous.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: SILENTIR**

Referred to as "Silence" in the common parlance, the constellation Silentir is historically attributed to Dumat, the Old God of Silence and leader of the ancient Tevinter pantheon. The depiction of the constellation, however, is often debated. Some depict a dragon in flight, while others (also the most common modern depictions) show a man carrying a horn and a wand. Some scholars believe these represented scales, which would point to this constellation being a supplantation of the elven Mythral, but nothing indicates this to be more than speculation.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

### **CONSTELLATION: SOLIUM**

There are two common interpretations regarding the history behind the constellation Solium, commonly referred to as "the Sun." The first is that it represents the fascination of early peoples (such as the Necromenians, predecessors to the ancient Tevinter Imperium) with all objects in the sky, the Sun and Moon in particular. Indeed, many believe proper depiction of Solium is as both. The second interpretation is that this constellation originally represented Elgar'nan, the head of the elven pantheon who was also known as "Eldest of the Sun." Modern scholars do not know which, if either, is truth.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **CONSTELLATION: TENEBRIUM**

Called "Shadow" in the common parlance, likely due to the ancient association of the constellation Tenebrium with Lusacan, the Old God of darkness and the night. It is odd, however, that the depiction for this constellation has always been an owl and not a dragon, even in the Tevinter texts. This lends credence to the widely-held belief that Tenebrium was a name meant to supplant an older, elven association—perhaps with the elven god Falon'Din, sometimes represented in tales as a giant owl. There is, of course, another explanation: owls are nocturnal hunters, and among earlier people, were considered terrifying omens of loss.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **CONSTELLATION: TOTH**

The only constellation to maintain its ancient name in the present day, the constellation Toth directly corresponds to the ancient Tevinter Old God known as Toth, the Dragon of Fire. The depiction of this constellation varies, usually represented either as a man aflame (in agony, presumably a victim of the Old God) or as a flaming orb. Scholars in the Divine Age attempted to officially change the nomenclature to "Ignifir" (this is why some old texts record it as such), but the attempt never caught on, even after the eradication of Old God worship in the Imperium.

—From *A Study of Thedosian Astronomy* by Sister Oran Petrarchius

## **DARKTOWN'S DEAL**

Ask the nobles of Orzammar how their kingdom gets silks and grain and wine from the surface, and they'll tell you "trade with the surface occurs." It occurs. As if on its own. With no traders or merchants or human farmers involved. A little miracle of dwarven ingenuity.

The reality is a lot messier than their fantasy.

Orzammar relies upon the surface not just for its prosperity, but for its survival. Ages of Blights have taken thousands of thaigs away from the dwarves. These were the places where most of the food was raised. The dwarven kingdom that endured alone, independent beneath the Stone from time immemorial, perished in the First Blight, faded into myth. Now, the remaining dwarves underground cling to existence through a lifeline to the surface, a chain forged from the casteless.

Every dwarf who goes to the surface is stripped of caste, effectively exiled and removed from dwarven society forever. But Orzammar relies on continued relations with these exiles to live. This has created a shadowy area of dwarven trade and politics where the rich, powerful, and elite maintain secret ties to people who, by official decree, no longer exist. And everyone knows what kinds of things lurk in the shadows.

The Carta lives in the underbelly of the surface trade like a tapeworm. Many surface dwarves maintain ties—not officially recognized, of course, but respectable—to their former houses in the Noble or Merchant Castes, and those contacts are their means of trading with Orzammar. Those who have no ties, because they were cast off by their families or never had good connections, make the trip back underground to trade with Orzammar personally, where they find themselves treated like criminals. A casteless in Orzammar, even a wealthy one from the surface, will be driven away from most merchants, treated like he's carrying a plague at best. So these surface merchants turn to the Carta for help. The Carta acts as a contact in Orzammar for surface businesses and sells their goods on the black market. For a cut, of course. The Carta always gets its cut.

The outraged citizens of Orzammar sometimes petition the Assembly to deal with the rampant crime surrounding the black market, and showy displays are made of kicking in the doors to Carta hideouts and razing Dust Town. But the Carta always comes back, because the Assembly always allows it. Too much of Orzammar is dependent on the black market trade, and the nobles know it. They all do business with the Carta. Everyone has a stake in its success. The Carta has a thousand faces above and below the surface—honest merchants and Noble Caste lords and upstanding members of the Merchants Guild—all a cover for the thousands more smugglers, thieves, and murderers in the shadows. The lifeline of Orzammar. Praise the Ancestors.

—Excerpted from *Darktown's Deal* by Varric Tethras

## **ELVEN GOD ANDRUIL**

One day Andruil grew tired of hunting mortal men and beasts. She began stalking The Forgotten Ones, wicked things that thrive in the abyss. Yet even a god should not linger there, and each time she entered the Void, Andruil suffered longer and longer periods of madness after returning.

Andruil put on armor made of the Void, and all forgot her true face. She made weapons of darkness, and plague ate her lands. She howled things meant to be forgotten, and the other gods became fearful Andruil would hunt them in turn. So Mythal spread rumors of a monstrous creature and took the form of a great serpent, waiting for Andruil at the base of a mountain.

When Andruil came, Mythal sprang on the hunter. They fought for three day and nights, Andruil slashing deep gouges in the serpent's hide. But Mythal's magic sapped Andruil's strength, and stole her knowledge of how to find the Void. After this, the great hunter could never make her way back to the abyss, and peace returned.

—Translated from ancient elven found in the Arbor Wilds, source unverified

## **EXHUMING BODIES BY MOONLIGHT**

My tenure as ambassador to the Nevarran court began, appropriately enough, with a death. I arrived to find my predecessor and intended mentor, Sifas Carreter, had died in his sleep. Not unexpected, given his age. Instead of a cremation, the Mortalitasi were summoned for him, those grey-robed mages who seem to be everywhere in the palace.

I was warned of the Mortalitasi in Starkhaven. Some cautioned me about their political prowess, learned from sitting at the king's feet for generations. Others talked about the Mortalitasi like they were ghoulish surgeons in leather aprons, exhuming bodies by moonlight in their Grand Necropolis.

The Mortalitasi who spoke to me was a polite, tawny-haired woman who smelled strongly of soap. She explained that Carreter had earned the honor of being preserved and interred in the Necropolis. It seems a barbaric practice, but I knew that demanding a cremation would have made me—and, more importantly, Starkhaven—lose face in Nevarra.

Instead, my thanks seemed to please her. She described some of their rites. Though she wouldn't speak of the greater mysteries, even a glimpse into their arts put my hair on end. But I held my peace. The Mortalitasi are linked to the throne by blood. If I die in my office, like Carreter, my body will be in their hands. In a land where death and politics are intertwined, one should be polite.

—*Galen Vedas, Starkhaven ambassador to Nevarra, 9:6 Dragon*

## GREY WHISKEY/RITWINE/CONSCRIPTION ALE

Perhaps local to a handful of Grey Warden companies, these spirits reflect a custom—or legend—born of utility. Allowed to seize goods to aid their cause, Wardens combine half-full bottles to save space while traveling. Never fully emptied or—as with a kettle—cleaned, each eventually takes on a base flavor as unique as the Warden carrying it. "What do we care? Nothing burns like the first cup." Could be fact, could be tribute. It does seem as though the bottles range farther than the namesake Warden could.

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A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Korenic. Notes of fruit and anger."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Anras. Bottled whimsy."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Gibbins. Don't frigging touch! I spit in this! I mean it!"

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Tontiv. Home."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Riordan. Serve yourself."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Daedalam. Extra red."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Jairn. Smash when dead."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Eval'lal. Griffon Wing Ale."

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Steed. Joining juice."

*If Bethany joins the Grey Wardens in Dragon Age II...*

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Bethany Hawke. Princess piss."

*If Carver joins the Grey Wardens in Dragon Age II...*

A bottle marked "Vintage: Warden Carver Hawke. Toast them all!"

## HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER ONE

### By Varric Tethras

They say coin never sleeps, but anyone who's walked the patrol of Hightown Market at midnight might disagree. The pickpockets and confidence men head to the taverns at dusk, the dwarven businessmen and nobles go back to their tiny palaces to fret over the ways they got cheated, and the market falls silent.

Donnen Brennokovic knew every angle of the market with his eyes closed. Twenty years of patrols had etched it into him so that he walked that beat even in his dreams. The recruit, Jevlan, was another story. The ring of steel striking stone told Donnen that the kid had stumbled into a column again. His new armor would be full of dents by sunrise.

"Torches would make this easier." The sound of Jevlan hauling himself off the pavement was like a tinker's cart crashing.

"Torches make you night-blind. You'll adjust." Donnen crossed the square to help the kid to his feet. A breeze scurried across the plaza, sending the banners and pennants shivering and carrying an old, familiar scent. Donnen stopped in his tracks. "Something's wrong." His voice was low, warning. He peered into the dark, up at the mezzanine just above them. "Follow me. Be ready for trouble."

The two guards climbed the dark stairs and there, in a puddle of shadow, found the body. Gold-trimmed satin glittered through the blood.

“Get the captain,” Donnen sighed. “We’ve got a dead magistrate.”

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER TWO**

Magistrate Dunwald’s butler had the air of a man who had never risen before dawn in his life. He stared down his nose at Donnen Brennokovic and his partner, Jevlan, as if he were on some lofty balcony above them instead of standing in the parlor in his dressing gown.

“The magistrate is indisposed. This can wait until a reasonable hour.” He gestured for the guards to see themselves out.

“The magistrate is dead,” Donnen corrected him. “Wake the household.”

As the butler left, Jevlan shifted uneasily in his new armor. “Shouldn’t the captain be here?”

“You want to go back to the barracks, be my guest,” Donnen said with a shrug, only half-listening as he studied the collection displayed in the room. A dozen ancient swords lay nestled in display cases, protected from dust and prying fingers. He moved to lift the lid of the nearest one. Jevlan started to protest, but then the doors opened.

She had eyes the color of topaz and dark hair that fell across her brow like sword strokes. She strolled into the parlor with such dignified elegance that Donnen didn’t realize for several minutes that she was clad in a housecoat and not a ball gown.

“You have news about my husband? What’s Seamus done this time, forget to pay his bill at the Rose?” She seated herself and indicated the guards do the same. Donnen nodded at the recruit to speak up.

Jevlan started, “No, Lady Dunwald, actually—“

She interrupted him with a wave. “Marielle, please.”

“Lady Marielle, your husband has been murdered,” Donnen took over for the flustered recruit. “When did you see him last?”

Marielle started at him, her jewel-colored eyes wide, and her voice cracked on, “Murdered? Seamus?” But a heartbeat, maybe two, passed, and she again became the perfect picture of noble grace. “I saw him at dinner,” she answered in a tone anyone might use to comment on the weather. “He left before dusk. He said he was going to play Wicked Grace with the Comte de Favre.”

“Do you know of anyone who might have wanted him dead?” Jevlan asked softly.

“People want magistrates dead on principle.” She gave a wry smile, but her voice grew pained. “Criminals. Political rivals. Even people in his district who disagree with him.” She drifted off, lost in thought, and then turned to Donnen, eyes blazing. “A week ago, a letter came. Vague threats. I thought it was nothing, but it upset Seamus.”

“Who sent it?” Donnen asked.

“It wasn’t signed. But the seal was six crossed swords.”

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER THREE**

For the second time in what was becoming a very long night, Donnen Brennokovic and his partner, Jevlan, found themselves knocking on a nobleman’s door. It was still hours before dawn, the sky turning grey around the edges. The steel of Donnen’s gauntlets clanged against the door. Once. Twice. No answer. He sighed looking up at the dark windows of the mansion. He was getting too old for this shit.

"Maybe he's out," Jevlan offered. The recruit was nervous. In the guard a week and barely able to walk through Hightown, too green for a murder case.

"He's hiding. Look up." Donnen pointed. "He's shuttered all the windows. There hasn't been a storm in months." He pounded on the door again, louder.

"We should get the captain." Jevlan shifted and squirmed under his heavy shoulder plates. Donnen had forgotten how badly new guard armor fit. He started to tell the kid where to get it adjusted, and the door swung open.

"Come inside, quickly!"

A man rushed them inside and through the house. Every room was dark. No moonlight made it through the shuttered windows. No candles flickered. Their way was lit only by a hooded lantern in the hands of their host. He stopped once they had reached a windowless inside room, where he closed and bolted the door behind him.

"Comte de Favre?" Donnen guessed.

The man nodded. In the dim lantern light, Donnen could see that he was dressed in a gaudy brocade doublet, but had thrown a chain mail shirt over it. He wore the helmet from an obviously ceremonial armor set, slightly askew on his head.

"I know why you're here," the comte whispered. "Dunwald."

Donnen's voice was flat. "Did you kill him, your lordship?"

"This is bigger than a murder," the comte hissed, eyes flicking to the door. "Dunwald drew the attention of great powers. When dragons do battle, guardsman, mortal men can only take cover. Drop the case. Don't draw their gaze ."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER FOUR**

Donnen Brennokovic didn't stand on ceremony. He strode through the barracks and slammed open the door to the captain's office without so much as a nod to the guards he passed.

Just barely dawn, and already Captain Hendallen was buried behind a mountain of paperwork taller than the Vimmarks. All Donnen could see of the captain was her fiery hair and an angry gaze that had stopped more than one pickpocket mid-grift.

"Captain, I need a warrant for the Comte de Favre." Even as the words left his lips, Donnen knew they were a mistake.

The Captain rose to her feet. "Brennokovic." The way she spoke his name was like a portcullis slamming shut. "Where's my report on the Hightown Market body?" It was the kind of question you might ask a truant child, the kind where you already knew the answer and just wanted to see someone squirm in guilt.

"I'll file it after—"

"You'll file it now, guardsman." She stepped out from behind the desk. "We follow procedure in my barracks."

"A magistrate was dead murdered on my watch, Captain." Donnen's voice was heated. He could never keep his temper in her presence. "I'm not letting the killer get away."

"You left the scene without a thorough search of the market." Hendallen began pacing, her voice like cold steel. "You harassed a magistrate's widow. And you practically broke down a comte's door." She turned to glare at him. "All before dawn! If you want a warrant, you'd damned well better have hard evidence to justify it."

"I know that de Favre isn't telling us everything!" Donnen insisted. "Let me bring him in and—"

"Forget it." She crossed back to her chair. "You've got nothing. You're not arresting a man on a feeling, Brennokovic."

"Captain!" He protested. From behind her paperwork, the captain waved for him to be silent.

"You're two weeks from retirement, guardsman. You want to stay in the ranks long enough to get pensioned, you follow procedure. Find me evidence and quit wasting my time. Dismissed."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER FIVE**

Jevlan was waiting outside the captain's office when Donnen Brennokovic slunk out, defeated.

"We're not getting a warrant, are we?" Jevlan looked almost relieved.

"No." Donnen met his partner's eyes. The kid was barely twenty and looked like he'd walked straight to the Kirkwall barracks from somebody's potato farm. Taller and broader than the other guards, Jevlan slouched as if he didn't know how to fit into his own limbs, as if he thought he should be smaller. Hunched over in his brand-new, too-large armor, he looked like a child playing at being a guard. He was too green for a murder investigation.

"Maybe it's for the best," Jevlan said, almost speaking Donnen's thought out loud. "You're on your way out of the guard, and I'm..." he trailed off, then sighed. "Questioning nobles in the middle of the night wasn't covered in training."

Donnen glared at the kid. "I'm a city guard. And so are you, recruit. Nobody gets away with murder while we're on duty."

Jevlan stood a little straighter. "What do we do, then?"

"The captain wants proof." Donnen smiled. "We bring her proof."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER SIX**

The estates of Hightown fall into three types. The dwarven palaces in their enclave, huddled around their counterfeit paragon statues for shelter against the onslaught of human ideas that surround them. The foreign quarter, where the wealthiest Orlesian and Antivan merchants stay during their twice-yearly visits to criticize the ship captains and shop clerks and accountants in their employ. And the noble mansions, where families who can trace their lineage back to Orlesian conquerors and Tevinter landlords perch to look down on the rabble of ordinary folk scurrying at their feet. But whoever they belong to, all of the Hightown estates have two things in common: a showy front entrance used when the occupants want to be seen and a hidden back way when they don't.

The servants' door the the Comte de Favre's mansion was in an alley hidden by overgrown topiaries. Donnen Brennokovic picked the lock while his partner, Jevlan, kept an uneasy lookout. They had left their armor at the barracks, but even in civilian clothes, the recruit managed to look like he was wearing an older brother's hand-me-downs.

"I don't think this is what the captain meant when she said to get evidence," he muttered.

The lock clicked, and Donnen gently pushed it open.



Only a few slivers of light slid through the shuttered windows. Silence hung in the air like a cheap tapestry. Donnen and Jevlan crept through the dark rooms, alert for any sign of servants, but nothing broke the eerie quiet except their footsteps. In fact, there was no sign that anyone had been in the house at all until they found the room whose door had been torn from its hinges.

Inside, the comte lay in a pool of blood, one hand clutching a loaded crossbow, a dagger hilt protruding from his back.

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER SEVEN**

Donnen Brennokovic searched Comte de Favre's office. The comte lay dead, murdered while armed and barricaded inside his own home. The servants' rooms were all empty, and from the pulled-out drawers and abandoned trunks, they had been sent away in a hurry. The comte had clearly expected trouble, and trouble had come to call.

The comte kept all of his letters. Decades of correspondence sorted by, apparently, kingdom of origin filled his writing desk. Donnen rummaged through them, looking for darker ink, fresher pages, anything that might indicate that it was recent.

And then came the shattering sound of someone kicking in the front door.

"Hey, Milord Fancypants! Get your ass down here!"

Jevlan and Donnen ran for the foyer.

A woman stood over the splintered door, her eyes glittering brighter than the daggers in her hands.

"You there!" she snapped at the guardsmen. "Where's the Comte de Fullofit? We need to have some words. One of them will be 'coin,' and another will be 'now.'"

"Kirkwall guard!" Donnen barked back at her. "This is a crime scene! Identify yourself."

"Guards, are you?" she smirked, squinting up into the dark towards him. "No suits of armor outside. Man poking around a noble's house in the dark. This does look like a crime scene."

Donnen didn't flinch. "Your name."

"Belladonna. Captain Belladonna, of the Dragon's Jewels." She executed a florid bow that somehow managed to be insulting. "Where's the damned comte?"

"He's dead," Donnen said, watching her reaction. "You wouldn't know anything about that, would you?"

She cracked a wry smile. "Trust me, sweet thing, if I were going to kill him, I'd have waited until he paid me first."

"What was your business with the comte?" Jevlan spoke up, startling Donnen. He'd almost forgotten his partner was there.

"Cargo transport." She glowered at the recruit. "He hired me to deliver some antiques, and I've been sitting at anchor for a fortnight without being paid." She peered up into the dark balconies overhanging the foyer and shouted, "Anybody here? You want this rubbish, come to the docks tonight and pay me fifty sovereigns for it. Otherwise, I'm dumping it in the sea." With that, she turned on her heel and strode away.

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER EIGHT**

Donnen Brennokovic left his partner, Jevlan, at the barracks. The recruit was even more jittery after their run-in with Captain Belladonna, and although Donnen himself was starting to feel his limbs weighed down and aching after such a long shift, he finally had the scent of something in this case. He wouldn't let it get away.

The city of Kirkwall has a legacy of collectors. It was built in ancient times by Tevinters who collected suffering as if it were rare coins, and they passed on their obsession with obsession to future generations. On any street from Darktown to the Viscount's Keep, you can always find someone who'll always buy tapestries or who has every known spoon made in Nevarra. Or someone who hoards odd bits and scraps of historical knowledge like it's their grandmother's crockery.

Which is how he found himself knocking on a brightly painted door in the Alienage.

"Oh, guardsman! What a nice surprise! Nobody's been mugged, have they?" The elf beamed up at him. She had green eyes so wide, they barely fit in her face, and she seemed to be made of nothing but elbows and knees.

"No muggings today, Maysie." Donnen had to duck his head slightly to get through the door. "I have something you might be interested in." He handed her the letter the magistrate's wife had given him the night before.

"Well, this doesn't look very interesting at all." Maysie frowned, disappointed. " 'What you have claimed belongs to greater powers. You will answer to us.' That's a lot of rubbish."

"Not that. Look at the back."

She flipped the letter over and cooed as if she'd found a lost puppy. "Oh! Just look at you! You're just perfect!"

"Maysie." Donnen spoke in a loud, firm voice, trying to remind her he was still in the room. "Whose seal is that?"

"Oh, it's the Executors, of course!" Maysie peered excitedly at the wax seal, holding it up to the window for better light. "I should have guessed it from the silly 'great powers' nonsense. There's only been one example, on the letter claiming responsibility for the assassination of Queen Madrigal in 5:99! And this one is so much better! Just look at that imprint!"

"Any idea how I'd contact these 'Executors'?" Donnen asked.

"Oh, they're not real, of course. Everyone knows that."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER NINE**

Donnen Brennokovic was running out of leads to chase. He had only two week until retirement, just two weeks to find the man who'd murdered a magistrate and a Hightown nobleman—if Captain Hendallen didn't kick him from the ranks first.

The docks stank of piss and rotting fish, as foul as the men and women who worked there. But that was where Donnen had to go to find the raider captain Belladonna who had broken into the Comte de Favre's home.

The Dragon's Jewels was a big boat. She liked big boats. The pointy bits towered majestically over the water. That roundish wooden part seemed like it could crush armadas beneath its ... shit, I don't know, wood. It was the greatest boat in the history of boats.

But even from the dock, Donnen knew something was wrong.

He ran up the gangplank to find a dead sailor on the deck and a blood trail leading down into the hold. Donnen drew his sword and followed. His eyes still hadn't adjusted to the dimness of the lower decks when he tripped over another dead sailor, stabbed in the gut and left where he'd fallen. The body was still warm. The ship creaked with every swell of the waves. Donnen held his breath and crept deeper into the hold.

He barely deflected the blade in time.

Steel rang against steel. Donnen parried a second blow, still half-blind in the low light. The third swing got past his guard and left a wicked slash in his forearm.

"Nobody attacks my crew, you flaming pile of dog shit!" the attacker swore, and Donnen recognized her voice.

"Hold! Kirkwall city guard!" he shouted, barely bringing his blade up in time.

"You again!" Donnen's eyes finally began to adjust, and he could make out Captain Belladonna. She was clutching her ribs with her right hand, a dagger in her left, and was covered in enough blood that Donnen was sure it wasn't all hers. She glowered at him. "Could have used a guard not five minutes ago. Useless as ever." She grudgingly lowered her weapon.

Donnen sheathed his sword. "Who did this?"

"Don't know. Didn't care to ask." She sniffed. "Bastard killed two of my men. Before I cut off his hand and he bolted." She waved indifferently towards the rear of the hold. "It's over there somewhere."

"Did he take the Comte's shipment?" Donnen asked.

"No. If that's what this was about, you can have it." She limped over to a trunk and removed a bundle of cloth tied with twine. She threw it at Donnen's feet. "Good riddance."

## **HER PERFUMED SANCTUARY**

Divine Rosamund. Now here's an interesting story. Rosamund was the youngest Divine ever crowned; she was born to the noble Montbelliard family and groomed for the rank of Divine by her predecessor, Divine Hortensia II.

Records of Rosamund describe her as a radiant beauty, and she captured the hearts and imaginations of the Orlesian public almost immediately. Not long after she was crowned Divine, erotic art and literature featuring her began to make an appearance in noble Orlesian circles. The situations depicted in these works were entirely fictional; Divine Rosamund led a life that was beyond reproach, but it seemed that purity only served to fan the flames of creativity in her "followers." To them, reality was a meddlesome creature to be punted off the nearest cliff, and they showed no restraint in portraying the Divine in the midst of activities both forbidden and often physically impossible.

Several pages of a pamphlet containing a story about Rosamund still exist in the private collection of a certain gentlewoman who will remain unnamed. One page describes, in painful detail, Rosamund's "perfumed sanctuary." The rest are dedicated to portraying the Most Holy at her daily exaltations before she is joined in worship by her devoted templars.

—From *Secrets of the Most Holy* by Sister Damson

## HERO IN EVERY PORT (BALLAD OF NUGGINS)

Oh!

The best of us ran when the dreadnought was sighted!

Nuggins, Nuggins! For he heard the call.

Tripped nine Qunari, and that's why he's knighted!

Nuggins, Nuggins! As brave as he's small!

Oh!

A shore full of pirates, the worst set to happen.

Nuggins, Nuggins! His heart pure and true.

Tripped him an admiral, now he's our captain!

Nuggins, Nuggins! For me and for you!

Oh!

The blight was upon us, and we found no pardon.

Nuggins, Nuggins! Now he'll make a stand!

Tripped up the darkspawn, and now he's a Warden!

Nuggins, Nuggins! For all in the land!

Oh!

Paraded through Kirkwall as hero and winner!

Nuggins, Nuggins! Stubborn and vicious!

Tripped up a viscount, now he's for dinner!

Nuggins, Nuggins! Of course he's delicious!

—*From Small Legends: Of Nugs and Foxes, collected by Philliam, a Bard!*

## HOW TO ACT FERELDAN

My esteemed Lady Sidonia,

I'd like to take full responsibility for Lady Marchellette's odd behavior of late. You see, we recently began the study of history. I thought that it would do the young mistress some good to be exposed to all Thedosian cultures and not just Orlais. It was a foolish thought.

Regrettably, your dear daughter has taken a particular interest in Fereldan folklore. She first developed an affinity for King Calenhad, which seems to have devolved into borderline infatuation. She stared at me, eyes wide, when I told how he unified the barbarians with his allegedly incomparable might and charisma. Every time I tried to move the lesson on to something more important, she insisted I tell her again about Calenhad: how the Fereldans say his hair was twice as yellow as the sun, and his chin more chiseled than the tallest peak in the Frostbacks. Twice now, I've had to tear down drawings she's tacked up in her bedroom of the man shirtless.

Then we moved on to the werewolves, which was even worse. As you may already know, the Fereldans venerate the folk heroes Dane and Hafter. Dane was said to have been a werewolf, and Hafter to have descended from one. No enlightened man or woman could ever view such beast people with anything but revulsion. But you know Fereldans and their love of wildlife. Unfortunately, these tales of the wolf men set the little mistress's imagination afire. When she suggested we put on a play for you and her lord father, I could not say no. I'm afraid that's why Marchellette was running through the mansion, wearing wet furs and frightening the chambermaids. She was rehearsing a scene in which Hafter drives back the darkspawn. I've been informed that some priceless family heirlooms were destroyed amidst all that confusion, and I cannot fully express my dismay.

I understand if my abject failure as a tutor results in my immediate dismissal.

—A letter from Brother Bernard to his former employer

## **IN THE MISTS: A TORN SKY**

We set sail from Kirkwall under fair winds and clear skies. The captain said we would be in Rialto within a week if the weather held. I spent the day aboard deck, chatting with the crew, and retired to my cabin at dusk. To my dismay, the motion of the waves made it impossible for me to settle down. Even reading was difficult, though the book of myths and legends I had brought was quite riveting indeed. I emerged again several hours later, after it was dark, hoping the chill night air would grant me some relief.

As I leaned over the rail, I heard a cry of alarm from the crow's nest. I raised my head and saw, in the sky to the far-off southwest, an eerie green glow, which grew brighter as we watched. In the space of a breath, it became too dazzling to look at, and I had to shield my eyes. When I looked up again, the light was still there amidst swirling clouds. It looked to me then as though the sky had been rent in two and the heavens were pouring out.

I heard footsteps and was joined at the rail by just the rest of the crew. We were silent, all of us afraid to give voice to the fears that now consumed our hearts. Finally, after several minutes, we heard a lone voice from the crow's nest: "It's the end of the world."

—From the account of *Vierre Lazar of Treviso*, rumored to be a retired *Antivan Crow*

## **IN THE MISTS: PHANTOMS OUT OF DREAMS**

The world did not end that night. I rose in the morning to see that the sky still glowed green, and its light was still visible to us at sea, even with the sun blazing above. The crew could talk about nothing else. There were so many questions, none of which would receive answers 'til we made port in Antiva.

From there, things only became stranger.

As dusk fell, I found myself once again on the decks, having realized that it was the fresh air that kept the seasickness at bay. I was entertaining idle thoughts. The book I'd been reading had filled my head with curious tales of things seen at sea. That was when I saw the light, flickering like a candle flame, floating above the water, the same shade of green we saw in the sky the night before. As I watched, a bank of mist emerged from it and stretched toward the Sea Lily. Peeking out of the mist were white sails and prow, headed straight for us. It took everything I had to find my voice, but I called up to the crow's nest. "Look!" I cried and pointed. The watchmen's eyes widened, and the bell was sounded. The call went out to the helmsman: "Turn! Hard to starboard!"

We swung wide and narrowly passed the ship in the mists. I will never forget what I saw next. Hissing faces, some wreathed in flame, some in smoke, with dark holes for eyes and rows of sharp teeth. They were everywhere - on the decks, up in the rigging. I fell back in fright and must have lost consciousness.

When I came to, I saw the helmsmen standing over me, his face ashen. We both knew what we had seen. It was the Windline Marcher, come out of legend into reality.

—*From the account of Vierre Lazar of Treviso, rumored to be a retired Antivan Crow*

## **IN THE MISTS: THE WINDLINE MARCHER**

The story of the "Windline Marcher" is an old one. The earliest versions of the tale appear in the Exalted Age. Said to be a two-mast brig that set sail from Antiva City carrying cargo bound for the Free Marches, the "Marcher" was lost in a storm, and never made port.

Weeks later, she is seen on the Waking Sea, miles out from Kirkwall. A sentry from Hightown spots her floating in the mists, her sails full though there is no wind. Boats are launched, but no matter how far out to sea they go, they are unable to reach the "Marcher." Finally, the ship recedes into the mists and is gone. From that day on, she is spotted by sailors on the Waking Sea, always though mists and always before a storm, and is said to herald a violent death for all who see her.

Of course, the legend of the "Windline Marcher" is often dismissed as superstition, and in recent years the sighting of phantasmal vessels was proven to be nothing more than a trick of light upon the water. Still, the story continues to be told, its intent to chill, amuse, or even titillate. As a consequence, the tale has grown more colorful over time. In many later versions, the "Marcher" is manned by a crew of stunningly beautiful spirits, who can fulfill one's deepest (carnal) desires, should one succeed in boarding the ship. In one particularly outlandish retelling in these versions, the "Marcher" is sent on a disastrous journey to pilfer the secret recipe for Qunari ale and is lost to their cannons. She later reappears at important moments in Thedosian history and abducts legendary figures (Andraste included) who then band together aboard the phantom ship to attack Par Vollen.

—*From Thedas: Myths and Legends, by Brother Ferdinand Genitivi*

## **JESHAVIS, MOTHER OF ORLAIS**

It is said we owe much to the Sons of Betrayal. Three brothers were charged with girding against an Imperium in wait. And in mourning Andraste, we tribes of the crescent willingly bartered diversity for solidarity. Tevinter would not be defeated in Our Lady's lifetime, but would be balanced against for lifetimes to come.

While a Son of Betrayal named the fields "Orlais," it was Jeshavis, his wife, who shaped what we are. Her hatreds were older, bound to tradition. All our hatreds were abandoned so we would call strangers kin and stand as one against the Imperium. Greater her spite for how necessary the cost, because she knew we had a choice in that day, or no choice the next. She brought the marriage that wed tribe within tribe, but promised an untold vengeance of her own: if we stand against outsiders, we stand for ourselves. She would not suffer the rule of Alamarri, son or no son of Betrayal or Prophet.

Jeshavis plied brother against brother in turn, then named both as partners in crimes against faith. With artful turns she invited invasion, then crafted rebellion against the courts she inspired. Brother would kill brother and be killed in turn, two liberations that she would then own. Eight generations before the empire, before Drakon, here were the seeds of elegance to come. Jeshavis, twice married to Sons of Betrayal, twice widowed, our first chieftain born from us, of what would become true Orlais—where we venerate faith and the beauty of sacrifice, with daggers well hidden but well within reach.

It is true, we owe much to the Sons of Betrayal, for they were the tools that a master cast down. Let others claim credit for birthing the nation. Jeshavis claims nothing and gave us the Game.

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This text was translated from *Oer Gyðja Jethvis*, a highly romanticized account of the first gyðja, or female chieftain, of the unified Ciriane tribes of Orlais. The region and people would later coalesce under Drakon into the modern nation of Orlais. Many culturally distinct communities were forcibly merged during the rule of Maferath and his sons, ostensibly to create more efficient barriers against the likelihood of a Tevinter return to conquest. The effects of this relocation can still be observed in many Orlesian, Nevarran, and Free Marcher traditions.

—Collected and excerpted by Philliam, a Bard!

## JUDICAEI'S CROSSING

The grand bridge named Judicael's Crossing was constructed in 8:56 Blessed to celebrate the coronation of Emperor Judicael I, as a testament to the skill of Orlais' greatest engineers. The bridge replaced an ancient fallen highway leading to the Pools of the Sun. At the bridge's ceremonial dedication, the emperor's sister, Grand Duchess Leontine, led a dozen nobles and their entourages in a stroll across the bridge to the hot springs, where they took the waters.

Judicael's Crossing's structural supports bear architectural and decorative elements that mimic those of the ancient Tevinter highway it replaced. One can see their like several miles away in the archways rising above the village of Sahrnia. The Andrastian statues that decorate the walkway, however, are entirely Orlesian in style.

—From *The Highlands of Orlais*, by Lord Ademar Garde-Haut, royal historian

## KNIGHT'S GUARDIAN

Traveling through the Emerald Graves in the Dales, one will see dozens of carven stone wolves. The Dalish call these the Knights' Guardians. In the days of elven Halamshiral, wolf companions walked alongside Emerald Knights, never leaving the side of their chosen knight. Wolf and elf would fight together, eat together, and when the knights slept, wolves would guard them. The statues were erected in memory of their unbreakable bond.

—An excerpt from *In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar* by Brother Genitivi

## LA POMME VIE ET MORTE

The apples nearest the cafe are said to change their taste depending on whether one is walking toward or away from the gallows. And of course they do, for taste is subject to the whims of the heart, and no meal is favored after tears. But dare it anyway, for none know the taste of joy such as we who do not shy from experience.

It is said that the apples that grow near the gallows will be bitter on the tongue of a lover who will betray. It is also said, although by different people entirely, that unripened fruit should not be the only consideration when investigating matters of fidelity. The latter are lonely most evenings among the arbors of the Summer Bazaar.

—From *Our Orlesian Heart* by (Formerly) Sister Laudine

## **LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS: BOOK I**

The legend of "Les Trois Soeurs" is often repeated in Orlais and has an incredible number of variations. In some, the sisters are depicted as innocent on the surface, but eagerly engaging in bawdy exploits the moment they escape from their chaperone. In others, the sisters are heroic, valiantly solving any number of problems (sometimes unintentionally) before returning home. In still others, the sisters are clueless, bumbling from one adventure to the next, unwittingly leaving riots and chaos in their wake. The nature depends on who is telling the story or where they heard it last. Sometimes it's a raunchy tale for tavern drunks; other times, it's a scandalous tale told to criticize either the empress or the Chantry. There are some elements in common between all these stories, however.

They always revolve around the adventures of three sisters of the Montbelliard clan: Brielle, Marie, and Sheryse. They are depicted as young women typical of Orlesian nobility, versed in social graces but innocent of the world outside of their sheltered existence. One day, while traveling with their chaperone (always referred to as "La Bête" and usually depicted as a large and vindictive woman), they become separated and lost on the streets of Val Royeaux. Bewildered at finding themselves alone, the Three Sisters panic and end up in the infamous Belle Marche, an area of the capital renowned for its garish and celebratory seediness. In all versions of the legend, this is where the sisters' adventures truly begin.

—From *Tales of Val Royeaux* by Lord Werner Jauquin

## **LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS: BOOK 2**

Typically, the Three Sisters react in a similar manner upon entering the Belle Marche. Sheryse is the adventurous one, intrigued by all the sights and sounds of the market and the most heedless of any dangers. Marie is the brash one, the most suspicious of everything she sees and the one who makes withering sarcastic comments even if she allows her sisters to drag her along. Brielle, meanwhile, is always the innocent one. She is depicted as wide-eyed and startled, like a doe lost in the wilderness, yet by the end of the tale, she is also the one who bursts out of her shell the most.

A common initial stop for the girls, for instance, is the White Rose. It's an infamous establishment in the Belle Marche, serving tea and cakes to noble patrons by day and at night transforming into a house of ill repute filled with male and female prostitutes in elegant dress. The girls go there because the building is fashionable, someplace they can escape from the market's crowds. Inside, Marie is the first to realize that the "friendly gentlemen" are not what they seem. Brielle is scandalized, but it's Sheryse who runs off to dance with these men despite her sisters' protests. This leads to a chase through the White Rose, Marie and Brielle stumbling into room after room where they are confronted with various patrons (Empress Celene herself is frequently mentioned). Marie scathingly berates these patrons, while Brielle is intrigued despite herself and eventually drawn off when Marie isn't looking. Marie throws her hands up in disgust and joins a dwarf in smoking an illicit substance from a wild contraption. It's at this point in the tale where the girls' desperate chaperone, La Bête, appears in the white Rose and things truly get interesting.



Details vary, but by the end of this part of the tale, the White Rose is in flames, La Bête has pummeled her way through a legion of clueless patrons, and the Three Sisters are led out the back door by a charming elf—completely unaware anything is amiss behind them. To my knowledge, however, the White Rose has never burned to the ground in its entire existence and maintains a legion of guards that makes such antics implausible. Even so, the tale is stubbornly believed to be true even in Val Royeaux itself.

—*From Tales of Val Royeaux by Lord Werner Jauquin*

### **LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS: BOOK 3**

As with the stop in the White Rose, the individual tales of the Three Sisters are often told on their own; seldom is the saga repeated in its entirety. Indeed, one of the few times an attempt to do so was as a play in the Grand Royeaux Theater that sharply criticized Divine Justinia's attempts at reform. The play was quickly banned after only three performances. A book titled *The Three Brothers* was later published in Minrathous, citing the exploits of three Tevinter brothers who find themselves lost in Val Royeaux and spend their time ridiculing Orlesian culture. Despite claims in Tevinter that it is the original, it's quite clear the Three Sisters legend far predates it.

Throughout the legend's various incarnations, the most commonly depicted adventures include:

- The sisters are convinced to drink dwarven ale by a handsome nobleman with sinister intentions. Their reactions to the ale vary, but usually by the end of this tale, the sisters end up on a wild chase after the nobleman through the streets of the Belle Marche until he jumps into the river and drowns.
- The sisters ask for help from a group of dwarven merchants, who say they will do so only if the sisters solve a clever riddle. The nature of the riddle varies, but the dwarves always cheat the sisters in the end. Typically, the encounter ends with the sisters fleeing before they are sold into slavery, though sometimes the legend has them clubbing the lead dwarf to death with paddles until the other dwarves run off.
- They are drawn into the annual Satinalia parade, usually in the climax of the story, until the Imperial army descends upon the revelers and starts a chaotic chain reaction that results in the sisters either stowing aboard a pirate ship or wading through the elven alienage's sewers. It seems to change each age.

Once their chaperone, La Bête, catches up with the girls, they usually hang their heads in shame and return to the Montebelliard manse to resume good and honest lives. Not always, however. The most recent versions of the legend have the sisters remaining in Val Royeaux to fight criminals while wearing black masks, though I honestly cannot tell where this comes from.

—*From Tales of Val Royeaux by Lord Werner Jauquin*

### **MAJESTIC BASTARDS**

I remember the second-last one. I wouldn't get closer than sixty feet, double the wingspan. That left you time to move. The beast was too weak to do much. Still, seemed respectful to keep the distance and leave its end to animal and trainer. She starved out. Not the way they should go, and not the way I was used to seeing them.

Oh, they were majestic bastards, and they knew it. Ask any Warden dumped arse over ears for not picking nits. See, trainer and beast had a kinship, and both knew what they wanted. For griffon, that bond meant grooming. Couldn't fault them. They needed what they needed. I mean, what's fair trade for saddling a Warden-Commander, full plate, lightning storm, sheer dive straight through an Archdemon's wing! Legendary, you can't argue! But back on the ground they knew they were owed. And you couldn't shortcut and douse them—they had all the majesty of a paddling rat if you waterlogged the feathers. No, it was a grueling task of preening thirty bloody feet of wing. And you'd better remember, or maybe the thing got pissy next flight and cut an oak too close, give you a love tap so hard your next helm dented. Still, everything in balance, every talon tipped, there was nothing that compared. You could reach down from the sky and cradle Thedas in your hand.

Anyway, yes, I remember the second-last one. After she dropped, the robes took some crosscuts, because they do things like that. And then we burned it. And then I got drunk.

I do not remember the very last. And you can't make me.

*—Comments of an unnamed Grey Warden, excerpted from Weisshaupt records on the extinction of treasured species, liberated for public consideration by Philliam, a Bard!*

## **MARCHER MISCONCEPTIONS**

My dear Empress Celene,

I agree! It is strange how some people view the Free Marches. On a map, they see its name emblazoned on the vales south of the Minanter River and assume it to be a nation just as Ferelden is. They imagine a single ruler, a single army, and a common culture, but nothing could be further from the truth! Our dour, serious folk in Tantervale are not at all like the wild revelers of Wycome, who in turn are nothing like the self-important traders of Kirkwall. We are many nations squashed under one name on a map because the truth won't fit inside the borders.

A lovely saying I heard once: "We have a prince in Starkhaven, a margrave in Ansborg, a teyrn in Ostwick, and a viscount in Kirkwall... yet we accept no king in the Free Marches." At least, not since Fyruss appointed himself king seven centuries ago, which was immediately and unanimously opposed by our many great nations. We may only come together to face a common enemy, but when we do, we're a formidable ragtag bunch. Did you know that Grey Warden Garahel also united us during the Exalted Age? We marched together proudly to defeat the darkspawn at Ayesleigh... and immediately afterwards returned to our petty bickering.

The most important thing to know about the Free Marches is that we're free. We determine our own destiny, and that pleases us. Beyond that, the only other time we coalesce is when Grand Tourney comes to town. Then we boldly express our pride to any foreigner who'll listen. We'll kiss freedom on the lips and even lock arms with a proud Starkhavener! Alas, it lasts only a day, but there's no harm in that, right?

*—A letter written by Lord Chancellor Joffrey Orrick of Tantervale to Empress Celene I, 9:29 Dragon*

## **NOTORIOUS RAIDER TRASH**

You want to know about my raider "friends," huh? What in the world would make a goody-goody like you poke your nose in such a dirty business?

Well, there's good "Ser" Tadeus, of course. Some people say he runs the Armada. He doesn't. No one does. The Armada is a collection of ships, and each one is like a nation unto itself—its own rules, its own people, its own leader. Tadeus is respected, of course. You don't sink a half dozen Orlesian frigates without earning at least some respect. He's a dangerous man, but he's no king of the Armada. Anyone tells you that, they're lying, or misinformed.

Then there's Lachlan Poole. Likes to sail around the southern cape of Rivain, rattling his saber and posturing like it means something. No one really cares what Lachlan Poole does, though only a fool will say that to his face. You see, the thing about Lachlan Poole is he's got gold. Lots of it. All earned through legitimate means, even. He still has a trading company somewhere in the Marches, and hires people to run it while he plays adventurer on the high seas. The Armada lets him do it because it always pays to have friends with coin.

The one you should really watch out for is Ianto. They call him the "Talon," the "Terror of Llomerryn," but most often, "That Crooked Bastard What Might Kill You in Your Sleep." Slavery, murder, torture... nothing is too much for Ianto. He'd traffic in souls, if he discovered a way to extract them from people. In fact, I'm sure he has some Tevinter cronies working on that right this second. I'm sure there's coin to be made in stolen souls somewhere. The Imperium, probably.

—*Isabela, self-proclaimed "Queen of the Eastern Seas"*

## **OF GODS AND DOUBT**

Forgive me. I claimed belief once, swore with tears in my eyes that Our Lady was the Light, and through her blessing, I knew the Maker. But I cannot brook the division between what I have tried to know and what I cannot ignore.

Is the Maker less silent than the profane elven pantheon, or the Old Gods of Tevinter? And what of Archdemons that are not silent at all? We have real, ongoing strife - all of us, every people and creed - that we each blame on the heretical actions of others. And yet if any one of our truths was Truth, that blame would be impossible. It is not just that these claims of divinity cannot co-exist. It is that no other claims could be made, if any of those worshipped were ever truly "god."

I am shamed my faith cannot withstand so pedestrian an argument. All I have learned in my time here is fear.

—*Initiate Micaela Chevais*

Go as you must, as must we all, but know that the only thing worse than a faith broken, is a faith untested.

—*Correspondence and teachings of Mother Hevara, Val Royeaux archive*

## **OUR LADY OF THE ANDERFELS**

"A land filled with wonders like the Merdaine, with its gigantic white statue of Our Lady carved into its face, her hands outstretched and bearing an eternal flame." Genitivi's words, brief as they were, inspired me. This stone prophet sounded magnificent. I had to see her for myself.

I trekked up the Imperial Highway, concealing my identity and taking care not to seem like a foreigner. At Vol Dorma, a neglected road led west. Soon the dry land gave way to absolute desolation. Red earth. Bones. Blowing sand stripped my face raw. When it cleared, I could see for miles—not that there was anything to see. The few settlements I encountered were populated with derelicts and Chantry zealots. The warned me of worse trials, should I continue to the Merdaine.

Eventually I turned back, opting for a smaller statue in a place the Maker hadn't abandoned.

—*Brother Berard, Perendale Chantry cleric*

## **PARAGONS KNOWN AND LESSER KNOWN**

The criteria the dwarves use to name a Paragon never cease to fascinate me. While a relatively rare distinction, it seems almost any achievement of significance warrants the title. Some Paragons are the victors of great battles. Others write books or songs. The only common thread is an act that betters or sustains the dwarven way of life in some notable fashion.

Aeducan is among the oldest and perhaps most famous Paragons. Not to be confused with his descendent, King Endrin Aeducan, this prior Aeducan was a humble member of the Warrior Caste whose brave leadership during the First Blight saved Orzammar. When other thaigs were lost, Aeducan claimed defeated—but his service made him a hero. History now remembers Aeducan as the quintessential Paragon.

Other Paragons have been more controversial. Caridin, a master smith, created the powerful golems who helped the dwarves immeasurably in their battle with the darkspawn. Caridin then disappeared amid much speculation, taking the secret of his craft with him.

There is also Astyth the Grey, a Paragon of the Warrior Caste. She was famous for her skills in unarmed combat and cut out her own tongue to focus on the art without distraction. An order of female dwarven warriors known as the Silent Sisters persists; they remove their tongues in her honor.

But these are the most well known of the dwarven Paragons. Others have earned the rank over the ages for far less noble pursuits. I've found references to Paragons who made their names writing particularly good rhymes or brewing stronger ales.

Then there's the Paragon named Varen, who separated from his legion and lost his way in the Deep Roads. Varen nearly starved to death before breaking down and eating a nug, believing at the time as appetizing to dwarves as a rat. Devouring the creature not only saved his life but opened his palate to a new world of flavor. When they finally found him, Varen was fatter than ever and raving about the miraculous subtleties of nug flesh. The creatures are now considered a dwarven delicacy.

—*From Stone Halls of the Dwarves by Brother Genitivi, Chantry scholar*

## **PLANTS VS. CORPSES**

In all the strange struggles that have raged across Ferelden, one of the most peculiar is the battle of Pauper's Cap. A powerful demon, bent on gaining power in the mortal world, raised an army of corpses to assault the home of Helianthus, a reclusive apostate who was said to possess both fabulous wealth and great knowledge. While the demon saw the perfect host in this bejeweled bookworm, Helianthus was not without defenses of her own.

As the corpses shuffled toward her house, Helianthus called to the demon, declaring that though she was just a simple apostate, the demon would see her power an entire infantry. Then, calling upon her magic, she summoned spirits into the plants in her vegetable patch, creating countless tiny sylvans. The resulting garden warfare saw corpses armored with buckets and doors as makeshift helmets and shields battling possessed fruits and vegetables who spat seeds, constructed makeshift fortifications, and even chomped entire corpses whole.

In the end, the area around Helianthus's home became both garden and graveyard, home to the corpses destroyed as she defended herself, and this world, from the demon. Had she been defeated and her great brain turned to the demon's purposes, we might well have seen such terrible corpses rampaging from the great pyramids of Par Vollen to the pirate-infested waters of Llormerryn, or even into the unknown western lands...

Is this my lunch? I thought we were dining on bacon today. I was informed that there would be bacon. No, I shall not take the pot off my head. Why? Because I am maaaaaaaaaad...

*—A unsourced and debatable tale from Daveth the Mad, supposedly shared at his estate in Walnut Hills where he spent his later years*

## **RESPONSIBLE BLOOD MAGIC**

Let me correct you, apprentice. While it is true that blood magic is woven through the history of Tevinter, there are good reasons, quite aside from the Chantry's sermons, that such arts are now frowned upon. Consider the ancient magisters who once attempted to map the Fade itself. A worthy goal, perhaps, but a costly one. When their spells exhausted their lyrium supply, the magisters spilled the blood of countless slaves. To what end? The shifting nature of the Fade made the effort futile, and so much death left the magisters open to possession by demons. Wasteful!

Some still idolize Tirenna of the Rock, who used blood magic against the Qunari during the Steel Age. They say she cut her flesh on the shore of Marnas Pell as the dreadnoughts sailed in, turned her spells against their crews, and boiled the very blood in their veins. A terrifying display, to be sure, but against Qunari? It only made them more determined when they besieged the ports of Carastes.

And what of Magister Calanthus, that fool believed he could make himself the "Ascended Man" with blood magic? Thirty-three slaves died in that rite, and Calanthus became an abomination so horrific that his apprentices tore out their eyes at the sight of him.

You quote the example of the lovers Crescens and Seraphinian. Yes Seraphinian offered his own blood to cure Crescens of her wasting disease, and Crescens lived a long life. But if the noblest use of blood magic still calls for the death of a good man, is that not enough reason to reconsider?

*—Letter from Magister Aesthia to her apprentice, 7:71 Storm*

## **SAGA OF TYRDDA BRIGHT-AXE, AVVAR-MOTHER**

First stanza:

Tell the tale of Tyrdda Bright-Axe, mountain maker,  
spirit's bride:  
Free, her people, forged in fastness, made in  
mountains, hardy hide.  
Wise in wisdom, calm in counsel, great in gifts her  
grateful guests,  
Sacrificed she did to spirits, took their teachings,  
followed quests.  
Bright her axe, unbreaking crystal, stirred to flame  
when temper flies,  
Gifted from her leaf-eared lover, laughing lady of the  
skies.  
Bested blades of all who tried,  
Maiden, spurning all requests,  
Tyrdda Bright-Axe, Dreamer's Eyes.  
Avvar-Mother, of her making.

Second stanza:

Thelm Gold-Handed, fingers greasy, jeweled rings  
with glitter shone,  
Took in tribes in times of trouble, fed them fat to  
weaken bone.  
Warriors great and great in number, sun-kissed  
swords to fight his wars,  
Drake-scaled shirts their bodies covered, heart-wine  
stained the salty shores.  
Told his tribes a tale of treasure, over sea to north  
it gleamed,  
Whispered words to drive the droves to golden city  
where he dreamed.  
Counseled quick in dreams alone,  
Voices wiser man ignores,  
Pushed the tribes until they screamed,  
Heed the dreams and cross the Waking.

Third stanza:

Honey-tongued was Thelm to Tyrdda, gifts of gold and  
steel to start,  
Wanted Tyrdda's men for warriors, stolen tribe from  
stolen heart.  
Cold, her tribe, the Gold-Hand counseled, lean from  
winter's wind-knife chill,  
"Be my bride and cross the Waking, eat the gilded  
city's fill."  
Tyrdda Bright-Axe, fraught with fury, crystal axe-  
head stirred to blaze,  
Heeded well her leaf-eared lover, unabashed by  
lustful gaze.  
"None shall break my tribe apart,  
Not with demon-words that kill,  
Fear my fury's fiery rays,  
Dream-words lie, their thirst unslaking."

Fourth stanza:

Tyrdda Bright-Axe, Thelm Gold-Handed, battle  
brought with blade and ax,  
Thelm in mail and shields of silver, shining sheen to  
turn attacks.  
Blade of dragonbone, now blooded, warrior throats  
wrung raw with cheers,  
Tyrdda stands, her bright ax blazing, leg still  
weeping battle-tears.  
Bright the ax of leaf-eared lover, laughing lady of  
the skies,  
Fire flares as Thelm Gold-Handed, honey-tongued,  
repeats his lies.  
"North to warmth, and golden cities,  
Whispers speak in Dreamers' ears!"  
Silver scorched, the liar flies  
On raven's beaks, to dream unwaking.

Fifth stanza:

Tyrdda Bright-Axe, bold and bloodied, took her tribe  
from placid plains,  
Tribes with blades by farming blunted chased and  
fought, their parting pains.  
To the mountains, shorn of shelter, snow-slicked  
peaks gave wind its bite,  
Found a cave to save her tribe, but dragonfire lit the  
night.  
Beast no blade could break came roaring, mountains  
slipped their winter gown,  
Tyrdda shouts to leaf-eared lover, "You I chose above  
a crown!"  
Lightning split the spitting rains,  
Sundered over prideful heights,  
Dragon fell in rubble down,  
Crashed and crushed in earth's mad shaking.

Sixth stanza:

Tyrdda Bright-Axe, proud her tribe, free from fallow  
fat below,  
Built in battle, fed on fighting, strong from struggle  
did they grow.  
Deep in caves, the stone-men tribe, Hendir's warriors,  
stout and strong,  
Met the tribe with axes ready, armor gleaming, sword-  
blades long.  
Spoke with Tyrdda did her lover, gentle whispers soft  
she made,  
Dwarven hearts were sundered, simple, still with  
honor. Thus she bade:  
"Let the tribe the dwarf-men know,  
In their caves, where they belong,  
Not with battle but with trade,  
Hendir's dwarves, give peace unbreaking."

Seventh stanza:



Tyrdda Bright-Axe, Dwarf-Friend Chieftain, with her  
leaf-eared lover lay,  
Woke she did to love-sweat morning, lover gone in  
light of day.  
Dream-words whispered, spoken soft, still the silence  
crushed and crashing,  
Dead her tribe, unless a child could keep her line in  
warrior fashion.  
Aval'var, so named the lover, called "our journey,  
yours and mine,"  
One day child of Tyrdda's blood, Morrighan'nan, in  
strength must shine.  
Lover's whispers to obey,  
Hendir, dwarf-prince, friend in passion,  
Babe produced to serve the line,  
The Avvar tribe, her name, our taking.

Eighth stanza:

Tyrdda Bright-Axe, Avvar Chieftain, strong her tribe  
with dwarven trade,  
Battles brought to men and demons, won with wisdom,  
fire, and blade.  
Then did Tyrdda look to Hendir, dwarf-prince friend,  
children-giver,  
Took her freedom, Hendir glad, wished her what he  
could not give her.  
Chose her child to stand as chieftain, after all last  
wrongs were righted,  
Gifted goods of worldly want, left her tribe no more  
benighted.  
Skyward, one last trek she made,  
To her lover, dream-delivered,  
Raven-feathered, reunited,  
Hearts both whole, now neither aching.

## **SEERS AND THE ALLSMET**

23rd of Ferventis

When I set out for the capital of Rivain, I did not anticipate arriving in the middle of a little provincial festival. The streets are thick with fishermen and farmers coming in from the countryside for some gathering. Rural life apparently breeds fierce rivalries. I've seen more than one fistfight erupt in the square outside the inn. And do they call this music? Excellent wine, however. It must be Antivan.

24th of Ferventis

The agreement is sealed. The merchant had more jewelery on his head than Orlesian women do on their fingers, but anyone willing to sell me silk at this price may dress how they please. Sabol, whose title is "Ana-Een," is an amiable sort who offered to show me "Allsmet" tonight.

Apparently the village leaders—hedge mages they dub "seers"—travel to Dairsmuid twice a year to meet in council, forge trade agreements, and publicly pledge loyalty to Rivain's queen. Deals made at Allsmet are seen as especially auspicious. Sabol warned me that sometimes hotheads will attempt to settle old feuds before these seers decree binding judgments here. But there are also feasts, lavish gift-giving ceremonies, musical contests, and other rustic nonsense.

This explains the rabble. Still, it might be amusing to sample the local color. I've just witnessed a loudly public exchange between two men trying to outdo each other with ridiculous boasts in the square. The most extravagant liar was applauded and decorated with wreaths by the crowd! The Rivaini are lively. I'll grant them that. And not at all afraid to drink with a Tevinter.

...

Hah! Peasant oaf threatened me after I tripped into him at feast. Bit of fire cowed him! Impressed ladies, too. What enlightened attitudes. These people have fantasassas lovely dancers here. Must remb get vintage from inkeep. Label was BLUE!

26th of Ferventis

Find out who's sleeping on top of me. Bring more robes next year.

—*From the diary of Beskorus of Vyrantium, 9:32 Dragon Age*

## **SEXUALITY IN THEDAS**

What I find most interesting is that, despite the lack of open discussion on matters of human sexuality, there is commonality to be found on the subject in all Andrastian lands. Typically, one's sexual habits are considered natural and separate from matters of procreation, and only among the nobility, where procreation involves issues of inheritance and the union of powerful families, is it considered of vital importance. Yet, even there, a noble who has done their duty to the family might be allowed to pursue their own sexual interests without raising eyebrows. The view on indulging lusts with a member of the same gender varies from land to land. In Orlais, it is considered a quirk of character and nothing more. In Ferelden, it is a matter of scandal if done indiscreetly but otherwise nothing noteworthy. In Tevinter, it is considered selfish and deviant behavior among nobles, but actively encouraged with favored slaves. Nowhere is it forbidden, and sex of any kind is only considered worthy of judgment when taken to awful excess or performed in the public eye.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## **SHE OF THE HIGHWAYMEN REPENTS**

Gallows master, hold thy hand, hold it back awhile.

Callous juror, let me stand, let me bear a smile.

For comes my brother distant,

For comes by savior soon.

I stand here most insistent,

I will receive my boon.

Fellow soldier, hold thy voice, hold it if you may.

Fallow shoulders show my choice, I am in your sway.

For know my crime was cruel,  
And all my pain deserved.  
I stand here as a fool,  
Despite my brother served.

Mother dearest, look away, look into the sun.  
Other's nearest, gone astray, you will be undone.

For no more will I prattle,  
And no more will I pray.  
Hear you must the rattle,  
As life will fly away.

—*From Songs of Old Orlais: She of the Highwaymen Repents, inscriptions collected by (formerly) Sister Laudine*

## **SHRED OF BLUE**

Hear the rain upon the leaves, above the sky lies grey.  
A shred of blue would be denied. Alas, he could not stay.

There was a stir within his blood  
And the dreams lay thick upon him.  
A call did beat within his heart.  
One road was left before him.

Hear the rain upon the leaves, above the sky lies grey.  
A shred of blue would be denied. Alas, he could not stay.

"See how the rain has washed away  
The tears that you were crying?  
Though the darkness calls me down  
You know we all are dying."

Hear the rain upon the leaves, above the sky lies grey.  
A shred of blue would be denied. Alas, he could not stay.

And so he came upon the place  
Where so many tread before.  
One last look upon the world  
Before he crossed that final door.

Hear the rain upon the leaves, above the sky lies grey.  
A shred of blue would be denied. Alas, he could not stay.

Birds reel across the endless sky, above a house upon the plain.  
In memory she sings to him of a time before the rain.

Sweet Andraste, hear our song  
For his road will be ours too.  
Before darkness claims our souls  
Let us see that shred of blue.

Hear the rain upon the leaves, above the sky lies grey.  
A shred of blue would be denied. Alas, he could not stay.

—*Words to a song, scrawled on spare paper, writer unknown*

### **SKYHOLD GARDEN**

Where whither grows the simple scent of  
sprigs anew in furrowed soil,  
For on the vine are yours and mine, a  
bounty blessed by honest toil.  
Though brave in war and ways we are, and  
wander thus in victory,  
It's on the vine where yours and mine are  
graced with health and history.

In home and hearth and battlefield, our  
sustenance is common held,  
If on the vine are yours and mine, and  
always there we are compelled,  
For turning home is not retreat when home  
is why we fight at all,  
And on the vine is yours and mine,  
Entreating in our heart the call.

So of the boons you cannot buy, there are  
but two we're certain of,  
Not on the vine of yours or mine, is first  
the cost of truest love,  
And that denied a purchase price, we turn  
our gaze to what's in hand  
And of the vine are yours and mine,  
tomatotl from our own land.

—*From A Garden's Grace: Songs of the Field, collected by Maryden Halewell*

### **SONG TO ELGAR'NAN**

Elgar'nan, Wrath and Thunder,  
Give us glory.  
Give us victory, over the Earth that shakes our cities.  
Strike the usurpers with your lightning.  
Burn the ground under your gaze.  
Bring Winged Death against those who throw down our work.

Elgar'nan, help us tame the land.

—*Song to Elgar'nan, found in the Temple of Mythal, Author unknown*

## **SONG TO FALON'DIN**

The People swore their lives to Falon'Din  
Who mastered the dark that lies.  
Whose shadows hunger  
Whose faithful sing  
Whose wings of death surround him  
Thick as night.

Lethanavir, master-scryer, be our guide,  
Through shapeless worlds and airless skies.

—*Song to Falon'Din, found in the Temple of Mythal, author unknown*

## **SONG TO SYLAISE**

Sylaise, whose heat rivals Elgar'nan's light.  
Sylaise, whose temples rival Mythal's cities.  
Sylaise, whose breath rivals Andruil's spear.  
Sylaise, whose skill rivals June's craft.  
Sylaise, whose fire cannot be quenched.

We give ourselves gladly to your service.

—*Song to Sylaise, found in the Temple of Mythal, author unknown*

## **SURVIVING THE WESTERN APPROACH**

Day 73

If not for this record, I would long have lost count of how long we've been lost in this Maker-forsaken wilderness. Nothing but glowing yellow sand and rocky pillars. It is impossible to tell if we made progress today or if we are walking in circles. The broken pillar with the teeth that look like a wolf's - did we pass that earlier, or is there another just like it? Elerli has succumbed to the sun. Her face is red and dry and swollen, and we have neither water nor shade to offer. If we do not find the path soon, I fear she will not make it.

Day 81

Can it be less than ten days ago that I still hoped we would escape this wasteland with no deaths? Elerli succumbed that afternoon, and we've lost five since then. They're getting more frequent. We caught a scorpion yesterday, but its meat provided no more than a mouthful for each of us. If we don't find water soon, none of us will return.

Day 95

Retli and Gorvin have found a solution to their hunger and thirst. Mari died last night, and they butchered her like a calf and ate the meat raw, sucking her blood for its liquid. I shudder even to write this, but my own stomach growled at the sight. I refused to partake, but I don't know how much longer I can go hungry. If I do not join their horrors, I will be the next to be eaten.

—*Page from the Journals of Veril Dorel, from the Infamous Dorel Party, 7:19 Storm*

## TAKE BACK THE SKY: A TAVERN CHEER

Now gather ye drunkards, that's how these begin,  
The songs of our heroes, of wars and our kin.  
Well, now the fight's ours,  
And none of us cowers,  
We'll drink to all hours 'cause we know we can win!

Oh,  
They cut into heaven and called it a door,  
The Herald will lead us to even the score.  
We'll take back the sky, and we'll give them the floor.  
We'll take back the sky, and we'll give them the floor!

The beast was upon us, our hopes all but drowned,  
At our necks a monster, at our heels a hound.  
But we found a fortress,  
And it's frigging gorgeous!  
So join in the chorus and down a new round!

Oh!  
He cut into heaven, we said it before,  
Andraste will guide us to even the score!  
We'll take back the sky, and we'll give him the flo——or.  
We'll take back the sky, and we'll give him the floor!

We look to our leader, and heft up our crest,  
To show this Corypheus we're not impressed!  
He thinks we've been mastered,  
We'll beat down the bastard,  
And then we'll get plastered, we're blest by the best!

O———h!  
He cut into heaven, now sing it once more,  
Inquisitor! Lead us to even the score!  
We'll take back the sky, and we'll give him the flo—————or!  
We'll take back the sky!  
And feed him his lie!  
And black his foul eye!  
Let all arrows fly!  
And then we'll have pie!  
Die DIE die die DIE!  
We'll take back the sky, and we'll give him the floor!

*—An exercise in rhyme by Maryden, a minstrel to our fine Inquisitor*

## THE ANNULMENT AT DAIRSMUID

When we heard of the injustices against our fellow mages at the White Spire, the Circle of Magi in Val Royeaux, I feared what was to come. Our Circle at Dairsmuid is small and isolated; it exists largely as a façade to appease the Chantry.

When the other Circles rose up, the Chantry sent Seekers across the bay from Ayesleigh to investigate. They found us mixing freely with our families, training female mages in the traditions of the seers, and denounced us as apostates. Perhaps they thought we were spineless robes who could be intimidated with a little bloodshed. Before I was first enchanter, I was the daughter of Captain Revaud, of the Felicisima Armada. I know how to plan a battle.

They brought with them a small army of templars. We fought. And we might have won. But they invoked the Right of Annulment, with all the unrelenting brutality that allowed. It is their right to put screaming apprentices to the sword, burn our "tainted" libraries, crush irreplaceable artifacts under their heels, tear down the very walls of our home. No mage has the right to disagree.

We of the Dairsmuid Circle wait now, behind barricades. I have sent word to our brother and sister mages of this outrage. When they break through, we will not die alone.

—*Final journal entry of First Enchanter Rivella, slain in Dairsmuid, 9:40 Dragon*

## THE ASCENSION OF GHILAN'NAIN

Ghilan'nain kept herself apart from the People. She used her power to create animals none had ever seen. The skies teemed with her monsters, the land with her beasts. Andruil hunted them all, and after a year of killing, approached Ghilan'nain with an offer: the gods would share their power with Ghilan'nain, but only if she destroyed her creations, for they were too untamed to remain among the People. Ghilan'nain agreed and asked for three days to undo what she had made.

On the first day she struck down the monsters of the air, except those she presented to Andruil as a gift.

On the second day she drowned the giants of the sea, except those in deep waters, for they were too well-wrought, and Pride stopped her hand.

On the third day she killed the beasts of the land, except the halla, whose grace she loved above all else.

This is how Ghilan'nain was made youngest of the gods.

—*Story of the elven god Ghilan'nain, author unknown*

## THE AVENUE OF HER REFLECTIVE THOUGHT

The Avenue is inspirational, but wise travelers do not linger in their respects; not just because the bazaar awaits, but because the area before the backturned statues is treacherous.

Local legend has it that the child-empress Aimee abused the opportunity of religious repose to relieve herself beneath the gaze of Our Lady. Unable to discipline the toddling leader, her attendants instead chastised the statues, and had them turned in supposed embarrassment.

True or not, foolish youths dare each other to soil the spot in similar fashion, and a place of otherwise reverent thought always carries a faint odor about it.

—Excerpted and torn from A Disposable Walking Tour of the Capital by Philliam, a Bard!

## THE BLADES OF HESSARIAN

The body may die but the soul is ever-lasting. Andraste's human form was put to the sword and burned, but the fire only purified her and made her immortal. She was called to the Maker but saw with clear eyes that her work was not yet done. She went to Maferath's side, seeking an executor of her will, but saw the traitor for what he was. She went to Hessarian's side, but saw that Hessarian was not yet ready to give himself. And so she went to the lowly Alamarri slave Trefir, who served the Archon, and gave unto him the great Sword of Mercy with which her mortal life was ended. To him she said: "Take this sword and with it bring my judgment to the world." And Trefir took the sword, and became an instrument of Andraste's justice.

—*A Blade of Hessarian, telling of the order's founding*

The Blades of Hessarian are an ancient secret society who believe they serve Andraste and were chosen to bring her judgment upon the weak and the corrupt. The order was founded, according to their tales, by the Tevinter slave Trefir, who returned to the lands of the Alamarri bearing the Sword of Mercy. Since then, the Blades followed the one who bore the sword with unquestioning loyalty, as he or she was considered to have been chosen by Andraste.

Chantry scholars have determined that Trefir's account, detailed above, is pure fabrication. If Trefir even existed, it is likely he stole the Sword of Mercy from Hessarian, his master, before fleeing to what is now Fereldan. Less generous interpretations maintain that Trefir simply passed off his own sword as the Sword of Mercy to gain power and influence.

The last recorded sighting of a Blade of Hessarian was in 5:12 Exalted.

—*From Before Andrastianism: the Forgotten Faiths by Sister Rondwyn of Tantervale*

## THE CHILDREN OF ANDRASTE

There are many misconceptions regarding Andraste's bloodline, monsieur. This is due, I should think, to a general lack of knowledge regarding Andraste's mortal life. Understandable, considering the many cults that arose following her death. Every one sought to claim Our Lady for their own culture or claimed some aspect of her existence was a lie—all of them complete fabrications. My order has done considerable research to ascertain the truth.

We all know Andraste and the Betrayer raised five children. The eldest three were sons: Isorath, Evrion, and Verald. The rule of what was once southern Tevinter was split among them. Isorath was given the west, what is today Orlais. Evrion was given the east, what is today the Free Marches. Verald was given the central Planasene, what is today Nevarra. What became of these men and their legacies is the stuff of legend, and the majority of claimants to Andraste's bloodline link back to one of them. None of the three sons, however, were born of Andraste. They were born of the Betrayer's concubine, Gilivhan. People choose to overlook the fact that Andraste came from the Alamarri tribesmen and that they were barbarians, not the Fereldans we know today. They were savage warriors who took concubines in addition to their wives, and because Andraste was thought to be too weak to bear children, the Betrayer took Gilivhan to provide him heirs. Which she did. After her death, the sons were raised as Andraste's own.



Later in life, Andraste proved predictions wrong and had two daughters by the Betrayer: Ebris and Vivial. They were kept out of the public eye and not permitted to marry, though both had consorts. Ebris had but one child, Alli Vemar, who perished on a voyage to Denerim—less than a month after her mother fell to plague, and without children of her own. The younger daughter, Vivial, was more controversial: a strong-headed woman who defied her family by falling in love with a mage of Tevinter, Regulan. Vivial and Regulan went into self-imposed exile as the Exalted March began, and into hiding following Andraste's betrayal and murder.

What became of Vivial and her descendants is largely unknown for one primary reason: she had only daughters. Each of those daughters only had daughters. They married into other families and took other names, and in the chaos of the Second Blight, all traces of survivors were lost. Andraste's true bloodline, if it exists, lies solely in the descendants of Vivial, and the suspicion of my order is that it produces only daughters. Thus the claims of your young man, monsieurs, are highly suspect.

—*From a letter by Sister Galenna of the Augustan Order, Dragon 9:12*

## **THE CROWS AND QUEEN MADRIGAL**

The first Crow refused to speak, even when we put hot coals to the soles of his feet and peeled the skin off his face and hands with a paring knife. He opted instead to chew through his own tongue and choke to death on the blood.

The second captive repeated what we already knew: Queen Madrigal went on a hunt and did not appear for the evening's festivities. Her body was later found with four steel swords through the chest. I asked what he knew about one of the four swords being a replica of Hessarian's Sword of Mercy. He had not heard about that, or at least claimed as much. He later died on the rack, smiling slightly.

The third Crow must have realized he would not leave the dungeon alive. He seemed to hope that by angering Master Fiore, he would earn himself a quick death. The Crow tried our patience with pithy comments while Master Fiore was trying to work. At one point, he made a remark about Fiore's mother, which I shall not repeat here. I will admit to feeling admiration for his ability to retain a capacity for coherent speech, and even some wit, while under extreme duress.

Amid all his useless chatter, this third Crow did raise an important point. His guild has a reputation to uphold. They are ruthless, efficient, and discreet. How would they maintain such notoriety if agents routinely revealed the names of employers with something as "banal" as torture.

This gave me pause. I called for a halt to the session after some thought, I stabbed the man through the heart and set the fourth and fifth Crow captives free. If there is a confession to be extracted, it will not be done with pain. I recommend we abandon this course of action.

—*A report by Captain Aristide, tasked with investigating the assassination of Queen Madrigal of Antiva*

## **THE DAUGHTERS OF SONG**

Wine. Music. Poetry. And the wanton and frenzied indulgence of carnal fancies. These things characterized the hedonistic cult known as the Daughters of Song. Calling them an order of the faithful lends them a legitimacy they do not deserve. The daughters (and sons, though they saw themselves also as "daughters") celebrated Andraste's holy union with the Maker in almost every way imaginable. And it was only the "holy union" they venerated. Andraste's life, her war, her teachings, and her sacrifice were blithely ignored.

At its height, the Daughters of Song numbered in the thousands. They maintained a stronghold in a village called Virelay, in the Fields of Ghislain. Virelay saw a yearly event during which the Daughters of Song paraded carved images of the "Maker's Glory" through the square.

The Daughters of Song were wiped out by the righteous forces of Emperor Drakon during his campaigns to unite all of Orlais. When the emperor's forces sacked the village, the Daughters would not arm themselves and were either killed or captured. The village was destroyed, and the cult never recovered.

—*From Before Andrastianism: the Forgotten Faiths by Sister Rondwyn of Tantervale*

## THE DEATH OF ELANDRIN

Elandrin, our brother.

Falon'Din guide you. Maker guide you.

Let here the truth be kept, lest you be remembered a traitor, or our sorrow seem a passing woe.

Though you swore to serve our people, there were those questioning your heart.

Too often had we fought with humans along our borders until the beginning was lost to memory. Rumors of an abduction stirred. As always, their Chantry was swift to spread lies. In haste and anger, they killed Siona's sister for wandering too near the hunters' path. You carried her body back to us, you mourned with us—yet your heart was distracted. Siona begged for vengeance and you turned away.

More and more you vanished without word or explanation. When whispers rose that you would swear yourself to their Maker, we feared what would come.

Siona sought to save you, to bring you back to us. She had lost a sister, must she also lose a brother? Beneath the trees she saw you with a woman, the one who turned you from us. The woman gestured toward the village. You and she turned to gaze upon the Chantry's walls.

Siona returned. She told us how humans were turning you against us. How their lies must have filled you. As a loyal servant to the Maker's cause, you would betray our secrets. When we went to ask if there was truth in this, you were already gone.

So we sought to stop you. With haste, Siona led her people to the village. There we would challenge you. There we would bring you back to us... or to justice. In the dim of a moonless night, she saw Siona through the trees. She raced toward Siona, a cry on her lips and something in her hand. Siona's arrow flew. So the woman fell, the name "Elandrin" dying on her lips, daisies slipping from her grasp.

The men of the village suspected the girl's flight, and heard the scream. They fell upon the elves, but were no match.

Siona's haste surpassed your own. You knelt beneath the trees, blood-soaked petals clinging to your clothes from a final embrace. When more humans came, you would not be moved—and they would not listen. Their arrows found your heart and you fell beside her. We found your body in the river where they cast you aside. She was taken by her own. It was not the end, but your part is past.

Rest now as our honored brother once more. A wreath of daisies at your brow, the letter she carried in your hand. Whoever guides you, whoever guides her, may your souls meet once more in the beyond.

Faded blood stains the letter:

Adalene,

What care have I for gods I have never seen, for a Maker I do not know? Let others distract themselves with such lofty concerns. I know only this life, I have seen only this world, and I care only for you.

Perhaps your priestess distrusts the sincerity of "uncivilized" elves. If she must hear me say I will follow the Maker, so be it. Your god intercedes as much as ours. My life will not change.

I will return in two weeks' time. My heart longs for you 'till then, and will remain with you forever after.

Elandrin

## **THE DISCIPLES OF ANDRASTE**

The Disciples of Andraste are unique in all history. The cult preceded the Chantry and kept itself so hidden and isolated that it actually survived to modern day. The Disciples made their home high in the Frostback Mountains, in a village called Haven, which is now a sanctuary for pilgrims of the Chantry. It is understood that the Disciples were descendants of the first followers of Andraste, who brought her ashes to Ferelden and built the temple to house it. Because they had pledged themselves to the keeping of the Temple of Sacred Ashes, the Disciples of Andraste never left the Frostbacks. For nine hundred years, they kept strangers away, killing all who came close, and were completely oblivious to the world that advanced beyond the boundaries of their home.

Having developed separately from the traditions of the Andrastian Chantry, the Disciples were led by revered fathers. However, little else is known about the original beliefs of the Disciples, for they had turned from their noble heritage by the time they were discovered. Almost all scholars believe that the centuries-long isolation imposed upon the village led to the necessity for inbreeding. This practice likely led to a greater incidence of madness, which may explain why the cult was, at the time of its discovering in 9:30, worshipping a high dragon.

According to writings discovered in Haven, the Disciples of Andraste showed reverence to the dragon, believing it to be the Prophet reborn. The egg clutches and dragonlings of the dragon were afforded great honor, for being "Andraste's" offspring, and were cared for by the cult. The dragon never attacked the cult, being cunning enough to recognize how this arrangement benefited it.

In 9:30 Dragon, the Disciples were wiped out by the Hero of Ferelden, who was on a quest to retrieve the Sacred Ashes of Andraste.

—*From Before Andrastianism: the Forgotten Faiths by Sister Rondwyn of Tantervale*

## **THE EMPTY ONES**

The Empty Ones were a small and short-lived cult based in Nevarra and known for worshipping the blight and, by extension, the darkspawn. Some confuse the Empty Ones with followers of Tevinter's Old Gods—a reasonable mistake since Archdemons are said to be tainted Old Gods. However, it is clear from the histories that the Empty Ones did not worship Dumat and his ilk, but the blight itself.

Following Andraste's death, many of her followers fell into a deep despair. They believed that the Prophet's betrayal and execution marked the beginning of the end of the world and that the Maker's wrath would soon come upon them. The most fatalistic of them all gathered together to prepare for their doom. They called themselves the Empty Ones, for they saw themselves as worthless husks, ready to be swept away by the Maker's hand.

It is unknown what passed then, but over time, the Empty Ones grew to believe that the blight was to be the tool by which the Maker would end all of creation. They preached that it came from the Void, a place of nothing, and that returning to the Void was something to be celebrated because it meant an end to all pain and all suffering.

Some mistakenly take this to mean that the Empty Ones worshipped evil, but that is an oversimplification. The Empty Ones believed the world to be beyond redemption, and that it was the Maker's will that it be destroyed completely. There are tales of Empty Ones scouring the Deep Roads, searching for darkspawn, whom they saw as the blight's prophets in order to assist them in bringing about the next Blight.

—*From Before Andrastianism: The Forgotten Faiths, by Sister Rondwyn of Tantervale*

## **THE FOLLY OF GENERAL NOT-SHERITAN**

One.

We study thus the tale of Not-Sheritan, the servant of a Fereldan lord who together shared a casual friendship not common among Orlesians. It was during a diplomatic visit that both remarked on the absurdity of masks, frustrated as they were by the scorn of the Orlesians, who saw these visitors as common and unadorned. So insulted were the Fereldans that the servant did take up the mask of the Orlesian general Sheritan from the cloakroom. "What a lark," she sneered, earning the guffaws of her lord. And the lord sought to share the whimsy with the room, but he was mistaken of the reaction. None of the assembled dared question the bearer of the mask, even as they were told of the jest. For in the Orlais of the time, the mask was the person, and the wearer must be he, even if their build is slight and their sex reversed. Could it not be a test? In exposing the mistake, is not the witness also a cause of violation?

Two.

And so it was that this visiting servant was not just greeted but whisked away, for this was not a mere fete, but the launching of a grand operation. And at the fore of the might of Orlais now stood a waif behind a general's face. And none did question, for fear of censure. And she, the servant, could not get away. Left without her lord, she feared the madness of the Orlesians. That if she removed the mask, they would call her imposter, or spy, or some other thing she could not know. And as enemy battalions marched upon them, the servant was certain it would end in death for all.

Three.

But during times of crisis, there can emerge abilities we do not know we possess. The servant, under the greatest duress, stood as Not-Sheritan. She stood, and she spoke. She stood, and she led. She stood, and she attacked. And under banners they knew and a voice they did not, the forces of Orlais brought low their enemy. Now, perhaps the servant was more lieutenant than page to her battle-hardened lord. And perhaps the strength of the foe is stressed too much in retellings. And perhaps the allied were well practiced in their roles. But none question that Not-Sheritan was at the least adequate and at the most inspirational.

Four.

And so it was that victory was absolute, and cheers were raised for General Not-Sheritan. And so buoyed by respect and admiration, Not-Sheritan stood proud and removed the mask to state her true name. For had they not accepted her? Had they not thrived by her leadership? Had they not become comrades despite station and masks and nonsense of protocol? And the answer was swift and bewildering, for they had not. And swiftly she was bundled away, amid calls of "Imposter!" and "Spy!" and other terms she could not know. For she still did not know Orlais.

Five.

In the days that followed, to avoid scandal the appointing of Not-Sheritan was claimed a grand tactic of the true general, who must have orchestrated the whole affair from secret. "From secret" meaning the cloakroom, for not even his own attendants knew his face, and they would have had the guard whisk him to jail for trespassing. But with his mask restored and wary of the embarrassment, the general was merciful with Not-Sheritan, imposing less than half the prescribed lashes and sparing her and her lord the gallows. They were allowed to leave Orlais on the condition that "Not-Sheritan" was henceforth her name.

## **THE GIRL IN RED CROSSING**

Too long I have traveled, soon I'll see her smiling,  
The girl in Red Crossing I'm longing to see.  
O, I know she is there, daisies in her hair,  
Waiting by the chantry to marry me.

I've dreamed of the kiss I stole 'neath the arbor.  
I've dreamed of the promise 'neath the old ash tree.  
O, I know she is there, daisies in her hair,  
Waiting by the chantry to marry me.

One last stream to cross, one last hill to wander.  
Until I reach the love I'm longing to see.  
O, I know she is there, daisies in her hair,  
Waiting by the chantry to marry me.

Running through the streets, only silence follows.  
Elven arrows sunk into the old ash tree.  
O, I know she's there, daisies in her hair,  
Waiting by the chantry to marry me.

Ruby on the green, petals lost and drifting.  
Take her to His side, Andraste hear my plea.  
I found her lying there, daisies in her hair,  
Waiting by the chantry to marry me.

Not surprisingly, this folk song originates from the Red Crossing region, although it is known in various parts of Orlais. While clearly inspired by the events of the Exalted March of the Dales, it is unknown whether the narrator and the eponymous "girl" are based on actual figures or are representative of the overall losses suffered at Red Crossing.

—*From Orlesian Musical Tradition by Sister Rosette, published by the University of Orlais*

## **THE HEAD OF MADAME SNAPPY-SNIPS**

Mascot of Le Masque du Lion. Named in jest, but genuinely respected. The Grand Ma'am, as she is also called, was the last dragon brought down by Ser Koenig, the previous owner of the cafe. A spirited hunter, Koenig came of age in the years following the sighting that named the era. While others were quick to assume the tales of ancient Nevarran dragon hunters must have been exaggerated, he tracked the gradual increase in dragon numbers and size. Koenig believed we had yet to see a true return of the beasts of legend, and that the specimens of his day were young, despite their ferocity.

It is a cruel victory, but today we know Ser Koenig to have been correct, even as he may have fallen to his own expertise. He is—was—years overdue from his last hunt. And for the rest of us, travel wary. What we thought to be the pinnacle of dragon strength may have been closer to adolescence. The sisters of Madame Snappy-Snips may have left their sibling far behind.

—*Excerpted and torn from A Disposable Walking Tour of the Capital by Philliam, a Bard!*

## **THE JUDGMENT OF MYTHAL**

Whenever one of the People wronged another, they would not call on Elgar'nan to avenge them, for his fury would destroy all it touched. Mythal saw this bring strife among the People, and went to Elgar'nan; she offered to deliver justice when the People warred amongst themselves. Elgar'nan saw her wisdom and agreed, binding all to abide by her verdicts.

Some petitioning Mythal for justice hid jealousy, accusing those who had done them no wrong. She saw their lies, and struck them down. Others petitioning Mythal for justice burned with wrath for imagined slights. She saw their weak hearts, and struck them down. Those coming to her with clear minds and open hearts were granted judgment and protection, and Mythal harried their enemies until the end of their days.

—*Story of the elven god Mythal, author unknown*

## **THE KEEPERS OF FEAR**

This was not a place of honor. Here came beasts from the north, carrying a poison called "the Blight." They killed many warriors and sickened the land, and even their blood could kill.

We feared them, and it was right. We were strong, but still they came to feed upon our screams.

These stones hold the screams of the Alamarri. Wherever the spawn of darkness have come, these stones were raise, so the beasts might take their bounty of fear and depart. If they did not, every man would put his screams into the stone until none were left inside him. Then he would light the fire to burn the screams away, and take up sword and shield to fight until death came.

When all the men were dead, the women did the same, whether it was the tradition of the tribe or not. Then the children, even if all they held were fire pit sticks.

Remember our warning. Give the stone your screams, burn them so that they cannot master you, and fight.

—*Runes etched near the base of the screaming statue*

## THE LADY OF THE SKIES

My father died with honor, so we gave him to the sky. My husband and I led the procession to the peaks, singing. With knife and hammer, we scoured the flesh and split the bones. As we left, I saw the carrion crows descending to carry my father home in pieces. I knew the Lady of the Skies smiled.

Our tribe has never failed to do the Lady honor. The flights of her birds reveal the future to our shaman. We sacrifice wolves upon her altars. In return, she sends prize game in the hunt and victory in war. When a couple is bound together by the sacred knots, it is the Lady's hymn we sing.

We Avvar never leave the ice and the stone. We never bowed to Calenhad as the Alamarri did, nor shall we be enslaved by the words of their new prophet. We are constant as the sky, and from us our Lady shall have her due.

—*From the meditations of Anashe, Avvar tribeswoman and falconer*

## THE LOST CITY OF BARINDUR

On the fifteenth day of my journey across the Tevinter Imperium, our caravan reached a great rolling plain. Swaying grass hid flocks of birds so vast that when they took flight, their numbers blocked the sun. This, our guide informed us, was the great city of Barindur, wonder of the ancient world, famed for its fountains which were said to grant eternal youth.

Legend has it that during the celebration of the winter solstice, Carinatus, High King of Barindur, turned away an envoy from the High Priest of Dumat. The priest called upon his god to punish Carinatus for the offense, and the Dragon-God of Silence answered him.

Months passed. The Kingdom of Barindur fell silent. In distant Minrathous, the priests of Razikale dreamed of dark omens. Their oracles declared that a dire fate had befallen King Carinatus. Finally, the fearful High King of Minrathous sent a company of soldiers to Barindur.

The men reported that the road which led across the northern plains ended abruptly. They walked for leagues over barren, empty rock where the Kingdom of Barindur had once been. All of it swept from the face of the world by the hand of a god.

Not a single stone of Barindur remains, and nothing of the once-powerful city has ever been found. A secret now, that can never be told.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

## THE LOST TEMPLE OF DIRTHAMEN

We few whisper here where shadow dwells.  
Some words remain unuttered.  
Truths are pushed down, down  
Where they shall never arise again.

Dirthamen is gone, he said.  
Our Highest One brings to us this gravest news.  
What shall we do? Where shall we go?  
What of the old secrets that burn within our hearts?

They will come for us in the night  
Those who could steal the words from our lips  
And our god no longer rises to our defense.  
We claw at the walls, at the walls.  
Now we pray for a dawn that will never arrive.

Our Highest One, he deceives us.  
The honeyed words that drip from his tongue  
We know the despair they mask.  
We disciples of Dirthamen know truth, now as ever.

The Highest One promises safety.  
I shall protect our ancient secrets, he claims  
All that Dirthamen once granted to us will be safe.  
But it is our blood he seeks  
A sacrifice dark and unholy  
A prison of evil to keep us in and everyone else out.

We will not have it, will not have it!  
The secrets are madness in our ears, but they are ours  
The Highest One cannot take them from us.  
Only Dirthamen, our Keeper, only he  
And if he does not take the secrets  
They are ours forever.

His mind which cannot think  
His tongue which cannot speak  
His hands which cannot touch  
His ears which cannot hear  
His eyes which cannot see  
And thus shall our Highest One be bound.  
He shall join us in our Silence.

For his heart, for his heart  
Our Highest One is bound.  
The secret that he keeps, he keeps with us  
The vigil that he keeps, he keeps with us  
His fear will not weaken us  
No-one shall come, dear mentor.  
In our eternity, only darkness reigns.

## **THE LOVER'S ALCOVE**

Every district has one. At least one. And the question must be, "Why is a place meant for dalliance declared in such an obvious way?" And the answer, of course, is that obviousness is the entirety of the point.

When manners and station will not allow impassioned words, such corners are places to be seen not being seen. Entering with a paramour is as much a declaration as singing out in joy, which one of good standing must never do. The alcove is thus a dignified means of announcing romantic affiliation, either for genuine partnership, or to appear as such in order to spare a suitor a refusal. Dignity of course requiring that one does not also make use of the darkness for actual physical gratification.



This has, of course, never occurred.

—*From Our Orlesian Heart by (formerly) Sister Laudine*

## THE PERILS OF BARD LIFE

As a bard, you are welcome anywhere in Orlais. Doors are opened to you with generous smiles, their wearers confident that no one would falsely pretend to such a title for fear of retribution. Your slightest request is immediately seen to. Your services are expensive and yet actively sought, and those who cannot afford them beg only to not have your displeasure turn their way.

One day, however, you will awaken. You will realize the smiles are false, and behind them lies revenge. At the first moment of weakness, your brother and sister bards will be unleashed upon you like a pack of hounds, and you will realize they are not your brothers and sisters at all. For all your fancy intrigue, you have spent your life creating nothing of worth. You have been swallowed by the web of your own deceptions, and the Game of which you believed yourself master? It moves on without you, uncaring.

—*From a letter signed "Sister Nightingale"*

## THE PYRAMIDS OF PAR VOLLEN

The island called Par Vollen was the first land in Thedas to be taken by the Qunari, and has been held by them ever since. But while the Qunari have raised their own marvels on the island—the famed city of Qunandar comes to mind—Par Vollen had a rich history before the Qun ever came to its shores. Tear your eyes from Qunandar's wonders and look instead to the jungle. There you'll see the ruins of vast cities that proclaim in silence: "We were here."

Par Vollen's distinctive pyramids, looming from the overgrowth, have remained largely intact, even if their intended purpose has been lost. They do not seem to be tombs, though some chambers contain bodies that have been carefully preserved. Amazingly, the pyramids' proportions are mathematically perfect. Since their alignment is so precise, one suspects they served some scientific purpose. Observatories, perhaps? Andvan Therastes has observed that the shape of the Par Vollen pyramids seems perfectly to match the constellation Solium.

We know more of the pyramids than we do of the humans who built them. The Qunari came to Par Vollen as conquerors, but there is no history and little sign of battles fought on the island's shores. A civilization that could build such vast cities would surely have defenses, armies, perhaps weapons alien even to the Qunari. So why is there so little proof of resistance?

One answer may lie in what remains of their temples. Beneath the leaves and vines covering the walls, you can still make out the stylized carvings that adorn them. The paint has long since flaked away, but the silhouettes are clear: intricate sea creatures, shipwrights, musicians, archers, and kings. Here and there, odd figures are depicted, tall, horned, always in a position of authority and respect.

What were these horned figures to the ancients of Par Vollen? Priests, ritualistically crowned? Heroes? Gods, perhaps? We may never know the truth. But when the Qunari arrived from the sea, horned and carrying the word of the Qun, perhaps instead of conquerors, the people of Par Vollen saw an old legend returning to them.

This is all supposition. The humans of Par Vollen are Qunari now, their ancient civilization discarded like a child's toy. Yet the pyramids remain, along with the old cities, the island itself. One day, greater scholars may hear what they have to say.

—*From A Compiled History of the Occupied North, by Renatus of Ayesleigh*

## THE RANDY DOWAGER QUARTERLY

A waterlogged quarterly missive of suspect virtue:

The Randy Dowager welcomes the blooms of spring with the collected Callipygian Cuirassiers, being a scandalous representation of Her Majesty's favored caught in flagrante delectable. Can their uniforms—and modesty—withstand the assault?

The Randy Dowager: Exhibitions for the noble of thought, but spry of step.

The Lady herself says: "Hardly a Tethras, but generously arousing if "polished cuirass" does it for you. And it should. Three scarves fluttered in shock out of five." - RD

A smartly bound quarterly missive of suspect virtue:

The Randy Dowager greets the summer with the complete Obeying Her Order, being a ribald tale of templars standing firm before division by a secret cunning. An exhibition of inspiration at its most urgent, and the Chant at its most passionate.

The Randy Dowager: Exhibitions for the noble of thought, but spry of step.

The Lady herself says: "Such an assault to modesty that I publicly swooned lest my own honor be impugned. Twice. Five scarves fluttered in shock out of five." - RD

A well-worn quarterly missive of suspect virtue:

The Randy Dowager welcomes the cool of autumn with the fall of another, the collected Dreams of Desire, being the confessions of an apprentice and training more "furrowing" than Harrowing. Forbidden dalliances at their most spirited.

The Randy Dowager: Exhibitions for the noble of thought, but spry of step.

The Lady herself says: "Enchanting. One supports the Circles, if only because closed doors offer the imagination more. Three scarves fluttered in shock out of five." - RD

An unread quarterly missive of suspect virtue:

The Randy Dowager ignites winter passions with the collected Conscripted by Love, being a tale of heroes-come-legends, the Grey Wardens, and their shining duty to claim those of promise who most suit their Joining.

The Randy Dowager: Exhibitions for the noble of thought, but spry of step.

The Lady herself says: "Always a classic when Wardens come calling. Or, dare one suggest, the reverse? Four scarves fluttered in shock out of five." - RD

An extra-thick annual edition of the suspect quarterly

The Randy Dowager welcomes the new year by scandalizing the old, with the collected romantic epic, The Horned Ones, being a tale of conquest, both of nation and of heart. Demands are satisfied as bronze giants share their explosive passions.

The Randy Dowager: Exhibitions for the noble of thought, but spry of step.

The Lady herself says: "Only for those of particular taste. Delicate buds should remain in the garden while the bold of us flower. Five scarves fluttered in shock out of five." - RD

## THE SILVER KNIGHT

The question has always fascinated me. What happened to Ser Brandis, the Silver Helm? Lord Demetrius—the only champion killed—died before the victory, but both Sister Amity and Brandis survived. Amity established the chantry; history is filled with her name. Yet Brandis disappears from the story after his confrontation with the last Emerald Knight.

I took it upon myself to unravel this mystery. I learned that there are tales even the Dalish do not know. In lost verses of a song, painstakingly unearthed, I found the answer to my question.

Who could bear the weight of a people destroyed by his hand?

—*Lord Avery of Montsimnard, 9:39 Dragon*

The song follows:

Bright silver were his helm and chain,  
Bright silver on his horse's rein;  
He rode upon the golden plain,  
The brave and comely knight.

The elves stood fast, their banners high.  
They would not flee, they would not fly,  
Though knowing they would surely die,  
The last of Dalish might.

He met them on the golden field,  
The fate of elvenkind now sealed,  
In mercy, urged them all to yield,  
He sorrowed for their plight.

But prideful were the Dalish kin,  
Their vengeful hearts could not give in,  
With raging cry and dreadful grin,  
They struck against the Light.

Beneath the red and fading sun,  
The elven stand was swift undone,  
'Til they were vanquished, all but one:  
Defiant in her fight.

Her brothers on the field lay slain,  
He would not see her die in vain,  
In grief, cried "Yield!" to her again,  
That good and gentle knight.

He could not strike; his shield dropped low,  
She lifted sword against her foe,  
They did not see the far-off bow,  
Its arrow loosed in flight.

A sharpened thorn, a searing brand,  
A shot the elf could not withstand;  
The sword fell lifeless from her hand,  
With drops of crimson bright.

He said no word, he made no sound,  
But caught her, falling to the ground.  
Her dark hair flowing, all unbound:  
A veil as black as night.

And up around him came the call,  
That celebrated Dalish fall,  
The cry of vic'try came from all,  
Except the silver knight.

The glimmer of his helm and chain,  
Now dull with dark and bloody stain.  
He looked and saw upon the plain,  
The dying elven light.

Elf sword in hand, heart filled with woe,  
No one would ever see him go,  
But with a solemn prayer, spoke low,  
He vanished into night.

They say he rode on easterly,  
The sword he placed beneath a tree.  
And there remained, on bended knee,  
That grave and mournful knight.

## **THE SINGING MAIDEN**

Have you ever heard the story of King Bedwyr? Bedwyr, like most kings, was a man of great pride, who expected nothing but complete loyalty from his subjects. He believed the best way to achieve this was through fear—after all, those who feared him would never cross him or question his rule. Most importantly, those who feared him, would always seek to please him.

Bedwyr cultivated terror in his subordinates through the gleeful and unrestrained use of a contraption referred to as "the maiden." The maiden was a hinged iron casket, as high and wide and deep as a man, with vicious spikes within, meant to pierce through the poor soul locked into it. Bedwyr's maiden was a prized possession, and stood in a place of honor in his throne room, often with a screaming victim inside it. Political rivals, suspected assassins, treasonous ministers—the maiden consumed them all. But as time passed, more people were given to the maiden for increasingly trivial offenses: the cook for over-salting the king's food, the pageboy for dropping his sword. The maiden cast a pall over the kingdom, and its people prayed for deliverance from their cruel king.

Then one day, a strange woman rode into the city. She called herself Ember, and was an emissary from a far-off land. Her leaders had heard, she said, of Bedwyr's wisdom and authority, and she sought the king's counsel. The thought that he had earned the adulation of brother-kings across the sea made Bedwyr swell with pride, and he granted Ember an audience.

They dined and danced, and through it all, Ember flattered and fawned on the king. At the end of the night, Ember asked to see the maiden, the infamous device that had given Bedwyr all his power. The king, giddy with praise, proudly presented Ember with the empty contraption. Ember looked at the maiden, sighed with disappointment and said, "That does not look terrifying at all. I should have imagined the spikes to be much sharper."

Bedwyr grew red at her comment and replied: "The spikes are sharp enough. Look at the blood that still clings to them!"

"But it is so small," said Ember. "Are only children and women its victims?"

Bedwyr grew redder still, and replied, "Of course not. The maiden has devoured many men."

Ember shook her head and said to the king, "I do not believe it. Surely no warrior could fear this thing. A man like yourself, tall and muscled, would not fit within."

The king laughed, and saw a way to prove the merit of the maiden to Ember. "I will show you how easily a man like myself could fit," he said. And with that, he stepped into the device. But Ember was waiting, and no sooner had Bedwyr squeezed himself into the iron casket that Ember slammed it shut on him.

Ember took the maiden, with the screaming Bedwyr inside, through the castle, and down into the city. And the people, finally free from the king's tyranny, cheer and danced to the "singing" that echoed through the streets, until Bedwyr was dead and it finally stopped.

*—A tale often told in the Singing Maiden tavern*

## **THE SOUL CANTO**

A traveler asked the Ashkaari: "What was your vision of our purpose?"

The Great Ashkaari replied: "I will tell you a story."

A vast granite stature stands on an island, holding back the sea.  
The heavens crown its brow. It sees to the edge of the world.  
The sea drowns its feet with every tide.  
The heavens turn overhead, light and dark. The tide rises to devour the earth, and falls back.  
The sun and the stars fall to the sea one by one in their turn, only to rise again.  
The tide rises, the tide falls, but the sea is changeless.  
Struggle is an illusion. There is nothing to struggle against.  
The deception flows deeper. The statue resists the ebb and flow of the sea.  
And is whittled away with each wave.  
It protests the setting sun, and its face is burned looking upon it. It does not know itself.  
Stubbornly, it resists wisdom and is transformed.  
If you love purpose, fall into the tide. Let it carry you.  
Do not fear the dark. The sun and the stars will return to guide you.  
You have seen the greatest kings build monuments for their glory  
Only to have them crumble and fade.  
How much greater is the world than their glory?  
The purpose of the world renews itself with each season. Each change only marks  
A part of the greater whole.  
The sea and the sky themselves:  
Nothing special. Only pieces.

—*Tome of Koslun, the Soul Canto*

## **THE STONE TREE**

So Galen made his way through the wood until he saw the light of the quarter moon shining on the rock. Elise emerged from the pines, and they shared a quick embrace before making their way to the waiting ship.

—*From a local version of The Resourceful Lovers*

It's said that lovers who kiss the stone tree will be blessed with a long and happy marriage. Those fond of the superstition tend to ignore renditions of the tale in which Galen and Elise drown at sea,

—*Sister Holda, from her unpublished work Folk Nonsense and Other Absurdities*

## THE STORM COAST'S CLAIM

On the Waking Sea I ply my trade.  
Wink, good ser, and tell a saucy tale!  
The yarns I spin do please the maids.  
So buy the lads a round!

Oh, the Storm Coast may yet claim these bones,  
But I'll sail until they do.  
So tell the girls I'm coming home,  
With coin enough for two.

Drowning in the waves, a girl I met.  
Wink, good ser, and tell a saucy tale!  
I plucked 'er up with a fishing net.  
So buy the lads a round!

Oh, the Storm Coast may yet claim these bones,  
But I'll sail until they do.  
So tell the girls I'm coming home,  
With coin enough for two.

In the Nocen Sea, swims a might beast.  
Wink, good ser, and tell a saucy tale!  
I'll show you the scar where he sank his teeth.  
So buy the lads a round!

Oh, the Storm Coast may yet claim these bones,  
But I'll sail until they do.  
So tell the girls I'm coming home,  
With coin enough for two.

A cheerful salt, that's what I be.  
Wink, good ser, and tell a saucy tale!  
A'shore for the night and seeking company.  
So buy the lads a round!

Oh, the Storm Coast may yet claim these bones,  
But I'll sail until they do.  
So tell the girls I'm coming home,  
With coin enough for two.

—*From Songs of Northern Ferelden, by Sister Adalaide*

## THE TROUBLES OF A CHANTRY SCHOLAR

As students of culture, it is important to always recognize your biases. I wear my Chantry perspective openly, for if my readers do not understand the lens through which I view the world, they cannot account for how these biases may color my writing.

Gathering accurate information is challenging in a place as vast and fragmented as Thedas. One man may go on at length about lurid dealings with a king, then refuse to provide his name or some proof of the account. Other sources may conflict wildly. Fixing travel to some of the more remote areas of the continent is nothing compared to the difficulty I've had finding contacts I can trust. I cannot tell you how many times "reputable people" have tried to deceive me, sometimes for personal notoriety, more often in the interest of a pet cause. Trustworthy Qunari, Dalish, and Tevinter contacts are especially scarce, and I prize those I have kept friendly. Often it is I who must earn their trust.

Texts too can be unreliable. From extensive readings, I have determined that Andraste was a Fereldan Orlesian who was born in every town from here to Hossberg. What little remains of elven history has been told and retold, shifted and skewed, until the tales are unrecognizable. I have particular respect for the dwarves, for there is no other people so obsessed with recording an accurate and complete history. If only the Shapers were as open as the skies they fear.

If I can be honest, the long reign of the Chantry has made the recording of reality at times a trial. Most common histories have been rewritten through the filter of my religion. Everything has meaning as it pertains to the Maker. And while this is unavoidable, it sometimes leads to conflicts between what is officially taught by the Chantry and what I have seen with my own eyes.

While my belief in the Maker is absolute, only a fool would ignore the lessons to be learned from other societies and religions.

Take the Fade. Was it the kingdom of the Maker, as common knowledge dictates, or the realm of the Tevinter Old Gods? Few people would contest its existence, but beyond that, there is little agreement among scholars. Though there are many who would disagree with me, I have come to believe nothing is for certain. I've met too many people and encountered too many perspectives not to keep an open mind about these things.

*—Excerpt from a lecture by Brother Genitivi at the University of Orlais, delivered shortly after the release of his seminal work, In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar*

### **THREE LITTLE EMPRESSES**

Simple bunks in the style of the Three Little Empresses, the triplets who were not triplets. Humble in their youths, but a symbol of something more sinister, it was rumored that Empress Merise (6:19 to 6:43 Steel) had given birth to one child, but adopted two look-alikes to protect the lineage from assassination. Wise in a way, but it presented other problems, if we're to believe the outcome of the popular children's skipping rhyme that we associate with the time:

Three little empresses, which of them is true? A simple glass of almond tea and now there's only two.

Two little empresses, which will be undone? A dagger from beneath a cloak and now there's only one.

One little empress child, reaping what was sown, Only she knows which she was, and now she's on the throne.

*—Excerpted and torn from A Disposable Walking Tour of the Capital by Philliam, a Bard!*

### **TO BE CORRUPTED**

The corruption is taking hold now. What doesn't hurt is numb. Head's all foggy. But the scientist in me can't help but describe what this feels like.



My body is breaking down. The fingernails were the first to go. I started to itch all over, and when I scratched, they peeled back. Clumps of hair fell away. Then clumps of flesh.

I hear a song in my head. It's deafening. The most beautiful thing I've ever heard. But I don't hear it with my ears. It's in my brain. A blissful sound. This must be the call for which the darkspawn yearn, what causes them to dig so feverishly.

I'd still rather die. Suppose that's something.

—*Missive found in the Deep Roads, signed only "Warden Pierse"*

## **TOWER OF BONE**

The Tower of Bone is so named for the hundreds of human bones discovered in a hidden chamber beneath the flagstones. The bones were cremated in accordance with Chantry law, and the chamber cleansed and sealed.

Local tales of the tower and its grisly contents abound. Some believe Tevinters built the structure, reinforcing its foundations with blood magic. In other tales, elves built the tower. My favorite is particularly imaginative. In this story, a blood mage summoned a greater pride demon, who then possessed the entire tower. When the mage died, his sons were unable to control the demon, so they commissioned eight monstrous iron chains intended to hold it. The touch of the cold iron chain is the only thing holding the stone abomination in place. Should they break, the tower will pull itself off its foundations and walk, destroying everything in its path.

—*From The Highlands of Orlais by Lord Ademar Garde-Haut, Royal Historian*

## **TRADING WITH KAL-SHAROK**

My approach was carefully observed. This was not a thaig unused to watching its boundaries. I got the impression that if I'd been one of his Orzammar cousins, our meeting would've been swift and bloody. That is, if I'd been allowed to find the passage at all. As it was, he was polite and efficient, and he knew well the current market for everything he offered. Clearly their isolation is not because of fear, and certainly not disinterest. Among his wares, I saw the latest fabrics of Val Royeaux and volumes by a Free Marcher poet three centuries dead. This only added to my doubt of the official year of Kal-Sharok's "rediscovery" as declared by the Assembly of Orzammar. I didn't mention this to my host. As curious as I was, there was an undercurrent I found unsettling. I must stress that he and his helpers were professional and honest throughout. But there was something I can't describe. While he remained hooded, he looked me square in the eye when our deal was struck, unashamed.

I lived through a time of Blight. I've felt the gaze of a Grey Warden and seen the corruption of his prey. Why I remembered both in that moment, I still can't explain.

—*On meeting Novas Sturhald in Kal-Sharok, excerpted from the journals of Ser Evrain Abernache, noble merchant-scholar*

## **UNSIGNED JOURNAL**

The red potion was bitter and burned my throat. It was nothing like the lyrium I know. There was a hum in my mind, a held note that seemed to course through my entire being. The power it brought was incredible. I felt as if I held all the world in my palm, and I could crush it with a thought. Is this what the Maker feels?

I can think of nothing else but that power now. A taste of the limitless makes it impossible for a man to be content with the ordinary. Why be what I am when I can be more?

## **VALLASDAHLEN**

Elves have their heroes, just as we do; they honor the Vallasdahlen—Life-Trees—of these legendary figures. Planted in remembrance of those who dedicated their lives to the Dalish kingdom, these trees grew into a mighty wood, a testament to the elves' force at their height.

Walk beneath the Vallasdahlen with reverence; remember that each of them once had a name.

—*From In Pursuit of Knowledge: The Travels of a Chantry Scholar by Brother Genitivi*

The Dalish believe Mathalin was the first of the Emerald Knights, and the first to hold Evanura, the blade of honor, forged in Halamshiral for his hand.

Tanaeth was a smith and the High Keeper of June; she spent her years rediscovering the arts of Arlathan.

Briathos protected the Dales from human incursion. When humans sent missionaries and templars, he turned them away.

Vaharel conquered the human city of Montsimnard.

Lindiranae was the last to hold the blade Evanura. With her fell the Dales; the sword was lost.

Dalish revere Elnora for her tireless work reviving the magical arts of lost Arlathan.

Ralaferin was a great lord of Elven Halamshiral. The Ralaferin tribe existing today believes they descend from him.

Calmar was Elnora's apprentice and First, and friend to the halla.

Sulan was Mathalin's squire. He walked always with a wolf at his side.

## **WALKING THE FADE: A HARROWING**

I found myself on a plateau of swirling smoke and mist. I could not see my feet, or perhaps I had no feet in that place. Each step was treacherous. I had to believe there was a ground. If I didn't, there wouldn't be, and I would fall into nothingness. I was protected only by my will and my magic.

The demon they made me face took the shape of a great cat. As we battled, it spoke in my mind. It told me that I would eventually stumble, and then it would pounce. The demon talked to me of the templars beyond the Veil, standing over my paralyzed body, their swords pointed at my heart, waiting for the moment of my failure. All it would take was a splinter of fear, a seed of doubt, and I would be unmade. The demon would devour my mind, and the templars would destroy what was left of me.

This was my Harrowing. They force this upon all mages and call it good. But it is neither good nor right. It is evil and unjust.

—*From a partially destroyed journal bearing no name, found in a Kinloch Hold cistern.*

## **WALKING THE FADE: FROZEN MOMENTS**

I once studied the Fade as a scholar, dissecting it, as a child might a rat or a frog. I was young and craved the power conquering the Fade could bring. I tried in vain to chart its paths, and when that failed, I attempted to secure them. In my arrogance, I struggled against the Fade's very nature. How does one pin down a dream? How can one control a thought so that it might travel always the same course from conception to completion?

Only when I let go of my desires and humbled myself was the Fade opened to me. The spirits came and took it upon themselves to be my guides, my lanterns in the darkness. At their command, the paths grew still, and I could walk them again and again. I was shown vast oceans, containing not water, but memories, drawn from the minds of dreamers. I drifted through frozen moments, like paintings, perfect in each detail. As I explored this impossible realm, the spirits kept darker things at bay. I came to trust them, even love them, and I saw my own love reflected in them.

To know the Fade, one cannot seek to master it. The Fade is the master, the teacher. We are merely apprentices.

—*Writings of Magister Callistus of Taraevyn, known to some as "Callistus the Fade-Touched"*

## **WAR HOUNDS**

Good work here. Solid stone from the Frostbacks. Kikhol's Peak on human maps. Highhall's Roof on proper dwarven ones. As for subject, I heard the story once from a Fereldan trader. Hounds of war: one for the battle won, head raised high to chase the enemy's dead into the Fade. The second is for the battle lost: head raised, calling to a fallen master, baring its neck to the blade to join them. Any efficient sculptor will tell you they create a design and then apprentices copy it for sale. I asked why she had two meanings for the same pose. She said "Would you rather sell one statue or two?" Smart lady.

—*Stonework evaluation for Lord/Lady [Inquisitor surname]'s consideration, Mason Gatsi*

## **WHAT DISCIPLINE ACHIEVES**

We came first from the sea. The dreadnoughts took Par Vollen at a stroke. We marched on the land called Seheron, then Rivain and the Tevinter Imperium. Our viddathari told us the Tevinter capital of Minrathous was unassailable; though it did not fall, its walls were cracked with steel and baqoun fire. Tevinter saw what discipline achieves.

The bas called us conquerors when we brought them purpose. When we tamassrans teach a child to read or a wilderness is made fruitful, is that conquest?

Without the certainty of the Qun, there can be no reason. The bas raised three retaliations against our forces, pushing back in Antiva and Rivain. The kabethari, still adapting to the Qun's rule, suffered worst - the very people the bas sought to "liberate." The land burned, while the bas called us savages.

Such madness and hypocrisy needed another answer. We signed the treaties of the bas to silence them, and left.

We will return. Patience is the manifestation of self-control. While the bas bicker amongst themselves, we prepare. What is time compared to the demands of the Qun?

—*Tamassran teaching notes, recovered and translated*

## **WHAT IS GREEN?**

What is green? Imagine I should present to you an object which, to my mind, is of indisputable greenness and ask, "Does this thing appear to you to be green?"

Naturally, you might say that it does, for you have come to recognize the appearance of the color of the object to be "green," associating the word with what your eyes see. But could it be my understanding of "green" differs entirely from yours? What if, perchance, you could see into my mind? You might realize that all things that I name "green" are actually "red" in your understanding.

Ah, without the moorings of objective truth, we are set adrift in oceans of solitary experience.

*—The promising opening to a lecture given by Karsten Groeke, philosopher-poet at the University of Orlais. The lecture's quality dropped significantly after this point, and ended quickly when Groeke subjected audience members to a poorly constructed ode to Chartreuse. He fled from the auditorium under fire from students armed with overripe "red" tomatoes.*

## **JAWS OF HAKKON**

### **SCOUT HARDING**

### **CHARACTERS**

Forward camp has been established in the Fereldan Hinterlands, and suitable locations for other outposts have been identified. Progress into the area proceeded ahead of projected schedules, thanks to a local volunteer.

For further details, read on:

Sleiter was ambushed and overwhelmed by bandits and might have died if not for the timely intervention of Lace Harding, who rescued Sleiter with two well-aimed stones from a sling. Her family mabari ran off the remaining three bandits. Harding and Contessa (the mabari) escorted Sleiter back to the forward camp, followed at a distance by the small herd of ambling sheep that belonged to a neighbor of the Harding family. Once there, she requested a map, which she proceeded to fill out with helpful details, most notably known bandit hideouts and ambush points. Map completed, Lace Harding took her sheep and returned home.

We did not expect her to return the next morning, now outfitted with a small bow and leather jerkin, and absent one hound and a herd of sheep. "Maps are all right, but nothing beats a guide," she said.

That was a week ago. She's still here. I took the liberty of offering her a position as a scout.

Yours,  
Charter

### **STORVACKER**

### **CHARACTERS**

She is the hold-beast of Stone-Bear Hold. All other bears in the area are mere imitations.

Storvacker. How do I even begin to explain Storvacker?

Storvacker is flawless.

She has two ancient elven trees for claw sharpening *and* a silver honey dish.

I hear that her claws are valued in Denerim at 10,000 sovereigns.

I hear that she sells her shed fur to Orlesian master weavers in Val Royeaux.

Her favorite story is Hard in Hightown.

One time, she met Alistair Therein [sic], fabled warrior of the Fifth Blight, and he told her she was pretty.

One time, she clawed me in the face. It was amazing.

*—From Ruminations upon the Avvar and Their Customs by Reginald de Gorge*

### **THANE SVARAH SUN-HAIR**

### **CHARACTERS**

This appears to be an unfinished letter. The handwriting is simple, and the text has many phrases crossed out:

Lowlanders, if you be brave enough to—

Orlesians, if you be brave enough—

Merchants of Orlais, if—

To those who wish to trade with Stone-Bear Hold, you should know me. I am Thane Svarah Sun-Hair—

I am Thane Svarah Janesdotten, known as Sun-Hair. Though my blade has tasted battle-tears many —

Though my blade has tasted blood many—

Though I have fought many battles, I wish no conflict between us, but instead trade between our hold and yours. We have furs and leathers that put your lowland hides to shame, plus weapons that have tasted Hakkon's winter—

We have furs and leathers that will make your warriors look strong and your lovers look supple, plus weapons—

We have excellent furs and leathers, and weapons like none seen in the lowlands. Trade honestly and well, and there will be coin for all. Cheat us, and your blood will—

Trade honestly and well, and there will be coin for all.

—Thane Svarah Sun-Hair

This is a fool's task. What lowlander would come this far for furs they have not seen?

Ah, Korth, I just wrote that instead of saying it. This stupid lowland writing vexes the mind.

The rest of the letter is a series of angry sketches of axes.

## A TRADITION OF REBIRTH

## GROUPS

Some outlying nations have differing ideas on what happens to us after death. The southern Avvar, for example, believe in a hazily defined afterlife governed by the "Lady of the Skies" where the dead are reunited with their kin. A comforting notion, and not unfamiliar. The Chantry's idea that on death we cross the Fade to live by the Maker's side is accepted from rough Ferelden to decadent Tevinter. Yet Avvar also believe some of their people are destined to be "reborn," which some among the Chantry have great trouble grasping. It is not, I must emphasize, a spirit possessing a body. Other than invoking the gods, spirits have nothing to do with the process. It is the essence, the soul, which returns clothed in new flesh.

The core of the concept is thus: the souls of a few Avvar "favored" by fate "migrate" on death to inhabit a new body destined for them, so they may return and perform great deeds for the good of their hold. These resurrected souls are not expected to remember their past selves consciously, but instead are assumed to be subtly "guided" by their previous experiences, especially through visions and portents. This most conveniently sidesteps the need for proof that one has been "reborn" or that such things even occur. Then again, perhaps we should not cast scorn too quickly; as of yet, not one of the dead has returned from across the Fade to describe the Maker's paradise.

—*Part of a monograph entitled Grand Visions of Life and Death, written by Roberto the Skeptic of Antiva in 9:31 and banned by the Chantry in 9:32*

## FROM A MAGE'S JOURNAL

## GROUPS

I argued with the Avvar mage long into the night. If we'd had no truce with these barbarians to fight the darkspawn, it would have come to blows. Their conception of the Maker is as a child's! They assume He is a "spirit," and that we have displeased Him because He "answers none of your prayers." When I attempted to explain the doctrine of the Chant, the mage kept asking nonsense such as "Did Andraste have no gods of her own?" or "Why haven't you sung up another Maker?" I asked what in the good grace of Thedas she was on about, and the answers chilled me.

The Avvar confuse spirits for "gods," treating them as patrons to be lulled and wooed. The mage described, to my growing horror, how the Avvar deliberately invoke spirits for "strength in battle" or solicit them for advice. The mage claimed some of the spirits around her village had "lived" with her hold for a dozen generations, and sometimes took the form of an animal or departed relatives "when they pass on their wisdom."

Strangest of all, in the event a "god" is destroyed, the Avvar begin a year-long time of offerings and prayers and rituals I have no interest in knowing about further. At the end of this period, a new spirit takes on the name and role of the old one. I attempted to explain that this was not a "god," merely a spirit drawn in by their desires. The Avvar mage declared, with a ridiculous air of superiority, that that was the point.

If she hadn't saved my life a day ago from a rampaging hurlock, I'd take it all to the templars.

—*From the private journal of Illna Allenish, a mage serving in the Fereldan army during the Fifth Blight*

## ON AVVAR CUISINE

## GROUPS

What is thrown into the Avvar's cookpots? What isn't! Far from the delicate creams and sauces of Val Royeaux, or the rich pies and ripe cheeses beloved in Ferelden, the Avvar must subsist on whatever their mountain valleys provide. Nothing is too humble for their appetites, from the small, succulent snails found on hillside boulders to fern fiddleheads harvested in the spring. This is not to say the Avvar do not dine on more dangerous (but far more filling) fare. Harts, rams, gurguts, and lurkers are all candidates for communal evening meals taken around the fire. "Lowlander" spices, while not unknown, are great delicacies reserved for feasts. (In fact, my parting gift to the thane of Fennec-Tooth Hold was, at his request, ten jars each of black peppercorns, powdered mustard, and Antivan cord-seed.)

Avvar cooking methods favor utility. Stews are common because they can be simmered until nightfall with small fuss. Holds by lakes or rivers will wrap fish in clay and pungent leaves and leave it to bake all day over banked coals. Most Avvar food preparation, however, centers around winter. From the spring thaw onward, the hold is an endless hive of activity as meat is smoked, vegetables are pickled, and fruits are dried and stacked in crude dirt cellars in preparation for the long dark.

Despite this race against the seasons, the Avvar freely leave out rich cuts of meat and piles of plump berries on wood and stone slabs around their village. They believe these "offerings" propitiate a strange collection of beings they refer to as "gods" inhabiting the forest. The wise traveler attempts not to judge, and I was treated with all care due a guest, but I never become accustomed to the sight of good food left out by such a practical people.

—*From The Further Journeys of Marquis d'Lussard, with an Emphasis on Food and Drink, with Full Illustrations by the Author*

## A CELEBRATION OF WARDENS

## HISTORY

Outside times of Blight, Grey Wardens investigate rumors of darkspawn. Ser Kiersten of the Free Marches mounted an expedition to the Frostback Basin to look into one such sighting. She and her fellow Wardens allied themselves with an Avvar hold besieged by darkspawn after an earthquake in the mountains tore open a new passage to the surface. After ten days of fighting, the Wardens and the Avvar drove the darkspawn back and sealed the entrance against further incursions. In celebration of her bravery, the Avvar deployed a feast for Ser Kiersten and her Grey Wardens so legendarily boisterous that there are still paintings and statues dedicated to their alliance littered around the Basin.

—*From Journeys of the Wardens: A Comprehensive History by Lady Locke*

## AT WHAT COST

## HISTORY

From an aged journal found in Frostback Basin:

It still tastes strange. No matter.

Several water-stained pages follow before the text resumes:

Have we traveled through lands more remote than these? We must have. Yet I've never felt so removed from life back home as I do now.

T. makes the same arguments as always, though adds a lack of demons as a point in her favor. Lack isn't absence - which I was quick to point out. She called me pithy. There are demons here, though not as many as we faced in those early years together. The Avvar have their mages too. The last were ill prepared for me. I wonder if that's the part that bothers her?

O., as always, was no help at all.

We push on. My head aches. The others are singing the song we learned at that lakeside town. I forget the name of the place. I think my eyes are about to explode. Of course, A. has noticed and tells the others he needs to read something. It's quiet now. The journey here took longer than expected. I must take stock of the rations. After sleep.

There were more than expected. Everything has been more than expected. A few moments later, and O. would not be standing here. I was able to subdue the mage before things became worse. T. said nothing about it afterwards. She knows O. would have died.

"At what cost?" T. asked me that once. I said it costs nothing, but I don't know. I met a man who'd fought longer than I, but his mind had faded with age, and he could not answer. The point remains that I can do more. I can be more effective. We've all seen the demons, what they did. We've seen what some would do with blood. The better question is, who pays the cost if no one takes this chance?

And no one said it has to be forever. Just until things are settled.

"If you count eight times, will the number change?" O. asks. She's been watching me these last few days, whatever she says to the contrary. Damned blue bottles. I did not plan this journey as well as I should.

I lay trying to find constellations through the leaves. T. brought me some water. She just smiled, and there was no admonishment behind it. It made me feel somewhat better. As always, A. cooked our dinner while deriding my own ability to produce something edible. O. attempts to tell jokes - Maker, they're pathetic. Why do they make me laugh anyway?

Long days behind. I fear there are fewer ahead. Whatever costs I've paid, they will be worth it. It doesn't matter. This night-safe beside a fire, the three of them singing that stupid song... I am content.

## **INQUISITOR AMERIDAN**

## **HISTORY**

What is known about Inquisitor Ameridan would barely fill a page. He was a friend of Emperor Drakon. He was Inquisitor when the Seekers of Truth folded themselves into the Chantry as part of the Nevarran Accord, their Order serving as precursor to the Order of Templars and the Circle of Magi. Shortly after the accord was signed, between 1:22 and 1:24 Divine, Ameridan left his position and departed, never to be seen again.

These facts alone are undisputed. Everything else is uncorroborated hearsay, broad speculation, or salacious rumormongering:

—Ameridan did not willingly cede power. Drakon forced the Seekers of Truth to disband upon pain of death, then removed the Inquisitor rather than suffer rebellion in the new Chantry's ranks.

—Ameridan was forced to retire due to the still-young Chantry's restrictions requiring celibacy, as he was involved in a relationship with a mysterious "Lady-mage" that the Chantry erased from history.

—Ameridan was a rowdy noble who cared more for raucous entertainment than for the Seekers. He held the position only because Drakon wanted a loyal friend commanding the Order, and when the Seekers became part of the Chantry, Ameridan was free to retire to a life of hunting dragons and wenching.

Any of these stories may be true, and without more evidence, we have little hope of ever reaching a clear determination. Nevertheless, I would offer a few notes that are often overlooked as scholars delve so deeply into their own historical specialties as to lose key context:

Firstly, Emperor Drakon, rightly acknowledged as the man who molded the Chantry into the organization it is today, was a pious man, committed to spreading the Chant of Light and creating a world where magic and men were governed by Andrastian principles. All sources agree that Ameridan was a close friend of Drakon, and while it is certainly possible that Ameridan was more pragmatic than pious, it is highly unlikely that Drakon would have befriended a figure who was actively opposed to the Chantry, much less tolerated such a man holding a position of power in the growing Orlesian Empire.

Secondly, Inquisitor Ameridan was universally acclaimed as a powerful combatant, regardless of his supposed faith (or lack thereof). Rumormongers suggesting Ameridan was exiled ask us to believe that Emperor Drakon could see no use for a powerful warrior with years of command experience. Given that the Second Blight had been a fact of Orlesian life for more than 15 years at the time of Ameridan's disappearance, with darkspawn pouring from the Anderfels into northern Orles in growing numbers, it is frankly absurd to suggest Drakon would casually dispose of such a military asset.



Without further evidence, we may never know more about Ameridan's departure. Nevertheless, I hope that we may eschew the currently popular cynicism, at least when obvious evidence against it is presented, to see that his disappearance must have had some other cause.

—*From Finding Ameridan by Professor Bram Kenric (Starkhaven University Press)*

## A GOOD MARRIAGE

## LETTERS AND NOTES

In a hold past our own, a man named Virmik Torsen was to wed a woman named Seddra Yildsdotten. They were young, and in love, and made large offerings to the gods asking for happiness. The night before their wedding, Seddra had a dream. The Lady of the Skies came to her and told her to tie her rope-knots so tightly that she and Torsen would only wed a year. She awoke troubled, but did as the Lady asked. Virmik untied only one knot, and they married a year.

The year was hard. Their bows missed game and the winter wind howled through their huts. Virmik and Seddra grew thinner. When their marriage was up, they made large offerings to the gods, this time asking for mercy. The night before the wedding, the Lady of the Skies came to Virmik in a dream and told him to untie a single knot, so he and Seddra would wed only a year. Virmik awoke sorrowing, but did as the Lady asked. He and Seddra married again for a year.

The year was long. The weather was foul and the crops were poor. Virmik and Seddra grew thinner still. When their marriage time was up, Seddra and Virmik both had a dream from the Lady of the Skies. "You asked for happiness," she said, "but I cannot give that to you. You asked for mercy, but the land will not show it. Think carefully what you ask tomorrow."

Seddra and Virmik spoke long into the night and in the morning made an offering to the gods. They asked for strength to hunt and harvest when life was good, and patience, when life was not. The year was good in some places and hard in others, but they grew to know themselves and what they could bear. They became happy, not from the gift of the gods, but from their own deeds, and lived the rest of their lives as one.

—*From Stories of the Wild South: A Collection of Tales of the Barbarian Nations of Ferelden by Lady Susanna Ashwell of Ansborg*

There are notes at the bottom margin of this page, in different handwriting:

How's a rope tell you how long you marry?

An Avvar groom unties knots on a rope that the bride ties for him. He's got until the end of the wedding-chant. Number of knots he unties is the number of years they're married.

That doesn't make any sense!

Sounds like a good deal to me. See if you like living with your handsome new husband or wife once the bloom's worn off. Maybe you only untie one knot or tie them tight, like in the story, if you're not sure.

I think it's daft.

I think you two nitwits should stop scribbling in the book I've got to return to the library.

## A LETTER TO HARDING

## LETTERS AND NOTES

My darling Lace:

I hope this letter finds you healthy and happy. Last week, I managed to barter for maps of Ferelden and Orlais from Hugin, the old soldier who rents the place on Mistress Johann's farm—you remember him, don't you? Quiet man, always smoking a pipe in his chair on the porch. He wasn't using the maps anymore, so I gave him some of my jam and patched his coat in exchange for them. Now, whenever you tell me of your travels, I'll be able to track where you've been. I'm astounded, my darling, when I look at the weave of dotted trails I've already marked out on my maps. Oh, the places your feet have touched! How far you've gone, my little Lace. I am so, so proud of you. When I was your age, I'd only ever gone as far as Lothering. My mother never left Redcliffe; she lived and died there. And now here you are, flying so far with so much purpose. My mind can barely comprehend it, but my heart swells.

I shan't take up too much of your time. I know how busy you are. I am looking at the Frostbacks on the map as I write this, because I know you will likely be at your Skyhold. Please make sure to dress warmly. I have included the recipe for your favorite turnip-goat stew. A taste of home to stave off the cold mountain airs.

Kisses and hugs from me and your father.

Mother

## **ANCIENT DOCUMENT PROTECTED IN A SCROLL CASE**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

Whosoever reads this message,

Let it be known that the bearer, Inquisitor Ameridan, Commander of the Seekers of Truth, travels to the Frostback Basin on the official request of His Divine Majesty Kordillus Drakon, Emperor of Orlais, upon business vital to the safety and security of this most holy empire, and that he and those who travel with him are to be afforded every service, rendered every assistance, and extended every courtesy in their effort to protect Orlesian lives from threats both magical and mundane.

Maker watch over him,

Kordillus Drakon I

## **ARBOREAL FORT**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

A report from Agent Charter, received by the Inquisition's advisors and carrying their notes on the matter:

Sheer cliffs and steep drops present obstacles to speedy travel within the Basin. As a temporary measure, rope ladders are being constructed and placed at strategic points chosen by Scout Harding. Continued presence in this area will require a permanent solution. Please advise.

(Charts and topographical information provided for your perusal.)

—Charter

A series of comments follow:

Flatten the area? —Cullen

Of course the commander suggests hitting the hills until they forget they're hills. —L

We could look into getting the soldiers to cut steps into the cliffs or construct structures with some form of verticality. Scaffolding, perhaps? —Josephine

I was joking. Meanwhile, have you threatened to cut out anyone's tongue today? —Cullen

Thinking about it right now. —L

The roofer, Berinole, was talking to the foreman about drawing up plans for additions to Skyhold. Covered platforms connected with spiral staircases and suspended catwalks. We could apply this idea to Frostback Basin. —Josephine

I was there. Wasn't Berinole drunk? —Cullen

He didn't draw up the plans while drunk, I'm sure. We could have an engineer or Dagna look over them, to see if they're structurally sound. —Josephine

An engineer, yes. Dagna, no. We don't need our outposts to be half-in, half-out of the Fade. Or be able to sing the Chant of Light, or whatever it is she's working on right now. —L

## **BLOOD-STAINED SHRINE**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

We took steps to avoid the Hakkonites and stayed out of their way for the most part. It would've gone uneventfully had Pryce's inexperience not caused him to leave visible prints in the dirt. The Jaws of Hakkon used them to track us, and even Falker cannot throw them off the trail. Persistent bastards. We ended hiding amidst the moldy corpses and sun-bleached bones that littered the ground around a strange shrine. It was carved of stone and capped with what looked to be a dragon skull. Thankfully, when the Hakkonites traced us to the shrine, the sight of it made them stop short. They whispered among themselves, and their leader seemed to make a small bow of obeisance to the skull. They then abandoned the chase.

We still don't know what it was about that shrine that made the Hakkonites balk. Perhaps we don't want to know.

—From reports sent to Scout Harding

## **COLETTE'S NOTES**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

A series of detailed drawings of the inscriptions, glass shards, and surrounding area follow a handful neatly written notes:

"Two stood. Felled sixty true before our triumph. A breath in the hunt and let rest the lowlanders, worthy of the Lady's care."

Inscription discovered in Tevinter ruin within Frostback Basin—not Tevinter in origin. Script style and surrounding symbolism mark text as Avvar. Writing not widespread in holds—place marked by a leader or augur? Few lowlanders known to be in area at time.

Glass in area likely means templar presence, long past. Samples prepared for Professor Kenric's opinion.

## **GELDAURAN'S CLAIM**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

The script is an ancient elven dialect. Upon further observation, it twists, the words becoming visible:

There are no gods. There is only the subject and the object, the actor and the acted upon. Those with will to earn dominance over others gain title not by nature but by deed.

I am Geldauran, and I refuse those who would exert will upon me. Let Andruil's bow crack, let June's fire grow cold. Let them build temples and lure the faithful with promises. Their pride will consume them, and I, forgotten, will claim power of my own, apart from them until I strike in mastery.

This appears to be scattered pages from an old journal. The handwriting is barely legible and filled with spelling mistakes:

They told me not to go, but I did. I had no love of mountains. Red-Lion Hold raids for goats and chickens. There are better fights in the lowlands. I am tall and strong, and they think me a great warrior. I bed many women with my tales. Why would I go back?

Several pages have been torn out or scratched over until the next legible section:

The darkspawn struck Red-Lion Hold. I heard the news in a tavern in Redcliffe. The Blight took the land. The Lady sends no messengers to blight-touched bodies. My kin will know no peace.

I curse the Lady. I curse Korth. I curse all the gods who let Red-Lion fall. The people did the rites, sang the songs. Why would the gods abandon Red-Lion?

I left the mercenaries I traveled with. They understood. Many have lost kin of their own to the Blight.

Several more pages are illegible, and then:

I have taken the survivors. I know how to travel better than they do. The thane is dead, but many warriors survive. Many people died from blight-sickness. Harof Talespinner was among them. Those who live say they asked the lowlanders for help, but they let Red-Lion die.

We must find a path. We have no need of Korth or the Lady, not if they would abandon my people like lowlanders did. The only god I will forgive is Hakkon, for the tales say he was stolen by the lowlanders when the Jaws of Hakkon bound him to flesh and bone.

Red-Lion Hold is gone. We are the Jaws of Hakkon now. We will build no home, for homes can die. Instead, we will bring Hakkon back and teach the lowlanders to fear the Avvar again.

These appear to be somewhat recent pages from a journal:

We have searched for months and found nothing. The tales tell of this area, but the Stone-Bears, a hold of fishermen and chicken farmers, have lived here for generations and seen no sign. If we see nothing, we must keep moving. I will not let my hold falter. We will move on lest we die.

After several torn-out pages, another section is legible:

We have found it. Hakkon himself welcomed us. An ancient Tevinter fortress, sheathed in a wall of ice. It was untouched by lowlanders, who could find no way to breach the walls. Our mages alone, blessed by Silent Hakkon with the gifts of ice, could part the wall for a few heartbeats, giving our people time to climb inside.

The wall resists common fire, and even the flames from our mages did little to melt the magical ice. We are safe. The northerner markers lead to a shrine that our mages say reeks of magic. I have sent warriors to guard it, lest it hold some spirit who can part this wall with lowlander magic.

We have found Hakkon, bound in silence where the lowland warrior trapped him for ages uncounted. Our trials have not been in vain. They were a test.

Hakkon will come again.

These appear to be very recent pages from a journal:

The lowland warrior trapped our god in some strange magic the mages cannot understand. They say time is twisted upon itself, a knot inside a knot. They say it may be the old Tevinter magic of this place that made it possible, spirits and old Tevinter power like blood and wine.

The spirit of Hakkon remains in the dragon. That much is clear. In the tales, the Jaws of Hakkon tamed it like a hold-beast, then fed it demonweed and other herbs the healers use to bring spirits. We cannot unravel the magic binding the dragon, but perhaps we can bring forth Hakkon himself and bind him anew to some other worthy beast.

Red-Lion Hold's beast died with genlock blood in his jaws. It was a good death, but a death still. As Jaws of Hakkon, we have no hold-beast, but the soft-limbed fools at Stone-Bear Hold have one who is tamed and ready.

The next several pages are illegible, until:

The winter-cursed Inquisition has come. The bear is free and our wall of ice shattered by Tevinter magic. We have no time and no beast.

I will eat the herbs myself. The mages say I may not be strong enough to bear such a great spirit as Hakkon. I would rather die trying than fail. I will not abandon my people. I will bring death to the lowlands.

The Jaws of Hakkon will not fail again.

## **LEATHER-BOUND HAKKONITE JOURNAL**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

Thane Harofsen thinks he alone can work the words of lowlanders, as though the augurs had not learned the tale-drawing runes to study the old magic. He is blind, but the Jaws of Hakkon would not be here without him. A hold needs blind men with big blades sometimes.

In the old times, the first Jaws of Hakkon spoke with the great spirit himself. He opened their eyes that they might see the elfstones hidden across the world, and they entered the old cave and learned the mysteries of winter. Their working of cold let them slip through the ice-wall that wards the lowlander fortress, and we must now do the same if we are to take it as our own.

Hakkon has been silent all our lives. He cannot speak to us in dreams or open our eyes, and we remain blind to the elfstones. The lowlanders, though, have found a new way to see them. The skull of a dream-slain, set with the right magicks, can bring the elfstones to our sight.

We will regain the mystery of winter.

## **MOUTH OF ECHOES**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

The savages speak to their gods in the cave passage. They call it the Mouth of Echoes. They light fires and feed them with green spruce and shout their questions into the deep. They say answers come to them on the last whispered echo. Superstition, we laughed. And now Razikale is silent and madness descends. I can only think, what if? What if there are irregularities in the Veil here? What if we could secure the Avvar cave and bend it to our purposes?

The slaves are gathering materials. We will build a shrine to the Dragon of Mystery—implant foci into the walls, cut sacred designs into the stone, the better to hear her with. We will hear her voice again, or we will die.

*—Scribbled in blood-red ink on parchment found in the Mouth of Echoes*

## **MYSTERIES OF THE FROSTBACK BASIN**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

A voluminous pile of notes and observations. Half diary and half research notes, these parchments have no clear order, if they ever did. At the top, someone has written "Observations of the Mysteries of the Frostback Basin, and their Hidden Connection to great secrets buried by the Ages."

## **The Mystery of the Aqueducts**

After much reading, I know the Tevinter walls by the lakes were called "Aqueducts," which were Roads that carried water to their Forts of Stone. These aqueducts Drained water from the lower regions, but that is not the Whole Reason the Tevinters changed the land. Parts of the Basin have been Altered in the past, which one can see if they are of the right mind for it. There is only one explanation: paths of Mystic Resonance, or Mystic Lines, or "Ley Lines" run through the land!

The mages in the hold deny "Ley Lines" exist, but they are Protecting Secrets of Fraternity, or else are ignorant of secret lowlander rites. As proof, Professor Whalen Vankin maps Lines of Power Across the Basin in his book "Ode to the Ordo Templis Royalis." He does not SAY so in the book to a Casual Reader, but certain secret signs left by the Professor to befuddle his Enemies point to it very Clearly, if one reads the text eight times.

## **Secret Prisoners of Tevinter**

Long ago, this would have been under the water, until Tevinter drained much of Swamp Kuldsdotten to build this prison. Why make a jail so remote? For Prisoners they wished to Hide. Tevinter has Made War on Orlais many times, but I now believe there is also Secret War between them that the Common People are not allowed to see. This prison is a Remainder of this Secret War that continues in our time.

I speak of Orlais' attempts to rouse the Snake Kings of the Earth against Tevinter's alliance with the Moon Men.

This is explained in Ser Ycke's Pamphlets, of which I have read many, which explain things such as why the snake appears in Tevinter drawings, and how the Snake-Kings came to exist. (Crystals.) Did Moon Men have their Tevinter Allies keep the Reptilian Ones here, so they could interrogate them at their Leisure? None can say, but I will say yes as that would Fit My Theories.

## **Secret of the Rockspit**

The Rockspit is an island of Great Significance. Its sides are steep, but the top is flat, and there are pillars and a Dragon's Statue perched Proudly for all to see. Would Tevinters put these items here for no reason? Nay! I believe they were meant to be seen from a great height, for river and island would make a good landmark for a bird's eye. This island is obviously the place where Tevinter first Contacted the Moon Men.

This would explain why the River was Clearly Diverted from its original path in the past, as one can see if they follow the old river banks! Did Tevinter use the Ley Lines to do this? Did the Moon Men fly? Do they look like us, only greyer? Much remains to be Discovered!

## **The True Purpose of the Crater**

Lord L'Rouche of Montsimnard once was Witness to "tremors that collapsed an old Chantry, along with a meadow, into a deep and giant depression." He blamed it on "the Fereldan Crown" using "dark magic to disrespect Orlais' superiority." The Orlesian was only half right, for I know now this was the work of the Serpent-Folk instead.

If one looks keenly, once can see the Frostback Basin must have been manipulated by the hand of some Vast Thing. The crater in the Lowland Fortress was not the natural settling of mountains, but came to exist after the shifting of Something Below Ground! The Snake-Kings must be vast, and their movements powerful to cause the Earth to Quake with their moving. It is Clear as the Sky that Ancient Tevinter, along with the Moon Men, came here to make an Attempt to kill a buried Snake-King under the crater!!! Too many Signs and Portents are aligned to think anything else.

Someone has sketched landmarks on the back of the papers: a crumbling Tevinter wall standing in a shallow marsh, an island in the middle of a river, something that looks like a Tevinter prison, and a small Tevinter outpost with a terrace on one side and a metal sculpture in the courtyard.

## **NIGEL'S POINT**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

I absolutely cannot wait to survey and explore Nigel's Point. This was one of the ruins the explorer Ser Nigel visited on his travels through the Frostbacks. So much of what I've learned of this region comes from his notes and sketches. It's appalling to me how little recognition he's received, compared to that Brother Genitivi or even that peddler of pabulum, Philliam, a Bard!

I wonder if I could discover the original purpose of Nigel's Point. Its ancient Tevinter name, of course, has been lost, but I am certain it was built and dedicated to an Old God. I wonder which one. If I could learn this... of course, Harding gives me a severe look every time I suggest I could just stroll over one morning. She insists it's too dangerous. She worries too much.

*—From Colette's research journal*

## **PAGES NEAR AN OLD CAMPFIRE**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

An ancient fire has pages from an old book torn next to it, likely used for kindling. The ice has kept a few pages legible:

Haron and Orinna drew the Avvar away, but when Telana and I breached the Tevinter frost-ward and entered the fortress, we found to our chagrin that this is their main base. Their mastery of ice magic allowed them to slip through the ward without melting it. Instead of luring the dragon into a trap of our making, we have had a brutal fight in the home of our foes.

The dragon's power is like none I have ever seen. Possessed by this Avvar god-spirit, it rivals the legendary Archdemon Dumat in its fury. I pray the legends of another Archdemon leading the Blight in the Anderfels are just foolish stories, but if they are true, then I understand why Emperor Drakon asked me to come here. Drakon's new "Orlais" cannot face two god-dragons at once.

Telana was injured in the last battle. She says that she can still fight, but she is limping badly, even after our healing magicks. Once we are warm again, I will send her back to the surface. The spell that will seal away the dragon offers little chance for escape, and in her current state, she cannot hope to outrun the magic. With luck, she will reach Orinna and Haron, and they can get back to civilization and bring reinforcements.

I can feel my fingers again. It is time to go.

## **QUESTIONS OF ACCURACY**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

...that moved against them were halted by the light from her most-assured hands. It was then she took her own counsel, in ways best not set forth here, and led the party away.

Did Ameridan's eyes seek hers among those assembled as he relayed the events which led them there? If she stood among us, I did not know her. Yet his hand moved slightly at his side, as my own does when my wife is near and I seek wordless comfort in the touch of her fingers. We had all heard the whispers.

Did he say her name in the telling? Would he have dared? Times were different, but have they changed so much?

*—Excerpt from the writings of Lord Bescond, first put to page in 1:48 Divine*

A letter follows:

This is a precise copy. The preceding pages were lost—or removed—ages ago. Bescond makes no further references to this woman, although Ameridan comes up several times later on. Bescond's writings, as they pertain to Inquisitor Ameridan, are not entirely unknown, although you're unlikely to find them among Chantry records. Their validity is largely dismissed. Some have questioned whether the so-called "light" and "counsel" reference magic or holy insight. And of course, Bescond wrote down his impressions many years after the fact. The author's own wife brought accuracy into question when she admitted her husband was recalling his youth in the Orlesian capital through nostalgia and age-distorted memory. I believe her admission is part of official Chantry record.

Best of luck,

M.

## **RAZIKALE'S REACH**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

The fog came on swiftly, cloaking the world in shadow and turning the stones beneath our feet into a treacherous slick. I knew we had to find shelter before we lost even that faint light. We stumbled on, following Ragnarr's broad painted back, and arrived at an ancient Tevinter temple just as the last of daylight left us. Ragnarr instructed us to pitch our shelters beneath the entrance passageway and warned us not to wander too deep into the ruin. His voice was an uneasy whisper, and I knew at once he was afraid. Wary of alarming the rest of our expedition, I took Ragnarr aside and spoke to him. Some of the Avvar, he said, believed the temple to be the haunt of old, vengeful spirits. The Tevinter had come here long ago and built their great temples and then one day, without warning, they had abandoned them all. Ragnarr was convinced they had done something terrible here, though he could not tell me what it was. Whatever the reason, he found the temple deeply disturbing and had brought us to it only out of desperation.

I slept fitfully that night. Once, I opened my eyes to see a pulsating amber light from beyond a second doorway. I blinked and it was gone. In the morning, the fog had lifted, and I wasn't sure if I had really seen the light, or dreamed it.

—*From the travel journals of Ser Nigel, explorer and knight*

## **THE DEATH**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

An elaborate group of veilfire glyphs flicker to life. There is an impression of a great battle in the distant past. A spirit protectively watches over Avvar from Stone-Bear Hold as they corner a rival group of Avvar in a forest. They join in battle, and the spirit turns aside blades to protect the Stone-Bear warriors.

There is the snap of arrows, a lash of magic. The rival Avvar fall, but so does the spirit. The sensations fade.

## **THE MOURNING**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

The veilfire ignites a complicated tangle of glyphs. There is an impression of mourning. Avvar from Stone-Bear Hold pray and sacrifice to the spirit destroyed in the last battle. There is the sensation of months passing. The prayers are not forgotten. The vision fades.

## **THE RETURN**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**



As the last group of glyphs light with veilfire, there is a sensation of excitement and anticipation. An Avvar hold celebrates a night festival around an altar piled high with food and drink. The thane begins a song. The hold joins in. The song grows louder and faster. It goes for hours.

As the sun rises, a blazing spirit appears above the altar. It has the name of the spirit that fell in battle. It is both the same spirit and a different one at the same time.

There is a ear-splitting roar of—triumph? Welcome? Something more?—from the gathered Avvar. The vision fades.

## **THE FROZEN GATE**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

The gate remains frozen, even at the height of summer. A piece of ice chiseled from the whole remained unmelted in a bucket of warm water, even withstanding the heat of burning embers. I have never seen such magic. Our Avvar guide, Ragnar, will tell me nothing about what lies beyond the frozen wall. I have exhausted all possibilities and shall have to accept that I will never pass beyond that gate.

I have retained the piece of ice for my own use. Its properties make it perfect for chilling my cider on hot days. I shall take pleasure in this and try not to fixate on my unsated curiosity.

*—From the travel journals of Ser Nigel, explorer and knight*

## **UNFALLEN SHACK**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

Many explorers in ancient ruins report finding homes, furniture, or even tools that look a few years old at most. Before the more learned study of spirits and the Fade made available by the Circles, scholars often assumed that such structures must be new contamination of an older site, leading to much misinformation and misunderstanding regarding the movement of various peoples in ancient Tevinter and even earlier.

Our brothers and sisters in the Circle of Magi have given us a more likely answer. In areas where the Veil is thin, spirits engrossed by a particular even may endeavor to preserve the "feeling" of the area by preserving, in their own imperfect way, some or all of the area itself. The hut of a legendary apostate may appear to have been abandoned for a few decades, with crumbling walls and dust, when it is in fact from a previous age or even older. Spirits scratching at the edges of the Veil have scared away the vermin that would have chewed through the beams and the plants whose snaking tendrils would have reclaimed the stones for the forest.

It is the recommendation of the committee that all university-sanctioned historical expeditions include a mage for consultation upon such matters. Only in this way can we avoid the embarrassing missteps of our forebears and bring Orlais the true knowledge it deserves.

*—A letter from the University of Orlais Historical Committee to Empress Celene asking for support (request tabled after the start of the mage rebellion)*

## **FROSTBACK BASIN**

## **PLACES**

Halvor often arrives around Wintersend, but given the recent weather, I hadn't looked for him. Which is why his voice across the market took me by surprise:

"Lowlander! I was owed a drink on my next visit. And supper. Unless you were getting out of your wager?"

Maybe I was trying to get out of the bet, but I happily paid the bill at the inn that night. I asked Halvor where he'd last traveled, and he said he'd been trading with an Avvar hold in the Frostback Basin. Then he raised an eyebrow at the look on my face. So I described the stories Uncle told us as children, where brave expeditions get lost in places like the Western Approach, Nahashin Marshes...Frostback Basin. He laughed and admitted it could be a cruel place. He described thick forests—greater than any I've seen, I'm certain—and darkened swamps. His rule for traveling there seemed to boil down to "be wary and alert...because everything can kill you." The wildlife is violent, the cliffs are steep, and you must be mindful of the gods' wishes (here meaning his Avvar gods). Of course, the hunting's good, the trade fair, and the Avvar hold impressive.

"But do people really disappear in the forest?" I asked.

"Few lowlanders come through. Not sure how many leave after." The last was a joke, but I won't be visiting that hold any time soon.

—*Letter from a Fereldan merchant to his cousin in Highever*

## AMERIDAN AND THE MAGE

## TALES

Soft Fade-touched light, in dream-lit tones, falls dark.  
Each form a memory, recalled through parted lips,  
That try to speak, fall silent. Before light marks  
The dawn, from sleeping fingers she slips  
Into the day, where averted eyes bend  
To any but the other. Oathsworn  
To Lion's call, yet here the two are broken.  
As waxing sickle stands witness to the end  
Of love's denial and secrets borne,  
From parted lips, the words at last are spoken.

—*From "Ameridan and the Mage," author unknown*

This overly romantic portrait of illicit meetings between a mage and her lover was written sometime in the Divine Age. Though likely penned after Ameridan's disappearance, the work was said to be inspired by tales and rumors of the former Inquisitor's "lady-mage." By the Second Age, Chantry scholars had largely concluded that the piece did not refer to Ameridan at all, but to another man altogether. These scholars claim the poem's title was a later addition, meant to discredit the last Inquisitor's reputation. The poem was later deemed "problematic" and relegated to a list of banned works.

—*From An Examination of Banned Text, author undisclosed*

## BALLAD OF THE MURDERER'S GOLD

## TALES

In darkest of winter, from foulest Tevinter,  
We fled with a lifetime of wealth in the hold.  
The ship's hull was breaching, with no hope of reaching  
A shore for to live with our murderer's gold.

But then came the island, the safety of dry land.  
We struggled to shore to recover our breath.  
But spirits surrounded us all, had us hounded,  
And charged us with carrying coin bought with death.

The captain, they shouted, had cruelly clouted  
A servant who died at the treasury door.  
He soon grew no older, but slipped on a boulder  
And shattered his skull, and was wealthy no more.

The first mate had wrangled escape and had strangled  
The kindly old guard 'fore he raised an alarm.  
He slipped in the rigging while through the wreck digging,  
And choked to death cursing that he had done harm.

The lady was bathing, her last look was scathing  
As I held her down for the key she did hold.  
If my fate be drowning, let spirits be frowning,  
I'll sit on dry land with my murderer's gold.

## **CONSTELLATION: BELENAS**

## **TALES**

According to Avvar legend, Korth the Mountain-Father kept his throne at the peak of the mountain Belenas, which lay at the center of the world and was so lofty that from it, he could see all the corners of the earth and sky.

Over time, bold young Avvar would challenge each other to scale the mountain of the gods. At first, Korth found this amusing, and he delighted in the valor of their failed attempts to enter his hold. Then Sindri Sky-Breaker, boldest of the heroes of old, succeeded in climbing to the summit and stood in the Hall of the Mountain-Father in the flesh. Korth, being a good sport, gave Sindri a hero's welcome, and the mortal returned to the Frostbacks with tales of gods and gifts from Korth, and soon more and more heroes were barging into the hall of the Mountain-Father demanded to be showered with honors. Korth grew weary of throwing banquets, and the other gods began to fear his temper.

So Korth spoke to the Lady of the Skies and lifted Belenas from the earth into her realm, which could not be reached even by the most intrepid climber, and there he dwells in peace.

—*From A Study of Thedosian Astronomy by Sister Oran Petrarchius*

## **CONSTELLATION: FULMENOS**

## **TALES**

Commonly known as "the Thunderbolt," the constellation Fulmenos depicts a bolt of lightning thrown by a wrathful god. *Which* god has always been a matter of dispute. Each of the Old Gods of Tevinter has been credited as the thrower, with the target being anything from the lost city of Barindur to a jester who made a particularly heinous pun.

—*From A Study of Thedosian Astronomy by Sister Oran Petrarchius*

## **CONSTELLATION: VISUS**

## **TALES**

Known as "the Watchful Eye" in common parlance, this constellation had great significance to the ancient Alamarri and Cirianne peoples of southern Thedas. The story goes that the Lady of the Skies opened one eye so that the light from her gaze could lead her people safely from the Frostbacks. When Andraste's armies marched north from their ancestral lands to wage war upon Tevinter, they were guided by the Eye, and it became the Maker's gaze—not the Lady's— leading them to victory. The sword was added later; it is said that the star that marks the point of its blade only appeared in the night sky after Andraste's death. The early Inquisition took Visus as the symbol of their holy calling when they joined the Andrastian faith: the Eye representing both their search for maleficarum and the Maker's judgment upon their actions. When the Inquisition ended and became the Seekers of Truth and the Templar Order, the templars took the sword while the Seekers retained the eye.

—*From A Study of Thedosian Astronomy by Sister Oran Petrarchius*

## **TALE OF HRYNGNAR, ICE-TROLL**

## **TALES**

Tremble at the ice-troll Hryngnar, guard your gaze against his wrath,  
Dead to dreams as dwarves below us, fools in folly block his path.  
Weapons weeping, Avvar warriors struck to seek their legend-mark,  
Fed not fortune but the Lady, folly-fallen in the dark,  
Dead to Hryngnar's fury freezing.

Came the giants, water-wading, here to hunt and harrow home.  
Avvar fear the shapes in shoreline, forced to flee when giants roam.  
Hryngnar, ice-troll, sees his brothers, calls the winter winds to shore,  
Giants frozen, forged in frostbite, threaten Avvar homes no more.  
Fears of giant-battle easing.

Came the warriors of Tevinter, armors shining, shields of gold,  
Stole the land of Avvar keeping, stone-carved walls to claim their hold.  
Hryngnar, ice-troll, wreaks his raging, lowland warriors weep and shake,  
Glacier-strength did Hryngnar conjure, stone Tevinter walls to break,  
Lowlands flee, their lands releasing.

Stay unseen from ice-troll Hryngnar, glacier-strength in giant form,  
None but fools will fight the winter, battle-bond the icy storm.  
Dead to dreams as dwarves below us, wrath of frost and winter's death,  
Blades are blunted, battle-broke, on hide whose chill can frost the breath.  
Hryngnar ice-troll, winter's seizing.

## **THE HUNT OF THE FELL WOLF**

## **TALES**

The runner strode the winding road,  
And out of breath came she  
'Pon the bastion of the huntsmen true  
To make her desperate plea.

Ameridan in dragon's hide,  
Haron clad in blessed steel,  
Came forth to head the tidings brought  
With so much breathless zeal.

"Upon the lonely moors," the runner cried,  
"A loathsome beast now dwells.  
As day gives way to night, it strikes.  
All in its path, it fells."

Three souls bravely led them out  
The dark'ning moor to see  
As sun slipped 'neath the sighing heath  
The hunters' guide did flee.

The moon crept o'er the heather  
As a terrible cry released  
In silvered light the hunters saw  
The arrival of the beast.

Favored like a wolf it was,  
In size like a Woodsman's Death.  
Within its eyes burned eldritch fire,  
The Fade in every breath.

Swift as thought, the hunters struck.  
The demon wolf fell back,  
But mortal strength alone could not  
Prevent the beast's attack.

With one huge paw, the monstrous thing  
Struck Ameridan the Brave.  
Across the moor he flew, and fell  
Into a watery grave.

Jaws like a dragon's clamped down tight  
Round Haron's armored chest,  
And with the knight it sped away  
From moonlight, to the west.

No living eye was there to see  
From peaty swamp arise  
Ameridan, who found himself  
Alone, 'neath darkened skies.

The shattered shield of Haron  
He found upon the moor.  
In grief Ameridan did vengeance swear:  
The beast's head he would procure.

Whilst the wolf across the moor  
Bore Haron to its lair,  
A labyrinth of winding cave  
Any mortal should beware.

By worm-light in the twisting cave,  
Haron bravely fought  
To free himself from death's own jaws  
Before his life was naught.

With blade-arm free, the knight struck true  
Into the monster's eye,  
And off it fled into the dark  
With otherworldly cry.

The wounded knight in darkness  
Found within the cavern's gloom  
An idol of fade-touched stone,  
Which could prove the monster's doom.

Ameridan all alone did seek  
The demon-wolf's fresh trail,  
And to the cave he came prepared  
A wolf's heart to impale.

Down the winding cave, he sought  
The beast that slew his friend  
And in the eerie worm-light  
Met the beast at cavern's end.

With burning blade, Ameridan  
And monster met again  
Whilst elsewhere did Haron valiantly  
With demon-wards contend.

As demon-stone was shattered,  
Ameridan struck true:  
Beast and spirit—both felled at once,  
Though neither hunter knew.

Now, wounded and in darkness,  
Hunters separate made their way  
From the bottom of the cavern  
Toward the rising light of day.

Ameridan found Haron  
Stumbling, wounded from the cave,  
And both rejoiced to find the other  
Yet free from the grave.

As night passed into day, the two  
Did tales of valor spin,  
And to this very day, each claims  
That he alone did win.

## **THE NAMING OF STONE-BEAR HOLD**

## **TALES**

It starts with a man: Ivar Jerriksen.

Driven from their hold by war and misfortune, theirthane dead, Ivar led what remained of his people through the mountains. The winter was harsh. The winds of Hakkon echoed through the peaks. The beasts fled, and the hunters could find little game. Ivar's people grew weak. They feared themselves cursed. When the blizzard struck, they built a meager fire and huddled for warmth. When the blizzard lasted three days, they knew that they would die.

On the third night, while Ivar stood watch, he caught sight of a great grey bear through the snow. Though the beast was distant, Ivar could feel its eyes upon him and knew he must follow. Alone, he made his way through wind and snow. The great bear walked ahead of him, always distant but never out of sight.

At last, the bear stopped. Ivar came to stand beside the bear and saw before him a sheltered place where his people might be saved. He reached out a hand to his guide, but instead of fur, he found grey stone. So Ivar knelt before the stone and gave thanks to Korth, for he knew the Mountain-Father had taken the form of a bear to guide him here.

Ivar returned to his people and led them to the sheltered place. Ivar Jerriksen became Ivar Snow-Favored, and the people swore to honor him as their new thane. The hold was given the name Stone-Bear in honor of Ivar's vision, and in this place, we have grown strong.

—*From Stories of the Wild South: A Collection of Tales of the Barbarian Nations of Ferelden by Lady Susanna Ashwell of Ansborg*

## TWO MARKED IN BATTLE

## TALES

In a hold past our own, there were two men. One was born Ivatt Jovsen, the other Rekkas Hildsen. When word came lowlanders marched on Ivatt's hold, he searched for them. He found the lowlanders in a valley, and his heart was grieved, for they wore mail, and spoke eagerly of battling Avvar, and came in great numbers. But clever Ivatt studied the rock above the lowlanders. When they camped for the night, he climbed up to the tallest peak, and rolled a great boulder to the edge, aiming for the light of their fires. The boulder slid with other rocks into a mighty wave of dirt and stone. More than half their numbers were crushed, and the others fled in terror to the lowlands.

Ivatt's hold held a great feast to celebrate and said the songs would now call him Ivatt Stone-Thunder. Rekkas Hildsen grew jealous. Did he not shoot better than Ivatt? Did he not run faster than Ivatt? A great monster lived at the top of the mountain by the hold. It had feathers of gold, and taloned claws, and stole their game from the valley. Rekkas swore he would kill the beast to make his own legend-mark and went hunting on the mountain.

The first night, Rekkas found and killed a ram. The second night, Rekkas found and killed a hart. The third night, Rekkas found the nest of the feathered monster, and it was empty. The hunter laid the hart and the ram on the nest, then climbed above it. When dawn broke, the monster returned. It greedily tore open the meat. While it was distracted, Rekkas leapt down and plunged his sword into its back.

The monster screamed, but its hide was thick, and the sword stuck. The beast took off into the sky with the terrified Rekkas still on its back. The monster twisted and looped to shake him off, and the sword dropped into the deep valley. Desperate, Rekkas held on to the feathers on the monster's neck. He saw the beast would soon fly over his home, where all his friends and kin were gathered in astonishment at the sight above them. Rekkas threw his weight, trying to force the monster closer to the ground. It worked, and when the beast soared over the hold, Rekkas twisted and threw himself off. The gods were kind, and as the beast flew off, Rekkas landed on a midden heap, torn feathers floating about him.

Rekkas was humble the rest of his days, never again letting jealousy take his head. The hunter knew, in the end, his legend mark could have been far worse than "Rekkas Feather-Fall."

—*From Stories of the Wild South: A Collection of Tales of the Barbarian Nations of Ferelden by Lady Susanna Ashwell of Ansborg*

## **THE BLACK EMPORIUM**

### **XENON THE ANTIQUARIAN**

### **CHARACTERS**

I left the Black Emporium empty-handed for two reasons. First: most of the items were priced far beyond what I could afford. Second: I spent most of my short time there trying to sate my curiosity about its proprietor. I found myself stealing glances at the Antiquarian from behind piles of books, between shelves, and at one point, over a basket of mismatched socks. There he sat, petrified, in the center of the Emporium, skin of waxy grey over ancient taut sinew, moaning in a voice so dry and brittle it sounded like the snapping of twigs after a drought.

A girl of not more than twelve scurried to and fro to fulfill his numerous requests. Another patron noticed my fascination and told me that the girl—most likely an urchin rescued from the street—was responsible for the needs of the Antiquarian—feeding, washing, and the like. So impossibly old is he and so fragile his skin, he can only tolerate the barest whisper of touches from the smallest and most tender of his servants.

"Only in this way may he come close to his lost youth," said the man.

I was surrounded by objects of legend, yet none fascinated me as did the Antiquarian.

*—From a journal page found in Kirkwall's Darktown, written by an unknown author.*

### **THE BLACK EMPORIUM**

### **PLACES**

It is a myth, of course, nothing more.

Tales of a mysterious underground shop run by an immortal—perhaps undead—proprietor who peddles impossible and implausible goods have circulated for decades among the templars. Now and then, a zealous or curious knight will go looking for the place to no avail. Stories place the Black Emporium in Kirkwall's Darktown, the sewers of Val Royeaux, in the back of an empty boathouse in Llomerryn, at the top of a tower in Marnas Pell, and hidden beneath the skirts of the giant statue of Andraste at the Merdaine.

No reputable source has ever found it and none ever will, because it does not exist.

You will, of course, hear the standard justifications: it appears only to the worthy, it appears only to the invited, it is hidden by blood magic, it exists only in the Fade. Rubbish. There is no magic that can hide an entire shop full of trinkets from the eyes of a Seeker of Truth. And I am not just saying that because I searched for six months and didn't find it; shut up, Tristan.

*—From a letter by Seeker Benedict to Divine Justinia V.*



## **THE DESCENT**

### **LIEUTENANT RENN**

### **CHARACTERS**

*Scribbled notes between Lieutenant Renn and Legionnaire Bernat:*

Lieutenant Renn:

Sir. I reviewed our request for supplies. As your second, I am duty-bound to point out the absurd amount of ale listed. Unless we have resorted to drowning the darkspawn.

Respectfully,  
Legionnaire Bernat

Bernat,

Don't be ridiculous. There's no such thing as an "absurd amount of ale."

Renn

Lieutenant Renn,

You have requested more barrels than we have legionnaires.

Respectfully,  
Legionnaire Bernat

Bernat,

Can't even let a dead man have some fun. Fine. Reduce the number of barrels to half. But I expect Tapster's quality, not the piss they sent last time.

Renn

Lieutenant Renn,

I will make sure the Crown is aware that the ale is for the esteemed Lieutenant Renn, Vanquisher of Darkspawn, Hero of the Fifth Blight, and... what was the other title? I always forget.

Respectfully,  
Legionnaire Bernat

Bernat:

Owner of the boot in your arse, salroka.

Renn

### **SHAPER VALTA**

### **CHARACTERS**

My daughter,

I regretted the way we parted from the moment you left Orzammar. The words I spoke shame the Ancestors and our house. Your mother still won't speak to me.

Yesterday, I passed a funeral for a legionnaire. I looked in as they tattooed her face. The weight of the ink seemed heavy. In moments, she aged twenty years. I know you are not a part of the Legion, but sometimes it feels like I have lost my daughter all the same.

I remember when you were a little girl. You'd drag me to the Shaperate just to skip down the aisles of books and records. You'd hum softly and run your tiny fingers along the spines of tomes you'd one day study. I still expect to find you there.

They tell me the Legion commander with you is one of the best and I shouldn't worry. It may be weak, but I'm not ready to lose you to the Stone. Please be careful.

Your father

## **CRET AHL**

## **CREATURES**

Long before the first thaigs, legend speaks of the cretahl, horned war beasts with eyes like molten silver. Possessing the might of three brontos, the cretahl charged their prey, using a rock-hard frill to smash their targets to a bloody pulp. The cretahl held down their prey with four strong legs, quickly stripping their victim's flesh from the bone with powerful jaws. Despite their brutality, some cretahl were domesticated as fierce weapons in battle. What happened to these savage creatures is unknown. Some people claim the darkspawn wiped them out; others say they never existed. Those with more imagination speculate that these magnificent creatures retreated deep within the earth in search of the deadliest prey.

## **DARKSPAWN EMISSARY**

## **CREATURES**

What I remember most is its tongue flapping against a row of spiky teeth. I'd heard emissaries possessed the ability to speak, but the words were unnatural. They twisted and lurched as they left the creature's mouth, accompanied with a spray of saliva.

"Have you ever experienced living flesh ground between your teeth?" it asked Mila before biting through her throat.

My ankle was broken from the battle, but I dragged myself away. The pain I felt would be nothing compared to what the emissary would do to me. Rycus stayed behind. I never knew if he was covering my escape, trying to save Myla, or had simply given up. I sensed a surge of dark magic, then heard his cry and a thud. I didn't look back, just crawled as fast as I could. When I reached the surface, the back of my boots were splattered with blood.

*—An excerpt from The Blighted Codex, a classified collection of studies on the darkspawn, held safely in the Imperial Library in Minrathous, available only to members of the Magisterium*

## **GENLOCK**

## **CREATURES**

The pleasure Cassius takes in dissecting the beasts is repugnant. A genlock was on the operating table today. The man actually giggled as he put the knife to the monster's chest and black blood pooled from the incision.

"I wonder what sound it'd make if it were still alive," he mused, pulling back the flaps of thick, pale skin.

"I don't know. Gargling?"

If Cassius caught my tone, he ignored it and continued gabbing. "So much muscle. And look at the hands! They're almost twice the size of the feet! Fetch me a jar."

I obeyed, then stood back, covering my mouth to avoid the splatter, as he removed each appendage.

He separated the head last and held it up to candlelight. "The broodmother that spawned this creature was once a dwarf. What I would give to study one. Another jar, please."

As Cassius dropped the head inside the glass container, I swear I saw the putrid eyes blink. I don't know how much more I can stomach.

*—An excerpt from The Blighted Codex, a classified collection of studies on the darkspawn, held safely in the Imperial Library in Minrathous, available only to members of the Magisterium*

## OGRE

## CREATURES

Since his return from Seheron, my brother Vero has had an affinity for horns. He's amassed quite the collection from felled Qunari. At first, he kept them in his study, but soon the entire estate was overrun with the dreadful things.

So when on a hunting trip we came across an ogre with black horns glittering like tar, you can imagine his glee. I warned him that darkspawn are not like the Qunari, and ogres are especially cruel. But Vero was far into his cups. Not that he needed an excuse to ignore his little sister.

"You go right. Flank him," he spat, already stalking towards the creature.

I circled the ogre and thought it strange that we had found one on the surface. From everything I've read, ogres traveled with a horde and were usually only spotted during Blights. It was eating something; I was too far to see if its prey was animal or human. As I took my position and readied a paralysis spell, Vero prepared his opening attack.

The ogre turned before the spell was cast. Its speed was unimaginable. Bloodstained claws wrapped around my brother's chest and crushed his ribs like twigs. Vero was dead in an instant. I ran to gather forces to avenge him, but when we returned, the creature and Vero's body were gone.

*—An excerpt from The Blighted Codex, a classified collection of studies on the darkspawn, held safely in the Imperial Library in Minrathous, available only to members of the Magisterium*

## SHRIEK

## CREATURES

An entire unit went into the ground, and only Tarquin returned. Cyra found him bloody and shaking. We asked what happened, but only got incoherent mumbling for answers. Cyra isn't taking it well. She's close with Tarquin's family and fears how Magister Nastasia will react when we deliver what's left of her son.

I still have hopes his mind will recover. Tarquin needs rest and wine. That's all.

It's been nearly a fortnight, but Tarquin is showing progress. He no longer rocks, knees tight against his chest, on the bed. Yesterday, he even let Cyra hold his hand. The mumbling has turned to silence, but I think words will come soon.

We sent another unit down to investigate. Unsurprisingly, evidence of a bloodbath greeted them. Cyra believes Tarquin's unit was ambushed. Half-eaten bodies and angry wounds from crude weapons point towards darkspawn.

Tarquin spoke today. Only one word, but it was enough. "Shriek. Shriek. Shriek."

Cyra held him as the shaking returned.

*—An excerpt from The Blighted Codex, a classified collection of studies on the darkspawn, held safely in the Imperial Library in Minrathous, available only to members of the Magisterium*

## SHA-BRYTOL

## GROUPS

*A torn page from Shaper Valta's hand written journal was discovered among trade correspondence delivered to Skyhold this morning. The Inquisition's courier could not recall how or when it came into her possession.*

Renn's murderers hide in the shadows, watching me from a safe distance. The Sha-Brytol saw the Titan favor me with the gift of shaping stone. I am more powerful than they will ever be. They fear me. They love me. They understand I am a part of the Titan they defend, but they don't realize it doesn't need their protection. It never has. Whoever these dwarves once were, whatever motives drove them to remain here, now they are only lost.

I don't sleep anymore, but sometimes I stop to listen. Yesterday—or was it an hour ago?—I became aware of a Sha-Brytol who had crept close enough to leave an offering: an empty suit of their armor. did they think I would wear it? Lead them? All their gift did was summon the image of my dead friend as I returned him to the Stone. I left the armor where it lay.

Tomorrow—no, it was just a moment ago—I enter one of their towers. I sense how rapidly they flee my approach. They think I come to destroy them, but I don't have to get close to do that. I'm just curious to see how they live. Do they live? The tower offers no answers. It is quiet and spare, reminding me of descriptions of the topsiders' temples to their gods. Are the towers temples? Fortresses? Both, perhaps.

Only one chamber provided anything of interest to me. A domed, circular courtyard held a pool of the Titan's blood at its center. Empty suits of armor sat neatly in a circle around the pool. Is this where Sha-Brytol come to be entombed in their metal skins? What smith makes this armor, and where does it come from? My lost kin are hiding something. They have a thaig somewhere.

I have no interest in finding that citadel of the Sha-Brytol, but another might.

## CHRONICLES OF A FORGOTTEN WAR

## HISTORY

Commander Othon told us to move out. He didn't give details, only that there'd been attacks north of Cad'halash and the Crown was sending reinforcements. Father grabbed our axes, and we were off. I was a boy then, puffed up from a few victories in the Provings. I didn't know what was going to be taken from me. But I would find out.

The journey to Cad'halash was long and tiresome. Bored warriors make poor drunks at camp. Father and I kept to ourselves, though I admit I longed to lose myself in a pint of ale, if only to have something to do other than sharpen my axe.

*—From Chronicles of a Forgotten War, author unknown*

A day after leaving Cad'halash, we noticed a change. The Deep Roads were practically abandoned. Torches would suddenly go out, leaving us to stumble though the dark and trip over discarded caravans. Then came the attacks, hard and fast.

Father was one of the first. We heard breathing: slow and heavy, from a creature much larger than us. Father held out his arm and grabbed the front of my armor to make me stop. I saw its shadow move, darker than the darkness, and then my body jerked forward. It left Father's arm hanging, still grasping my chestplate.

—From *Chronicles of a Forgotten War*, author unknown

The Scaled Ones. I can't remember who came up with the name, but it stuck. Drohg had been lighting a torch when one attacked, and we finally caught a glimpse of something other than shadows. In the flame's light, we saw a man's body like those of the Imperium humans, but covered in scales. It wore armor and even had a dagger hanging from its hip. Its jaws wrapped around Drohg's face and twisted. The crunch of his neck breaking seemed to echo down the Deep Roads. The torch fell from his hands, and we lashed out.

I swung my axe with all my might, but it bounced off the Scaled One's armor, the impact ricocheting up my arms. It let out a roar. Then more attacked. From the light of the fallen torch, I guessed there was a score of them, all wearing armor and carrying weapons as sharp as their teeth and talons. The one that killed Drohg barked orders I didn't understand. I kept swinging.

Othon, the best of us, made the first kill by splitting a Scaled One's head open. There was a strange silence as if after an upset in the Proving Grounds, and it hit me that these beasts were not used to seeing one of their own die. Drohg's killer growled and stamped out the torch. The Scaled Ones retreated into darkness.

—From *Chronicles of a Forgotten War*, author unknown

Our bodies screamed for rest, but Othon pushed forward. Now that he'd seen the enemy, our commander wanted to use the Scaled Ones' tactics against them: go on the offensive. He left guards with the wounded and led the rest of the company to scout ahead for where the Scaled Ones were hiding.

After marching in darkness for days, we finally saw an amber light flickering in the distance. Othon signaled everyone to hold and waved me forward with him. We proceeded slowly, wary of possible guards. Othon nodded toward an overlook. I climbed with bated breath, terrified that the Scaled Ones would hear the echo of my boots scraping against the stone. I felt little relief when we reached the top.

—From *Chronicles of a Forgotten War*, author unknown

The Scaled Ones had set up a camp at an intersection in the Deep Roads. In the center there was a golden altar fashioned in the shape of fire. A chill swept through me. On the tip of each flame hung the corpses of those we'd lost—including Father and Drohg. They'd been drained of blood, leaving only bone wrapped in grey skin. A robed Scaled One stood before the altar. Its voice was different from the others: softer, almost feminine. It chanted and raised a basin of blood towards the altar. The other Scaled Ones bowed low. The robed Scaled One produced fire from its palm and mouth and ignited the blood.

Othon grabbed my forearm and motioned for us to climb down. We returned to the rest of the company, where he relayed what we had witnessed. We would rest for an hour, regain our strength, and strike.

The memory of Father's sagging, emptied face kept me awake. The hour passed slowly, but it did pass. Othon led us down the path to the overlook. I readied my axe for blood and steel myself for the sight of the altar. But it wasn't there. The camp, Father and Drohg, the Scaled Ones... all gone. Only the basin remained, charred around the edges.

—From *Chronicles of a Forgotten War*, author unknown

## THE GUARDIAN

## HISTORY

*Josephine found a torn handwritten journal page tucked into papers on her desk and immediately delivered it to the Inquisitor. The page was obviously written by Shaper Valta, but the Inquisition's ambassador cannot explain its appearance in Skyhold.*

I don't remember most of what happened at the end. Inquisitor [surname] fought to stop the earthquakes, and we raced together through a place more beautiful than anything I had ever seen. How it could be the source of all that devastation confused me. It still does.

I felt Renn's absence with every step as we ran to the great circle. Immense lyrium veins pulsed with life, and their power flowed into the circle. Something grew from it. A towering being born from the Stone rose to stop us. The Guardian. It lashed out, and I fell into a warm light's embrace.

I thought I was returning to the Stone. Perhaps I did.

The light receded as I awoke in paradise. The Guardian lay shattered; the Inquisitor stood triumphant. A victory, but I could not take any joy in it. The Guardian had come to defend the Titan—protect the Stone from being weakened. It tried to kill the Inquisitor, but to me, it offered only gifts.

I hope to use them well—and someday understand why I was chosen to receive them.

## TITANS

## HISTORY

*Harritt made an odd discovery in Skyhold's Undercroft: a page of handwritten text torn from Shaper Valta's personal journal.*

The Titans are real. I knew it the moment I unearthed that ancient text. Renn scoffed at the words I read. I couldn't blame him, even as I felt the truth settle on me like a warm cloak. Much of our history has been lost, and the Wall of Memories goes back only so far. There had to be more to the story of our people, and I've finally found one of those lost chapters.

It's impossible to describe in words how truly vast a Titan is. The one I met is so large you can only glimpse parts of it. I had wandered inside its body for who knows how long without even realizing it. I've heard tales of dragons and giants on the surface, but descriptions of their size do not compare to the Titan's.

Its blood now flows through me, and its song fills the gaps in our history. I close my eyes and see glimpses of the world that was, before everything changed and the dwarven race broke in two. Something caused the Titans to fall, and the fate of my people fell with them. The Titan wants me to know. No, more than that. It wants me to understand. There is a loneliness to its song.

## A NOTE ON ORZAMMAR

## LETTERS AND NOTES

Inquisitor,

As you've already heard, Orzammar has urgent need of your services. The underground earthquakes in the Deep Roads threaten to cave in countless lyrium mines. If this happens, it would all but cut off the supply of lyrium to the surface, I don't need to tell you how many former templars in the Inquisition rely on that lyrium.

It is imperative that we remain in Orzammar's good graces. Their politics may not require as much finesse as the Grand Game of Orlais, but dwarven society can be just as perilous. Orzammar is one of two remaining thaigs that once made up their empire, and its citizens are a proud people who are accustomed to hardship and lean heavily on tradition. A dwarf's caste means everything.

While you are not traveling to the capital itself, you will be dealing with a representative from its Shaperate. I am told her name is Valta and her father is a highly respected member of the Smith Caste. Leliana has discovered little else about her, which isn't surprising, considering how tightly Orzammar holds its secrets. I caution you to treat this representative with the utmost respect. We are dealing with a proud people with long memories. Once a grudge is held...well, I'm sure you've heard what they say about rocks and dwarven stubbornness.

Josephine

## **AN UNSENT LETTER FROM A MINER**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

Lord Gavorn,

I shouldn't have to remind you of the Mining Caste's importance to Orzammar, but apparently not even the Ancestors can say when you last visited the Memories. The lyrium trade is the only reason our kingdom still stands. It is what keeps the king's coffers fat so that he may play a part in whatever little wars are raging on the surface. But lyrium is as dangerous as it is profitable. And when I write to you saying that earthquakes are threatening one of our most lucrative mines, I expect a faster response.

Something unnatural is afoot. The shaft-rats come out of their holes chanting nonsense. Even my own crew—men and women I've worked with since I was a child—claim to hear something in the tremors.

I don't care who or what you send to help us. Just do it quickly.

Miner Ordel

## **JOURNAL OF PROFESSOR ARBERG**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

I came expecting books worn from history's touch, their covers frayed and their spines exposed. But the Memories are not written on fragile pages. They are runes crafted from lyrium. The never-fading symbols glow as if alive and capable of speech. The Shapers tend to them with the deference of a grand cleric: a civilization's entire history catalogued and recorded for future generations.

Well, almost their entire history. My Shaper guide explained that I wouldn't find the names of surface houses, even prominent ones. The casteless are struck from the Memories because they have no position in Orzammar society and have turned their backs on the Stone. A bit much, if you ask me, but dwarves seem to be a people of extremes.

I was not permitted access to all of the Shaperate's records, only a select few. But I think I impressed them with my extensive knowledge of dwarven family trees.

## **JOURNAL OF TOG**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

I should have listened to Darya—kept my head down, focused on the drop. She warned me that Karshol doesn't like questions. But I'd heard stories of Orzammar my whole life, and if not for Mother's gambling, I'd have been raised there. The rift between our people is thicker than the ground that divides Orzammar from the surface. Our kin below think they're better than us 'cause they've still got their stone sense. Darya said they'd treat me different—even the dusters look down on a cloudgazer like me.

I didn't choose to be born on the surface. I never had Stone sense to lose. I just wanted to know what it was—what it felt like. Topside, people talk like it's magic. You hear rumors of the Stone guiding her children to lyrium veins, protecting them from cave-ins, or whispering to expecting mothers about their unborn infants' futures. According to Karshol, the reality of Stone sense is much more mundane. While miners can hear the distant song of lyrium, no one has conversations with the Stone. It's more of a connection. They can sense a passageway before reaching it and can navigate the Deep Roads without getting hopelessly lost.

My disappointment must've shown. Karshol asked if I had any other questions, then broke my nose for prying.

It's been a bad trip.

## **KOLG'S JOURNAL**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*A torn page from a journal:*

"Stone-blind Kolg," they chanted. Their grubby fingers pushed my face into the ground, scraped the flesh from my ear, spilled blood. Two thumbs made black spots in my vision. Their voices were loud. So loud. But I heard her the loudest. The Stone. When they left me in the quiet dark, she remained. Her soft lullaby told me of a way I could return: a song of my own.

Filled with Mother's love, I gathered singing stone by hand. They said it would poison me, but Mother would never do that. Not to her son. Within the melody are secrets meant only for me.

*A blood-splattered page from a journal:*

The song is soft, but hard to crack. I hear the words. I can even taste them. But I cannot say them. Maybe Mother needs me to remove my teeth.

*A crumpled page from a journal:*

Mother holds me when I sleep. Warm. So warm. Her rhythm flows through my throat, burning until the miners and their fat, cruel hands are a distant memory. Kolg is memory. I am the son. The words come in waves. I will drown in them. For her.

*The last entry in a dirt-stained journal with several pages missing:*

Mother's song leaks out of me. Liquid fire spills from my eyes, mouth, and ears. I give her everything and become a verse in her chorus. I am finally complete. It was never about the words, only the song.

## **LYRIUM BLAST CHARGES**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**



Mining lyrium is not work for the fainthearted. The stuff is dangerous to handle safely and difficult to find, and its veins only ever seem to run through the hardest rock. Lyrium is nothing but trouble, but luckily it offers a solution to its own problem. Pack the right amount into a small drum, prime it with a short fuse, light the thing, and run as fast as you can. The blast will leave your ears ringing for days after, but it will also explode any number of obstacles. There's a saying among long-time lyrium miners: "When the going gets tough, the tough get out a blast charge and blow a great sodding hole in the stone."

—An excerpt from *Selected Wisdom of the Mining Caste, Forty-Ninth Edition*

## THE ETERNAL BATTLE: DARKSPAWN

## LETTERS AND NOTES

Unless there's a Blight, surfacers reserve the darkspawn for cautionary religious lessons and bedtime stories. That is a luxury Orzammar cannot afford. Without the Legion of the Dead's continuous efforts, our great thaig would have undoubtedly been lost to the blighters long ago. Still, the question remains: where did these monsters come from? It's a given that the Chantry's beliefs about the darkspawn's origins are nonsense. They were not cast down from a fabled city—they crawled up from the deep recesses of the earth. We know that darkspawn come from broodmothers. Perhaps at the very heart of our world sits a queen—the first mother. Instead of focusing on her children, we should target broodmothers and ensure that future reinforcements will never be born.

*Written in the margins are two sets of handwriting, presumably from Lieutenant Renn and Shaper Valta:*

Chopping off their heads should do the trick.

Write in one of my books again, and it's your head at risk, Lieutenant.

## WARDEN AILSA'S DIARY

## LETTERS AND NOTES

I've never had a diary before. The Wardens kept me too busy. But now I'm dying, and there's no one to talk to. I'm alone with the music in my head growing louder. I always wondered how Wardens knew when they heard the Calling. I asked Lyam once after too many drinks. "You'll know," he said. And I did.

At first, it was just a whisper. A creak in the door hinge I could put off oiling. But soon, all I could hear was the music. It was there when I swung my staff and wiped the sweat from my brow. It lingered in Lyam's laughter and stalked my dreams. I can't explain the sound—the song—but I knew. It's a poison that grows in the mind, then consumes the body.

I came here to die. "In death, sacrifice." But I won't go quietly.

I cut through the darkspawn horde, expecting to find only more of them the deeper I traveled. But nothing has matched my expectations. "Deep Roads" brought to mind darkspawn, dwarven ruins, caverns, and death—but there's an entire underground world here. Just today, I came across plants with lyrium-streaked veins. I took a bath in a lake that held crisp, fresh water and cautious animals, large and small, that I'd never seen before. I can't be the first Warden to witness such wonders.

I was distracted by the curiosities yesterday. Was it yesterday? I let my guard down, got comfortable. Easy to do when you know death is inevitable. But then I stumbled across something horrible. I smelled it before I saw it: bodies. Hurlocks, genlocks, creatures I didn't recognize—hundreds of them, mutilated, tortured, and thrown into pits.

I ran. Didn't see the hole. Can't move my legs. They look like they should hurt, but I can't feel it. The music is too loud, the hunger too strong.

I can still crawl. I don't want to die like this.

## WHEN IT'S QUIET

## LETTERS AND NOTES

Dearest Iora,

This will never reach you. None of my letters will. But writing helps me cope with having joined the Legion. For all the death I have already seen, there are wonders down here, and I wish you could see them. When it's quiet, there are still hints of what the Deep Roads used to be. Right now, I'm sitting under the crumbling statue of a Paragon. I asked Ansa if she knew who it was, but the face is cracked. I like to think it's Endrin Stonehammer or Moroc the Maul, though I know you favor Astyth the Grey.

Back home, I never cared about history. Remember old Osteg shouting about Orzammar's former glory? Naming thaigs he'd never visited and people he'd only read about? I laughed at him. But down here, seeing what we've lost... These are more than roads, Iora. They connected our empire, let our culture flourish. The Stone accepted us, and we lived and moved within her. Now we cling to her like someone drowning.

Forgive me. All my letters end the same.

Legionnaire Greck

## HEIDRUN THAIG

## PLACES

*A letter to Merchant Levnog, predating the First Blight:*

Levnog,

More of the brand refuse to make the journey to Heidrun Thaig. Rumors of the incident has spread, and no amount of coin or beatings could persuade them. I asked Miner Vassov to send the [isana](#) shipment with his own crew, but have yet to receive a reply. I inquired if anyone else has heard from their Heidrun contacts. Nothing. I worry that it has something to do with those creatures that wear the faces of the dead. Apparently the king himself is leading a troop of warriors to check the situation.

Needless to say, the shipment will be late. I just hope it arrives at all.

Jodon

## DWARVEN MUGS

## TALES

**Pride of Nalthur:** The words "let them eat steak" are etched into the side of this well-worn tankard.

**Wraith Blood:** Apparently this mug once belonged to someone named Amrun.

**Branon's Custom Mix:** The mug bears the inscription: "Five minutes here is fifteen minutes there."

**Everd's Experience:** This cup is cracked. It has clearly seen action and no longer holds ale without leaking.

**Lost memory:** "World's Best Shaper" is stamped into the side of this mug in an obnoxious script.

**Enchanted Stein:** A rune is attached. On the side opposite, it reads "Bodahn & Sons Quality Wares and Enchantments."

**Sacrificial Cup:** Those stains don't look like moss-wine.

**Cup of Cobalt:** A blue substance is caked on the bottom. Cullen might know what it is.

**Vessel of the Ancients:** A forest of mold and rot is growing inside the cup. It clearly has never been washed.

**Titan's Nail:** There's an oddly organic quality to this stone cup, as if it were grown and shed rather than carved.

## THE NUG KING

## TALES

All praise the Nug King.  
Sate his appetite with cheese.  
Older is better.

—From *Songs That Only Nugs Can Hear* by Paragon Ebryan, 5:84 Exalted

A hot debate among nug admirers is whether the king in Paragon Ebryan's songs was royalty of some kind or merely an especially magnificent specimen of the breed. Every year, scholars, bards, and rodent enthusiasts bring offerings of cheese to the Deep Roads, hoping for a glimpse of the Nug King, who remains elusive.

## THE WELLSPRING

## TALES

In a time that only the Stone remembers, there was a thaig in the deepest caverns ruled by a wise old king. The riches in the Stone had provided well for the thaig: lyrium flowed like water from the ground, gold and jewels sprouted from the walls like mushrooms, and the people wanted for nothing.

One day, the king returned to the Stone and left behind two sons to vie for his throne. Neither had been named heir, and so each sought to prove to their father's Assembly that he was best suited to be king.

The first son journeyed far and wide across the Deep Roads, forging alliances with the other thaigs, and returned home bearing word of the goodwill of distant kingdoms and their promises of future friendship. But the Assembly was not impressed with words and promises and would not name him heir.

So the second son mined the ground for wealth. Every last scrap of lyrium, every nugget of gold he dug up and gifted to the thaig. But the Assembly, accustomed to abundance, was not impressed. So the second son dug farther and farther into the Stone—so far that he broke through to the other side and found the sky. And this he claimed for his thaig. And the Assembly named him king.

But the Assembly wanted him to bring back his treasure for the thaig. The new king climbed down and down the endless mine until he reached the sky, but try as he might, he could not pull the sky up, nor strike it to pieces with his pickaxe. The new king mined out more and more earth, trying to carve a path to the sky, and finally, he undermined his thaig so much that the whole kingdom broke loose and fell far, far into the ground and up into the sky.

King, Assembly, and thaig were never seen again.

—"The King Who Claimed the Sky" from *Songs That Only Nugs Can Hear* by Paragon Ebryan

## **TRESPASSER**

### **"BLACKWALL" AND THE LAST FEW YEARS**

### **CHARACTERS**

*If The Inquisitor pardoned Rainier...*

Inquisitor,

I hope this letter finds you well. I apologize for my prolonged absence. I have traced the whereabouts of one more of my former company, and I am writing to you from Kirkwall, where he now resides.

I knew him as Private Nicolaus Lory. He goes by Klaus now. Unlike so many of the men I betrayed, Klaus found a way to put his life together without turning to crime. It doesn't in any way lessen the horror of what I did, but it was comforting to see at least one life not completely ruined by my actions.

Klaus is married to a lovely lady. They run a small bakery. It didn't take him long for recognition to dawn, and then I had two mince pies lobbed at my head. Pies that were fresh from the oven, mind you. It was a good thing I ducked.

I made my apologies. Even after months of searching and making reparations...it was still hard. To his credit, Klaus allowed me to talk, and we ended the visit with ales at the Hanged Man.

I should return within the month. Thank you for allowing me this time, Inquisitor.

Yours,  
Thom Rainier

### **CASSANDRA AND THE LAST FEW YEARS**

### **CHARACTERS**

*If Cassandra is the Divine...*

Inquisitor,

You don't need me to dictate every word exactly, do you? I may be Divine, but that doesn't mean I have any particular skill at letter writing. Should I start with a joke? I don't know how to make hours upon hours of meetings with grand clerics sound anything less than mind-crushingly tedious. I also don't know how to make a joke about that. Something involving hats, probably. Varric would know.

It's very important that I sound reassuring. The Inquisitor has so much to deal with already and should not have to worry about the state of the Chantry on top of everything else. You can say something about how well the red lyrium cleanup efforts have gone, can't you? And perhaps mention that templars and mages—no, never mind, that subject has been discussed to death. Oh, perhaps mention the play about the Inquisitor's heroism that's being performed in Val Royeaux? That would be good to hear about, I'm sure.

Ugh! I'm late for a meeting with some revered mothers from Nevarra. Just finish this up with something appropriate.

With the Grace and Benediction of the Maker,  
Divine Victoria

*If Cassandra is not the Divine...*

Inquisitor,

I am writing to you from the Hunterhorn Mountains, where I was successful in tracking down Seeker Emery. She was more shocked than most to hear of Lord Seeker Lucius' betrayal, as he was her mentor when she was just an initiate. But she is eager to help rebuild, and she has heard of a few other Seekers who might have been sent to Rivain.

I still do not know how many of us yet remain—how many Lucius killed—but I know that we are recovering, and I know that we will be better this time.

I confess, I look forward to returning to Orlais next month. Once I would have thought that impossible; Orlais was little more than the land of frustrating politics, excessive ornamentation, and responsibilities I did not want. But now that friends wait for me there, it is almost a home.

Cassandra

## **COLE AND THE LAST FEW YEARS**

## **CHARACTERS**

*If Cole is more human...*

Inquisitor,

Your suggestion regarding the young man, Cole, was excellent. he displays an uncanny ability to locate missing people. When hostile forces held our agents and we feared they would be killed if we approached, Cole was able to reach them without being detected. While he has been less useful overall at extracting intelligence, I have learned to trust his instincts about whether a target is trustworthy or malicious.

Per your request, I have limited his assistance to rescue operations or attacks on clearly hostile forces. Whatever magic lives in the young man's mind, it would be poorly served by the less pleasant necessities of our work.

His remarks about my family, while not germane to the mission at hand, were also greatly appreciated.

Yours,  
Charter

*If Cole is more spirit...*

Inquisitor,

I send this to you uncertain whether this comprises a joke, a test, or some form of magic. If it is the latter, I wish to state that I am deeply uncomfortable, but based on the results, I can hardly complain. Our work has never been more successful.

I have no recollection of having written the following, but it is clearly my hand, with signifiers in the language that make it clear that I acted of my own volition when writing it. I assume that you will make more of it than I can.

Yours,  
Charter

Send to Inquisitor in re Cole:

Quarterly progress:

Rescues: 6 (Higher than expected)

Targets hit: 4 (One dead when wanted for interrogation—"no prisons"?)

Agent morale: Strong (Some crying? All insisted they were "good tears," strong emotions, but unrelated to mission at hand, usually tied to some past trauma.)

Oddities: Misplaced items, unexpected. Often tied to emotional revelation among group. Concern with hostile blood mage binding demons. V. Angry.

Wax on my fingers, bees drone behind me as the honeycomb crunches between my teeth. She was always proud of me.

Why did I write this?

## CULLEN AND THE LAST FEW YEARS

## CHARACTERS

Cullen,

Word has spread from Denerim about the summit the Inquisition will attend. The news is half rumors, but with the representatives thy say are going, it's clearly serious-and the details are probably not something you can put down in a letter. I will, however, look forward to more glowing descriptions about how much you love Orlesian parties.

Branson's here; his son insists I add "Ello Cul" to this letter. He also insists it be "Ello" and not "Hello". Your nephew is stubborn-how very familiar.

Love,  
Mia

*If Cullen is romanced...*

Cullen,

Word has spread from Denerim about the summit the Inquisition will attend. The news is half rumors, but with the representatives thy say are going, it's clearly serious-and the details are probably not something you can put down in a letter. I will, however, look forward to more glowing descriptions about how much you love Orlesian parties.

I'm sure you and [Inquisitor's name] will find enough danger away from the summit. You always do. Is it worth warning either of you to be careful?

*If Cullen continues taking lyrium...*

I've no word from the contacts you mentioned, but a Skyhold messenger delivered a letter from your sister among the reports we requested. It is not my place, but she sends so many. I do hope you'll read it.

Josephine

*An additional note accompanies the main letter. Both are crumpled:*

Cullen,

After how many letters, I don't expect you to answer. I'm not even sure you'll read this. But maybe you will and—I don't think it will help, but I want you to read it all the same. This isn't the first time you've disappeared on me, and I'm no less stubborn. When you're ready to come back, I'll be here for you.

Love always,  
Mia

## **DORIAN AND THE LAST FEW YEARS**

## **CHARACTERS**

*If Dorian is not romanced...*

Inquisitor,

It was good to hear from you, my friend. For months I've had only the Society of Maevaris's fledgling Lucerni party: Junior members of the Magisterium so filled with fire and zeal, and so wildly inept at politics, Mae keeps a bucket of ice water on hand in case one accidentally immolates himself. Lest I give you the wrong impression, we are making progress. But it will take a great deal of skill to keep the Lucerni alive through the usual schedule of Minrathous scheming long enough to become a real political faction. Fortunately, they do have me.

I'm sorry to hear that politics are plaguing you as well. Must be something going around, like a pestilence or an Orlesian fashioned trend. Hopefully Josephine can defuse the Fereldan outcry and persuade the Orlesians to stop circling you with a collar and leash. You know she did always love a challenge.

I'll find an excuse to make a trip south soon. We should really catch up in person, don't you agree?

Dorian

*If Dorian is romanced...*

Amatus,

I greatly enjoyed your last letter, as did the servants who stole it from my room and read it aloud to the kitchen staff. That small scandal was the only bright spot in the whole month; Minrathous is utterly and completely dull without you.

Maevaris and I have been meeting with our fledgling Lucerni party: A dozen junior magisters with a burning hatred for the corruption of the Imperium, and little idea how to change it beyond shouting incoherently. It's going to require a lot of work from Mae and me to turn them into shrewd Magisterium politicians. Don't laugh.

I know you're too tangled up in Inquisition business to get away, but we must find a chance to meet. Letters are a poor substitute for your company.

Dorian

## **IRON BULL AND THE LAST FEW YEARS**

## **CHARACTERS**

*If Iron Bull is still Ben-Hassrath...*

"Thank you for the information. We've removed the Venatori informant. Ansburg should be safer for Inquisition and Ben-Hassrath agents"

"Enclosed is the location of the ruins Tallis discovered, just north of Halamshiral. The obvious magical activity suggests that inquisition forces are better equipped to determine the nature and magnitude of the threat than our people"

"While the Imperium's increased internal struggle aids both the Qunari and the Inquisition, we suggest you keep a close watch. Both sides are likely to recruit allies, and Ben-Hassrath intelligence suggests that Nevarra is already unstable."

-Excerpts from Ben-Hassrath reports

*If the Chargers were saved...*

"Thank you for sending the Chargers to assist in dealing with the Demons attacking Montfort. Their assistance was most appreciated, and many lives were saved."

"The Iron Bull and his Chargers have prevented another Civil War from sweeping across Orlais with their efforts in Perendale. The Iron Bull in particular defeated the would-be usurper in combat."

"We must protest the actions of the Bull's Chargers in South Reach. While the presence of the Demons and Templars corrupted by Red Lyrium is undisputed, the necessity of your Dwarven miner collapsing the better part of a mountain on the enemy forces was hardly necessary."

"The Bull's Chargers were of great assistance in driving back the Demons that attacked the shores of Lake Calenhad. The Elf who calls herself 'Dalish' was particularly helpful, and I look forward to her promised explanation of how Dalish archery techniques can create walls of ice or dispel magical barriers."

—Excerpts from letters of thanks relating to the activities undertaken by Bull's Chargers over the past two years

*If Iron Bull was romanced...*

"But sorry, Lords and Ladies! According to our source in Skyhold, this *Bull* still only has a single *rider*, the Inquisitor him/herself! For anyone feeling *horny* or wanting to sit in the *saddle*, you'll have to *steer* yourself in some other direction as quickly as your *calves* can carry you, because our favorite Qunari mercenary isn't romanci-*bull* by you!"

— The least tawdry excerpt from the gossip page of *Masqued Murmurs Monthly*

## JOSEPHINE AND THE LAST FEW YEARS

## CHARACTERS

*If Josephine is not romanced...*

Dear Inquisitor <surname>,

Commander Cullen has reviewed the soldiers. I have written and received so many letters from the Orlesian court, our birds practically blot out the sun. We are as prepared for the Exalted Council as we will ever be. I know this past year has been full of formal meetings—goodness knows I have attended many, myself—but this one will truly test the alliances and friendships we have worked so hard to build.

If I may offer you any advice, Inquisitor, it is this: Keep a ready smile, and remember we have their attention because we are to be reckoned with.

Respectfully yours,  
Ambassador Montilyet

*If Josephine is romanced...*

My Dear <playername>,



Commander Cullen has reviewed the soldiers. I have written and received so many letters from the Orlesian court, our birds practically blot out the sun. We are as prepared for the Exalted Council as we will ever be. I know this past year has been full of formal meetings -goodness knows I have attended many, myself- but this one will truly test the alliances and friendships we have worked so hard to build.

Take courage, darling - and please visit me before we begin the Exalted Council. It would make me so happy to see you.

Love,  
Josephine

## LELIANA AND THE LAST FEW YEARS

## CHARACTERS

*If Leliana is the Divine...*

Inquisitor,

Thank you so much for your kind inquiries. I am doing very well, although I have been quite busy. Selecting new staff for my apartments at the Grand Cathedral has taken me so much longer than expected, and if you wouldn't mind, I would like to borrow Scout Harding for a few weeks to help me find more nugs.

I cannot possibly hire anyone to a permanent position without first observing them in a room full of baby nugs, and all the litters I have on hand are nearly full-grown. In any case, I will see you soon at Halamshiral.

Until then,  
Leliana

*If Leliana is not the Divine...*

Inquisitor,

Unfortunately I must report that my attempt to use nugs in place of messenger birds in the Deep Roads has not gone well.

On the first attempt, the nugs I released would not even go in the right direction, choosing instead to run around in circles and collide with walls while trying to squirm out from under the message canisters.

After considerable training, the second attempt went slightly better, with only half trying to escape their collars while the others at least tried to go in the right direction. However, none of the nugs arrived at their destination.

I will require some of Charter's time in dealing with an Orlesian noblewoman I believe to be intercepting my nugs. From my surveillance, she appears to be dressing them in little frocks that are simply *terrible*.

Nightingale

## SAARATH

## CHARACTERS

*This letter was clearly written a few lines at a time over the course of multiple days, as the ink at the start has already faded slightly:*

Elf-who-is-Tallis,

It is no longer my role to instruct others in the Qun, but I will share what I can with you if it brings you peace.

You are not alone in your struggles to achieve mastery of yourself and your purpose. Many viddathari come to the Qun filled with fear and anger. These feelings build walls brick by brick within the self. They prevent you from seeing the others around you, from seeing the world as it is, and they convince you that you are alone and in darkness, that you must fend for yourselves. The walls are real. But the darkness and the solitude, the world that they create within the self: that is all illusion. You must work to tear down the walls if you wish to see the truth, and the truth is this: no one is alone. It was the wisdom revealed to Koslun in the desert long ago. What looks like darkness is only the space between stars.

*This portion of the letter is slightly newer, and the handwriting, which was exceptionally tidy at first, has become somewhat looser, as if written in a hurry:*

And it is not just viddathari who struggle with these illusions. The world changes the self, and we must balance mastery upon its turning tides. Once I was an ashkaari, and I spent my days examining the philosophy of the Qun and trying to seek the enlightenment that Koslun found. But my dreams of demons took me down a new path.

*Here, the writing is filled with crossed-out passages, and the script becomes shaky. Some of the ink is still wet:*

And now with the song liquid—*crossed out*. And now I study the dam which holds back magic at its source. We will—*crossed out* Things change, little Tallis. The world changes. Find purpose in people around you, and your role will be clear. Remember when—*crossed out*. It will be hard to find wisdom in the noise. The noise is an illusion. Like the darkness. But the walls are real. Remember that. Tear down the walls first, and you will see the truth.

Saarath

## **VARRIC AND THE LAST FEW YEARS**

## **CHARACTERS**

Inquisitor,

Greetings and salutations from beautiful Kirkwall!

The sun is shining, the sea birds are screeching, and almost nothing in Hightown has fallen into a sinkhole and ended up in the sewers for over a month. The Red Lyrium cleanup in the Gallows is going better than expected. Nobody misses having Meredith fused to the flagstones, eerily glaring at everyone. The City Guard celebrated finally getting her out of there by holding a completely impromptu parade. Several Lowtown residents composed a song on the spot with lyrics to the effect of "Thank the Maker the crazy cursed Templar is gone," which was remarkably catchy-despite, or maybe because of, the fact that it was mostly just swearing in tune.

Even with all this stellar progress, it looks like i'm stuck here. Channels in the harbor were completely changed by falling debris a few years back, which led to a lot of ships getting wrecked coming and going, which... only made things worse. And then we had rifts open, and *weird glowing fade rocks* appeared out there.

Incidentally, thanks for closing the rifts.

Now the only hope for repairing the harbor is to send guys with pickaxes to clear the rocks. Ever try to hire miners who are also divers, Inquisitor? There aren't many, and even fewer are happy mining *glowing shit from the Fade*. This is going to take a lot of my coin to fix.

Stop by the city some time. We'll get in a game of Wicked Grace. Please. This Viscount shit is boring me to death.

Varric

## VIDDASALA

## CHARACTERS

While we still have little information on their methods, our agents have obtained considerable information on Ben-Hassrath hierarchy and organizational structure. Strictly speaking, the entire group is under the jurisdiction of the Ariqun and would therefore be considered priests. The Qunari divide all Ben-Hassrath activities into three distinct categories: "Dangerous Purpose," "Dangerous Action," and "Dangerous Questions." Three priests form a mini-triumvirate that manages all their operations, with each priest presiding over actions in a single category. We have an ongoing mission to identify the leader of the "Dangerous Questions" branch, which seems to handle the vast majority of the Qunari intelligence gathering and sabotage missions. "Dangerous Actions" appears to be the branch responsible for enforcement; their agents almost never leave Qunari-controlled territory except to hunt defectors. The branch we have had the most contact with has been "Dangerous Purpose."

This division, run by a priestess called the Viddasala, or "one who converts purpose," handles the conversion of foreigners, the reeducation of Qunari dissidents, and the collection and quarantine of magic. Things that, by Qunari definition, are threats to themselves and others by nature.

Our attempts to infiltrate the Qunari "reeducation" camps have largely proven unsuccessful. The Ben-Hassrath are all too good at spotting our agents among their converts; most spies are sent away with a patronizing remark, and the few who have been admitted to one of their "viddathlok" facilities have never reported back. We will instead redouble our efforts to locate and infiltrate one of their "darvaarad" magical quarantine sites.

Charter

## VIVIENNE AND THE LAST FEW YEARS

## CHARACTERS

Inquisitor,

I fear I shall have no opportunity to meet with you prior to the Exalted Council at Halamshiral. The colleges and fraternities of enchanterers are holding *yet another* round of elections in a few months, and I must be present to organize everything, or the Aequitarians and the Lucrosians will inevitably get drawn into the most passive-aggressive arguments over *the number of ballot boxes and the arrangements of voting cards* you can possibly imagine. On the last two occasions when I could not be spared from my duties at the Imperial Court, the Isolationists sealed themselves inside the debating area with ice walls, in protest over some insult from Libertarian senior enchanter from Cumberland.

I must, of course, convey the continuing approbation of the Orlesian court, through I have no doubt dear Duke Cyril has already bored you to death with the Council of Herald's compliments by now.

Cordially,  
Vivienne

*If Vivienne is the Divine...*

My dear Inquisitor,

I hope this letter finds you well. I do apologize for the tardiness of my correspondence. I have, of course, been extremely busy, but that should never serve as an excuse for neglecting one's most influential friends. I look forward to seeing you again, my dear, though it is a pity we must meet under such disagreeable circumstances as the Exalted Council. It seems we've only just put the mage crisis to bed, and now the Fereldan Bannorn is awake and crying for attention.

I shall let Josephine give you the details of our upcoming business so that I can instead discuss more important plans for our reunion. Namely: shopping, darling. There is an excellent milliner planning to make the trip to the Dales from the capital just for the occasion to meet us, and, of course, we must visit the Imperial Gardens Spa at least once.

With affection,  
Divine Victoria

## ILLUSTRATED PERIODICAL

## HISTORY

Notable changes:

Chevaliers serving Duke Eneas will now carry shields with dovetailed dividing lines, instead of their previous flory.

Lord Fortier of House Aigle will join in union with Lady Vauclein of House Souris. A full-faced mask in the Montsimnardian crimped style, containing two colors from each noble line's Heraldry, may now be worn by first and second cousins of either household.

Lady Wesmith of Denerim will join in union with Lord Pierre of the House Veneur. A half-faced domino mask, black with white trim, rubies, pearls, or opals, may now be worn by Lady Wesmith's direct relations.

—From *A Panoply of Faces: An Illustrated Official Listing of Heraldry and Masks within the Blessed Empire of Orlais*, issued quarterly

## THE FIRST GRAND ENCHANTER

## HISTORY

Grand Enchanter Lothaire Hardouin was the first leader of the Circle of Magi when it was founded in 1:20 Divine. After Hardouin distinguished himself in battle during the Second Blight, Emperor Drakon himself endorsed him for the position. From all accounts, the Grand Enchanter performed admirably, but some speculate Hardouin was a second choice—that Drakon had another mage, with connections to Inquisitor Ameridan, in mind for the job.

Tellingly, these debates are based on a half-finished letter to an army captain and the guest list of a party where Ameridan and the Emperor were in attendance. If any proof ever existed, it is likely dust. The idea's merits should be treated as such, for scholarship's sake.

— From *A short primer of Orlais' most excellent and inspiring history* by Lord Renaures, published in 9:35 Dragon

## VIR DIRTHARA: A FLOWERING IMAGO

## HISTORY

The pages of this book—memory?—describes an immensely tall, immensely graceful vine that flowers with the heat of a copper sunset and has blossoms as large as ponds, petals as long as a man, and scents puffing out like citron and sky and carrion-death.

The day the last of the vines folds, spent and extinct, the creator of this memory weeps and, after recording the flower's sights and sounds, enters uthenera.

"Treasure this thought, for it was the last of its kind, and so much more than the last of me."

### **VIR DIRTHARA: ATTENTIVE LISTENERS**

### **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—show a solemn group of elves in an ampitheater of living wood, entire trees grown into seats and stairs for the listeners to recline on. Two other elves and a spirit of learning are speaking in turn on ways to bend the properties of the material world when casting spells. At the end, the spirit, with the air of a senior lecturer, floats forward and booms in a surprisingly deep voice.

"The unchanging world is delicate: spells of power invite disaster and annihilation. The unchanging world is stubborn: the pull of the earth fiercely resists making fire run like water or stone rise like mist. The unchanging world rings with its own harmony. Listen with fearless hearts, and great works will unfold."

### **VIR DIRTHARA: BIRDS OF FANCY**

### **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—describe a pair playing, colliding in the air, bodies formed for kissing, stroking lines of heat as molten as the sun. The dance is fluid, roiling, never ending, lovers tangled in a laughing knot that rolls on for years, a promise never to be parted, whatever ages come.

An annoyed thought intrudes, from one who marked this memory after it was recorded:

"By the gods, find a private chamber!"

### **VIR DIRTHARA: DUEL OF A HUNDRED YEARS**

### **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—show an narrow plateau on top of a mountain, Two armored figures—one in gold, one in black—are fighting in the snow. Steel flickers so fast the air hums. Blood dots the ground. They do not stop for breath. The one in black makes no sound as a blade parts his throat.

"Mythal, in her wisdom, interceded in an argument between Elgar'nan and Falon'Din. With clever words, she convince them to settle their grievance through a battle of their champions. Elgar'nan and Falon'Din agreed, and set their champions against each other rather than declare war among the gods. May those knights long be remembered, and Mythal's wisdom be praised."

### **VIR DIRTHARA: EXILE OF THE FORBIDDEN ONES**

### **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—show the blazing forms of the Evanuris banishing a howling spirit from the reaches of the Fade that touch their lands. A voice rings out, stern and imperial:

"For abandoning the People in their time of greatest need, for casting aside form to flee to where the Earth could not reach, we declare Xebenkeck and others of her ilk exiled from the lands of the Evanuris. Beware! Their familiarity with shape allows them to travel paths unaided. They may be bound, but only the protection of your gods will fully shield you from their malice. They are Forbidden from the Earth that is our right."

### **VIR DIRTHARA: HOMECOMING**

### **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—describe an elf approaching a city of glass spires so deeply blue they ache. The city's outskirts are wrapped in lakes of mist, and figures stroll along the pearly, glowing strips as if they walked on solid ground. Groves of trees woven into enormous parks shelter elves in quiet hollows, while other elves walk below a river churning along an invisible shoal in the air.

The scene hums with quiet talk and contentment as the memory's maker reaches the city's gates, already thrown open wide.

## **VIR DIRTHARA: RAISING THE SONALLIUM**

## **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—describe a heated argument between a group of well-dressed elves inside an elaborately arched pavilion on an island floating in a void. In the distance, haloed by a blizzard of light, thousands of elves are maintaining an elaborate magical ritual that pulls raw essence from the Fade, funneled into a sphere in the air. Through the lens of the sphere can be seen a world of indigo waterfalls and rust-red jungles, and a temple palace so frescoed and cleverly carved, it is a masterpiece in itself.

The well-dressed elves' shouting grows so loud, it can be heard over the magic. One leaps at another, howling and pulling out a knife burning with prismatic flame.

"Architects of the Grand Sonallium (a gift from Blessed Sylaise to Clever June as thanks for a great favor) in friendly debate over the color of the palace's roof trim."

## **VIR DIRTHARA: SIGNS OF VICTORY**

## **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—describe a monument made in a single afternoon by a thousand-thousand toiling servants swarming over a lump of fallen stone as large as a collapsed mountain. By the end of the day, the stern figure of Elgar'nan stares down into a valley, carved out from the foothills of the rock. The slaves have disappeared. Light radiates from the eidolon's narrowed eyes and its open, snarling mouth.

"Hail Elgar'nan, first among the gods! Mark his victory eternal!"

## **VIR DIRTHARA: THE DEEPEST FADE**

## **HISTORY**

The pages of this book—memory?—are instructions on how to reach the deepest parts of the Fade, realms so far removed they're unmarked by Dreamers:

"Epiphany requires a mind smooth as mirror glass, still as stone. Put aside ten years for practice, and the next hundred for searching. What others have learned will ease your journey. Those who never manifested outside the Fade will find it easier to find its stillest roots, but it is rare the compulsion overtakes our brethren of the air."

## **A DISPATCH FROM THE CROWN OF FERELDEN**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*If Alistair rules alone or with the Hero of Ferelden...*

Uncle Teagan,

I read your first letter. Trust Orlais to put up a fight about this now. You've been there before, so I'm not telling you anything new. Send a messenger if you need anything; I'll send someone out straight away.

Regards, King Alistair of Ferelden

Someone, presumably His Majesty, has drawn a stick figure weighed down by an oversized crown at the bottom of the page.

*If Alistair and Anora rule together...*

To our honored friend, Arl Teagan,

Thank you for attending this Exalted Council. We trust you implicitly with Ferelden's wishes, and to fight for the security for our borders. Messengers will be dispatched daily so that you are not cut off from us as you undertake this duty.

Maker be with you,  
King Alistair and Queen Anora of Ferelden

A Postscript has been scribbled faintly at the bottom of the page:

Good luck, uncle! If there's anyone i'd rather have there than me, it's you. Or anyone else, really, but thanks for braving the lion.

*If Anora rules alone...*

Honored Arl Teagan,

Let any who read this letter know you speak for the kingdom of Ferelden. Your words stand as my own, and your decisions are made with the support of myself and those pledged to the crown.

You have been a loyal friend, and we invest in you our trust and goodwill.

Maker be with you,  
Queen Anora of Ferelden

## **A FADED LETTER**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*This unsent letter is dated 9:41 Dragon, a month before the opening of the Breach:*

Marcelle,

Forgive the absence of my letters. The Dalish raids were ominous enough, but now Gaspard's chevaliers ride through my estates without so much as a by-your-leave! What a time to rattle their swords: A shipment came the other day with things that will not travel well. A rare Nevarran miniature of Andraste, A triptych lattice of thinnest oak from Tevinter, and, most wondrous of all—a pre-Chantry full-length elven mirror!

The Mirror was discovered after an earthquake near Vol Dorma brought to light an unplundered elven ruin. I purchased the entire lot - there were some other minor artifacts and trinkets — and the mirror has quickly become my favorite. My wife insists we leave soon, and I suppose she is right, but I cannot bear to leave it behind. I will send for the mirror when I am safely in Val Royeaux, then throw a party where you can marvel at it yourself!

Warmest regards,  
Yoan

## **ACTIVITY IN THE WINTER PALACE**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*Charter's Notes are in an encryption she developed with Leliana over the last couple of years:*

CM's intentions seem sincere. Agent in place at party tonight where CM is attending.

VP left notes at drop, as promised.

Servant in green livery seen leaving guest wing of palace at odd hours. Possible tryst?

Madame LV's "second cousin" is a bard in employ of Duke WM.

Lord WG plans to meet Lady GD tonight. Neither of their spouses know.

Lord RW plans to meet Lady SR tonight. Their spouses *do* know. Lord RW's wife encouraged RW to "step out" with SR so she could have "some peace and quiet" to herself.

## **ANIMAL HANDLER'S LOGBOOK**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*The first half of this logbook appears to be notes on the care and feeding of animals in a Free Marcher lord's manor. After that, it shifts into practice phrases in Qunlat. Later, it begins again with the following:*

Beast presents chafing around limbs and tail, likely from attempts to use chains. While its natural strength remains, muscles are slack from confinement. Taardathras said she initially tried drugging the beast, but the amount required to keep it sedated changed the quality of its venom so that it was no longer useful in producing gaatlok. She says fire has kept it under control, while the heated panels keep it in a state of comfortable drowsiness.

Taardathras is not as good at deception as she thinks she is. She does not like what we are doing to the beast. She calls it Ataashi, which means something like "great thing," and she repeats sayings from the Qun to herself when she extracts the venom.

I do not disagree with her. I saw enough harm done to innocent beasts at my lord's sneering commands. The beast, the Ataashi, deserves better than the pry bars and needles we use upon it each time we drain its venom gland.

Taardathras says I may be needed at the Winter Palace. It is likely that some view elves with suspicion, thanks to these attacks by the agent of Fen'Harel, but a human woman may still pass unnoticed among the servants. She says I may be asked to deliver more gaatlok in different containers. She says that it could be dangerous, and that if I do not return, most will assume I am dead.

As I said, Taardathras is not as good at deception as she thinks she is.

But she is right. I did not join the Qun for this.

## **BOOK OF BUTTERFLIES**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*This "book" opens to reveal thin slats of wood and glass. Pinned to cushions inside the slats are a confusion of colorful butterflies, some as small as a copper; others with a wingspan as large as a hand. Engraved on the front are the words:*

In celebration of your twentieth anniversary, with fondest well wishes.

Countess Lutetia

## **CONDUCT BECOMING THE INQUISITION**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

To all members of the Inquisition:



It has come to my attention that I must remind everyone of the type of behavior expected from us during this Exalted Council. It is natural to wish to hold our heads high, but remember that we are guests of the Imperial Court. It is upon us to behave with good grace, propriety, and restraint.

If you are unsure of how to address someone of gentle birth, "My Lord" or "My Lady" will suffice.

If you are fearful that you have overstepped an unknown protocol, speak with your commanders. If they are not available, seek me out.

Over-imbibing is strongly discouraged at all times.

If you are steered into an argument about the Inquisition's politics, politely excuse yourself as quickly as possible. Please do not engage in these debates !

If all else fails, trust sense and common courtesy to guide your actions.

Sincerely,

Lady Montilyet

## EMERGENCY MEASURES

## LETTERS AND NOTES

The order has been given: all known double agents within the Inquisition are being neutralized, and all suspect agents are being isolated from any information coming in or out of the Winter Palace.

We've received messenger birds back from multiple cities. The Inquisition is not the only organization compromised by Qunari spies. In Val Royeaux, gaatlok barrels were being put into position by low-placed servants in the Grand Cathedral and Council of Heraldry. In Denerim, Qunari spies were revealed among low-ranking members of the City Watch. Starkhaven was seeded with spies among its own palace servants.

In light of our lack of oversight on this matter, I will understand if an agent better suited to the task is promoted in my place.

*A reply below, in Leliana's hand:*

The blame falls on me. I will not let anyone else appropriate it, no matter how well intended. Do not forget the lives we've saved by warning other cities about the gaatlok barrels.

Besides, my friend, I have enough scandalous gossip on you that I know I can trust you. Of how many other agents is this true?

*The following line is in the original handwriting:*

At least twenty-three, my lady, but your point is taken.

## LETTERS AND REPLIES

## LETTERS AND NOTES

*A letter with an Inquisition seal sits half buried in a pile of memos:*

To the Honorable Salasari, Triumvirate of the Qun:

On behalf of the Inquisition, I must humbly inquire as to the hostile actions of your agents in Halamshiral. We can only view the attacks by Ben-Hassrath agents upon our officers and the infiltration and sabotage of the Exalted Council at Halamshiral as the prelude to a declaration of war. If the Qunari people do not wish to provoke retaliation from the Chantry, these hostilities must cease at once.

Respectfully, Ambassador Josephine Montilyet

*Several incomprehensible messages in Qunlat follow. A letter in common with elegant script has been torn open and crumpled into a ball, but the writing is still legible:*

To Ambassador Josephine Montilyet of the Inquisition,

The Triumvirate of the Qunari people wishes to assure you that despite the loss of the dreadnought Berethlok and its crew of one hundred souls in a failed joint mission with the Inquisition two years past, military action has not been approved against the Inquisition. No one in Par Vollen has authorized actions of any kind involving the Exalted Council. Nor will they.

We are seeking out the Ben-Hassrath priest who appears to be leading this operation without our consent. Once she is located, we assure you that these hostile actions will cease.

## **LOGS OF A DARVAARAD GATEKEEPER**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*The entries in this book are written in several different hands and occasionally even different languages. From the few entries in the common tongue, it appears to be a log filled in by the various guards who have watched the gates of the Darvaarad:*

Morning: Artifacts brought in by Hissra Kith. Original location not on manifest. Asked Isskari, was told, "They're from ruins." Please remind agents that all relics must be properly catalogued, or the Taarbas will never stop complaining about it.

Afternoon: Three kiths deployed. Including Isskari of Hissra Kith. Told her to write down locations in her manifest this time.

Evening: Hissra Kith reported back. Isskari handed me manifest that just said, "Outside Darvaarad." Asking my sten for a knife.

## **MOLDY JOURNAL**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*Mold and rot have eaten most of the pages of these books. The remaining vellum is covered in spiky handwriting with spelling that is either archaic, wildly idiosyncratic, or both:*

...saw yht cross from the Volca, that which draggeth souls down to yhts larder in the brinedark. Hys beast preyth on humblewits and goldsworn even & the tower's keeper declares I will rest here if yht would ease me. The elvhen, which pulled me grip-up from my end, kends he is last of his kynde. I made it known elvhen live south-like, but he says yht would not be as yht was & I said that's evertrue & he laughed lark-like. Come dark he showed me a mirror deep strange, an "eluvian" sworne to beene in his family for...

## **NOTES ON METHODS OF ENCHANTMENT**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*The writing on these papers aches to be looked at, shimmering slightly as if under an enchantment. The notes are handwritten, but each letter is as perfectly uniform as from a printing press:*

Notes on the first attempt: Improper valences on the bindings woven into the materials led to a catastrophic unraveling. The first batch is lost, but I will have supplies brought in from the same stock to illuminate whether the imperfection is within the materials or the enchantment.

Notes on the second attempt: Elegance eludes me. The aim is to improve the coordination of the body and sharpen the perception of the heart, but grafts do not live long enough to plumb their worth. The current process is ruin. This batch is lost. Begin again.

Notes on the third attempt: Two enchantments whose matrices should have meshed, caught. The combustion caused such damage it broke several previously forged pieces. There is now a resonance between them, however, and light on my thoughts: an enchantment linked in tandem, as the neck turns the head or the wrist twists the hand?

Notes on the fourth attempt: The weave goes smoothly: bound tightly between many items, the stress on the energy produces finer results than a singular enchantment. Using up the last of the stock was well worth it, as I explained to it as a courtesy before final work began. Adjustments to the underlay were a great success, and will allow the recipe to be made with material taken from lesser animals, if the need arises.

*Below the letters, possibly in lieu of a signature, is the stamp of a stylized halla head.*

*Taken together, diagrams and ratios carefully inked at the bottom of the last of these notes could be turned into a schematic that replicates the creation of these artifacts.*

## NOTES ON PALACE GUESTS

## LETTERS AND NOTES

*A collection of servants' notes on the guests attending the Winter Palace:*

Countess D'Avorrie: Wants a stateroom set aside from three to five in the afternoon for her daughters' harp practice. Must have windows on one side and a balcony. If she proposes a recital, refer her to the seneschal.

Duke Pierpone: Wants to entertain Fereldan relatives. A barrel of whiskey and three wheels of cheese to be delivered to his quarters this evening.

Bann Worton: His bed should be made up with linens, not silks.

Ser Litstone: Complains an old wound in her left leg is making itself felt. Move her to the ground floor.

Lady Galettee: A duelist. Has requested a sparring partner and a suitable practice ground.

Lord Gilderay: To be woken at eight by a main on even days, a pageboy on odd days (don't ask) with a fresh pitcher of water and twelve sprigs of lavender on a peach-colored towel (don't ask), carrying these items in silently, without making eye contact with his lordship, placing them on the divan, clapping twice, then leaving without a word. (Do. Not. Ask.)

## ORDERS POSTED IN THE FACTORY

## LETTERS AND NOTES

*Portions of this are in indecipherable Qunlat, with what might be formulas in an unfamiliar number system. One section has been translated for viddathari workers in the factory, then circled, repeatedly underlined, with arrows drawn around it by someone who was clearly very insistent that it be read:*

For primers, combine **NO MORE THAN ONE PART** Ataashi venom with an equal amount of deathroot auxin and **THREE PARTS** powdered silverite. Adding more venom **WILL DISSOLVE THE CASING ON THE PRIMERS HERE IN THE FACTORY AND FILL THE ROOM WITH DEADLY GAS**. Whoever keeps getting the formula wrong needs to see me immediately! We have a great many primers to make *on a tight schedule* and cannot afford any more delays due to mistakes!

## PLAN OF ATTACK

## LETTERS AND NOTES

*This letter is written in both Qunlat and the common tongue:*

I have read your reports. Station your people in the abandoned elven towers by the lake. It is a short distance from its entrance to the mirror that connects to Halamshiral. We will need the space to lodge our people after infiltration is complete.

*There is a map of the Crossroads at the bottom, with an arrow from the elven ruins' Eluvian to the Eluvian that leads to the Winter Palace.*

## **SCANDALOUS GOSSIP**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*This unsigned note is creased as if it had been secreted away in someone's pocket:*

Dearest J—

I agree it is *surprising* that the Fereldans come as equals, but the Exalted Council *is* in the heart of southern Orlais. That cannot be lost on our neighbors.

*If Briala was supported during Wicked Eyes and Wicked Hearts...*

Marquise Briala has, of course, stayed out of sight, but do not believe for a second that the rabbit is not meddling when none can see her. The Inquisition gave her that title, but she would not hesitate to wind them so tightly around her, they'll choke.

*If Gaspard was supported during Wicked Eyes and Wicked Hearts...*

Gaspard rode out ten days ago to inspect his Chevaliers on the border, while "placing full trust in the Exalted Council." Even after all these years, the court hasn't accepted that our Emperor's tactics are as simple as they seem. If Ferelden takes the day, he will attempt to deflect the blame without upsetting their alliance. If the Inquisition yields to us, Gaspard will celebrate having an even closer ally to himself.

If he is in the mood, our Emperor may cap either outcome with a beheading or two. He has been eyeing a few Lords sideways lately.

*If Celene survived Wicked Eyes and Wicked Hearts...*

Empress Celene has stayed in Val Royeaux to appease a delegation of Nevarrans, or so her messengers say. It is obvious the Empress stays away to dodge the demands that she bring the Inquisition to heel. One would almost think that Celene believes they will find a way out of their bind. So strangely naïve, at her age!

*If Celene reconciled with Briala during Wicked Eyes and Wicked Hearts...*

Empress Celene came out for the first ceremonies, then retired into her chambers for the rest of the talks. A day later, Marquise Briala came visiting "on important matters of state." Suffice to say, I do not think we will see them at the Council—Celene and the rabbit cavort like lovers half their age. Of course, the foolish assume our empress is so distracted that they might safely overreach themselves, an idea even more disastrous than the new carpeting in the north wing. (That shade of lime? Really?)

## **THE VERY PRIVATE DIARY OF SANDAL FEDDIC, DO NOT READ!!!!**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

2 Kingsway, 9:41

Enchantment? Enchantment.

19 Harvestmere, 9:41

Enchantment! Enchantment!

11 Firstfall, 9:41

Enchantment... Enchantment?

15 Haring, 9:41

*Enchantment!!!!...* Enchantment?

7 Wintermarch, 9:42

Enchantment.

30 Wintermarch, 9:42

**ENCHANTMENT?!**

Enchantment.

5 Guardian, 9:42

Enchantment... *Enchantment!*

21 Drakonis, 9:42

*Enchantment?*

16 Cloudreach, 9:42

Enchantment! Enchantment. *Enchantment?*

## **TORN NOTEBOOK IN THE DEEP ROADS, SECTION I**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*Many of these pages are filled with sketches of elven statues matching the ones found in the area, along with notes and what look like attempts to practice Qunlat:*

Ebost: You all are

Ebadim: They all are

Ebasaam: We all are

If Fen'Harel truly has agents working against us, then the Dread Wolf must be laughing at me. The Blight takes my clan, so I go to Kirkwall. Kirkwall goes to ruin, so I flee to the Qun. Now the Qunari bring me down into the lightless depths, and for what? Because the nursery rhymes I remember from childhood make me an expert on ancient elves.

These statues are old. Better shape than anything I've seen on the surface. Many of them are for Mythal, though. And Fen'Harel. Not in a spot of honor, but guarding, attending.

Protector and All-Mother, why are you honored here, so far from the light of the sun? And why was the Dread Wolf at your side?

## **TORN NOTEBOOK IN THE DEEP ROADS, SECTION 2**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*Many of these pages are filled with sketches of elven statues matching the ones found in the area, along with notes and what look like attempts to practice Qunlat:*

They say the agents of Fen'Harel caused trouble in the Crossroads. I wish I knew. I wish whoever fights in the name of the old wolf was around to fight when the darkspawn took my clan.

Mine is not to question. I have chosen the Qun. The Qun will protect me.

Rethost: You all protect

Rethadim: They all protect

Rethsaam: We all protect

These statues are older than anything I saw in my days with the clan. The area's dwarven, though. What were the ancient elves doing down here? Mining? Where were the dwarves? Easier to have them mine it. Not a trading post. You don't go into a friend's home, knock over their gods, and put up your own.

War? I don't remember any legends about our people fighting the dwarves. Though I remember my Keeper telling a story about how the dwarves fear the sun because of Elgar'nan's fire. A metaphor for the elves of Arlathan driving the dwarves underground? The Qunari like metaphors. I should share that.

## **TORN NOTEBOOK IN THE DEEP ROADS, SECTION 3**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*Many of these pages are filled with sketches of elven statues matching the ones found in the area, along with notes and what look like attempts to practice Qunlat:*

Trying to remember that old bedtime song about Mythal. My mother sang it the night before the darkspawn came for my clan. It's the last time I ever heard her voice.

Ir sa tel'nal,

Mythal las ma theneras.

Ir san'a emma.

Him solas evanuris.

Da'durgen'lin,

Banal malas elgara.

Bellanaris, bellanaris.

Written beside each elven line is a corresponding phrase, likely a translation:

I am empty, filled with nothing(?),  
Mythal gives you dreams.  
It fills you, within you(?),  
Making our leaders proud.  
My little stones,  
Never yours the sun.  
Forever, forever.

Hahren said we had lost some of the old words. What if they have changed? Durgen'lin from durgen'*len*? Little *dwarves*, never yours the sun? What did Mythal do here?

Something's wrong. The lights in the walls are fading. Going to find help. It's not safe. Without light...

Itwa-ost: You all fall  
Itwa-adim: They all fall  
Itwasaam: We all fall

## WAGER NOTES

## LETTERS AND NOTES

*Notes carried back and forth by runners, covered in different handwriting:*

What do you say, gentlemen? Three days before the Inquisition sees sense and aligns itself with Orlais? Properly this time? —M

Nonsense, Marcel, Ferelden is here for blood. A day before they either demand it outright or threaten war on *us* if they don't get it. —L

The Divine will intercede. She must. Victoria and the Inquisition are too closely connected in everyone's eyes for her not to interfere. —A

You have great confidence in the Chantry, Allain? —M

A thousand royals' worth of confidence from each of you if the Divine settles the fate of the Inquisition. —A

Done! A thousand from each of *you* once the Inquisition accedes sovereignty to Orlais and the Council of Heraldry. —M

You two will beggar me. —L

Leonard! Are you out? —M

Don't be ridiculous. A thousand royals on the Fereldans getting their way after all. —L

Have you seen Ambassador Montilyet trying to cool everyone's tempers after the inquisitor *ran out* of the Exalted Council? —M

The Gall! (Inquisitor's Last Name) has some nerve. —L

Have you noticed the runners at the Divine's quarters? Everyone is demanding the Most Holy address the affront. —A

If anything, the Inquisitor's actions strengthened Ferelden's position. Arl Teagan is fuming. —L

Lord Cyril won't let him push. This is as good as sealed, my friends. —M

We'll see. —A

If so many royals weren't in jeopardy, Leonard, I'd say we should let the chevaliers throw the Inquisition out of the Winter Palace. —M

We're in accord. Their puffed-up soldiers are everywhere. One challenged me at the gate because the fool confused my house's mask with a family not even invited! Why do they think they are in charge if they can't master even basic courtesies? —L

Disgusting. *I* caught an Inquisition soldier and a palace guard in a fistfight. —A

What happened? —M

I stopped the fight, of course. We don't need this Exalted Council further out of hand. —A

A terrible thought occurs. What if nothing gets decided? What happens to our wager, gentlemen? —L

Maker forbid! If that comes to pass, we can give the royals to that farm your sister runs for retired chargers, Leonard. At least the old warhorses won't be left out in the cold. —M

## **WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW WORKERS**

## **LETTERS AND NOTES**

*While some of this letter is written in Qunlat, most is in the common tongue, the letters blocky and simple but tidy:*

The Dragon's Breath must continue regardless of concerns at the Winter Palace. Many are new to the Qun and have not yet learned to trust. Your worry is understandable. The rest of the world has betrayed you.

All who have been to the Darvaarad know the difficulty of maintaining the specimen for extraction for as long as we have. If we delayed Dragon's Breath, we would have to dispose of the specimen. Creating gaatluk is normally a slow process requiring much mining and careful alchemy. Venom extraction offers the only means to deliver the Dragon's Breath quickly and in large quantities. To delay the Dragon's Breath is to lose any chance of bringing peace to the South without needless suffering. The Qun demands we save the workers of the South from a bloody war and deliver them into our teaching before corruption further overtakes the land.

Others have voiced concern over the specimen. The Qun does not demand cruelty to any living being, but all creatures have a place and a duty under the Qun. The specimen serves as it must. When Dragon's Breath is complete, it will be extinguished quickly and painlessly, as when we slaughter animals for food.

Allow your superiors to deal with the agents of Fen'Harel, and remember your role in service to the Qun.

## **THE RISK OF SAAREBAS**

## **MAGIC**

*This sheaf of notes is written mostly in Qunlat. But select paragraphs have been translated into the common tongue:*



Those born outside the Qun will not comprehend the seriousness of using mages to help us. They believe the worst that can befall a mage is demon possession. They do not truly understand that the loss of mastery comes with a loss of the self. Those of the Qun since birth do not understand why we risk using saarebas. We have immersed them in a sea of magic until it seems impossible they could ever do anything but drown. It is right that we enlighten you so your purpose here is clear.

We have learned from this place that there lived an elven mage who saw a great wrong and sacrificed all to right it. This mage made the Veil, which protects us from the Fade. This Veil stripped power from his rulers, who had treated their people with such excess that it makes the southern kings and queens seem staid.

Thus does every action carry rightness and all paths converge.

In his greatest magic, the elven mage became an agent of peace through the Veil. In our willingness to brave this place, we may discover how the Veil can be strengthened through our own mages. For that, we risk our lives. The saarebas who have joined in this endeavor understand the dangers and have made their choice. Remember the words of Ashkaari Koslun:

Existence is a choice.

There is no chaos in the world, only complexity.

Knowledge of the complex is wisdom.

From wisdom of the world comes wisdom of the self.

Mastery of the self is mastery of the world.

Loss of the self is the source of suffering.

Suffering is a choice, and we can refuse it.

It is in our own power to create the world, or destroy it.

For peace, we will endure any horror here. We will create a safer world, or destroy the old one.

## **VEILFIRE RUNES IN THE DEEP ROADS**

## **MAGIC**

*In the light of the veilfire, the runes seem to shift, coiling and uncoiling like snakes. A thunderous voice shatters the stillness, shouting:*

"Hail Mythal, adjudicator and savior! She has struck down the pillars of the earth and rendered their demesne unto the People! Praise her name forever!"

*For a moment, the scent of blood fills the air, and there is a vivid image of green vines growing and enveloping a sphere of fire.*

*The vision grows dark. An aeon seems to pass. Then the runes crackle, as if filled with an angry energy.*

*A new vision appears: elves collapsing caverns, sealing the Deep Roads with stone and magic.*

*Terror, heart-pounding, ice-cold, as the last of the spells is cast.*

*A voice whispers:*

"What the Evanuris in their greed could unleash would end us all. Let this place be forgotten. Let no one wake its anger. The People must rise before their false gods destroy them all."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 10**

## **TALES**

Donnen Brennokovic had been pursuing the killer of Magistrate Dunwald without food or rest, and so far all he had was the seal of an imaginary group, a wounded arm, and a package that contained a rusted Tevinter shortsword. He was past exhaustion, and every breath made his head throb like he'd had too much too drink. He was getting too old for this shit.

He couldn't go to the barracks with a knife wound he'd picked up off-duty. If the captain caught him, and she would, he'd be thrown out of the guard for sure. That left one option.

The Chantry clinic turned no one away, but it usually didn't have to. The presence of three Circle healers was more than enough to frighten more decent folk into deciding to wait and see if they got better on their own.

Aside from a few drunken beggars snoring in the beds, the clinic was quiet. The healer didn't ask his name and tended the wound with only a disapproving frown. In a few breaths, his arm was as good as ever. Pity magic wouldn't mend his coat sleeve.

As he walked through the nave toward the exit, he heard a voice.

"Guardsmen, I was just about to look for you."

The deep black gown she wore only made her eyes more otherworldly. A scent like lilacs filled the air around her. She may have been dressed in mourning garb, but she was dressed to kill.

Donnen bowed. "Lady Marielle."

"We should talk. I may have a lead for you."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER II**

## **TALES**

The Café d'Or perched atop a hill in the Orlesian district of Hightown, with a view of the entire city so the wealthy patrons could keep an eye on the peasants toiling below. Lady Marielle studied the room across the rim of her cup. A few nobles sat at the delicate little tables, sipping tea from Rivain and whispering among themselves about the latest maneuvers in the Grand Game a thousand leagues away.

"What's this lead you have for me?" Donnen broke the silence, acutely aware that he stank of sweat and fish from the docks and was wearing a ripped, bloodstained coat in the most high-class café in Kirkwall.

"We're being followed, guardsman." The lady's voice was low; from the tone, she might have been discussing the weather. "The two gentlemen in the corner by the door."

Donnen picked up his teacup and gestured with it as if making a point while he turned slightly in his chair to look. The men were finely dressed but almost as out of place as he was: a large, sickly-pale Ander with a face full of scars and a tattooed Chasind with a stone dagger at his belt.

"A Chasind in a doublet? That's one for the history books," Donnen murmured.

Lady Marielle favored him with a half-smile. "Last night. A man came by the estate. He said he wanted to buy Seamus' collection. All of it."

Donnen sat up straighter. "The swords?"

"He said his name was Wagner." She sipped delicately at her tea. "He gave me an address in Lowtown in case I changed my mind. Those two have been shadowing me ever since."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER I2**

## **TALES**

They say you can buy anything in the Lowtown Bazaar. It's mostly true. On the right day, you can find vendors hawking spices from Seheron, the legacies of unknown dwarven Paragons, maps to hidden fortresses in the Donarks, and the crown jewel of Antiva. And no bookstore in Thedas peddles more wild stories than Lowtown.

Donnen Brennokovic made a point of greeting each shopkeeper as he passed so that the continual chant of "Guardsmen" reached the ears of the two large men shadowing him since he'd left Lady Marielle in Hightown.

The address she'd given him led to a warehouse in the Foundry district, a section of the city populated only by rusted metal spikes and vagrants. Donnen knocked on the door.

An immaculately dressed butler greeted him and gesture for him to enter. "Guardsmen Brennokovic. Messere Wagner has been expecting you."

Donnen followed him through a labyrinth of warehouse offices to a back room richly appointed with silk carpets and tapestries depicting the execution of Andraste. Two heavy armchairs upholstered in velvet occupied the center of the room. One sat a smug red-haired man dressed entirely in blinding white samite. The other chair was empty. "Guardsmen! Please sit." The gentleman spoke with a heavy Starkhaven accent.

"I suppose you would be Messere Wagner?" Donnen asked.

"I am a procurer of antiquities, Serah Brennokovic. As I'm sure the Lady Dunwald explained." Wagner carefully lit a pipe made of carved bloodstone and inhaled. "But we are both men of business, guardsman. You are soon to retire, are you no? Allow me to present you with an opportunity."

Donnen turned a critical eye on the tapestry of Andraste's pyre. "I'm listening."

Wagner watched him through a growing veil of smoke. "Do you know what Seamus Dunwald had in his possession, guardsman? What made the poor man worth killing?"

"Do tell."

"The Sword of Hessarian." Wagner leaned forward, studying him closely. "The very blade that pierced Andraste's heart."

Donnen gave him a flat stare. "If I believed that were even possible, I'd think that blade would be worth a lot of coin."

"Most would look at it and see a rusted piece of scrap. It is no longer the jeweled blade of an archon. But to the right buyer, guardsman, the sword is worth an empire's ransom. I know such buyers." Wagner smiled. "It is here. In Kirkwall. And if you help me find it, I can make you a very rich man."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 13**

## **TALES**

In the Lowtown Bazaar, Donnen paused to pay a little elven girl to play courier for him before making the long climb back uphill to Hightown. A careful glance told him the scar-faced Ander and the tattooed Chasind were still tailing him.

Donnen was certain they'd love the Viscount's Keep.

He passed beneath the stone gaze of the cormorant statues flanking the gates and nodded to the guards on his way to the barracks. No one noticed his ragged, bloody clothing, which disappointed him as much as he benefited from it. Recruits these days. Always slacking off.

Donnen bypassed the Captain's office and went looking for Jevlan. By now the kid ought to be rested up, and Donnen suspected he would need backup if his large, suspicious shadows decided to pick a fight.

But Jevlan's bunk was empty.

Donnen noted blood spatter on the bedding and a scent like lilacs. All of his gear was missing. In the center of the bunk was a note.

"Bring the blade to the quays tonight at midnight, or the boy dies."

It was signed with a wax seal: six crossed swords.

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 14**

## **TALES**

The late Magistrate Dunwald's butler blinked as Donnen Brennokovic barged into the foyer.

"Get Lady Marielle. Now." He headed straight to the parlor where the magistrate's collection was displayed.

Wrapped in a black shawl, Marielle sauntered into the room and leaned against one of the glass cases. "Guardsmen! What a pleasant surprise."

"Where's Jevlan?"

Her smile faltered. "Why do you think I would know? He's your partner."

Donnen held up the note. "Your perfume, lady Marielle." He dropped it on the display case beside her. "What were you doing in the guard barracks?"

"I didn't leave the note," she said with measured calm. "And I don't have your partner."

"But you were in the barracks." He stepped away to examine a display. "You told me Wagner wanted to buy the Magistrate's entire collection, but he said he was only interested in one blade." He opened the case. "And I think it was never in Seamus' collection. I think it was the sword meant to go right here." He pointed to the empty velvet-lined box. "I looked in the Viscount's records, and you've only been married to Magistrate Dunwald for about three weeks. You tell me who you're working for and where my partner is, and I'll see if we can't get you a deal with the Viscount's office."

"The Chantry." Marielle closed the door quietly. "They sent me to Kirkwall a few months ago when rumors of the sword began to surface." She examined the note. "I don't have Jevlan. This was already on his bunk when I went to find both of you."

Donnen didn't hide his scepticism. "You're innocent, but you didn't report him missing to any of the guards."

"Someone took him from the barracks, serah, with no one the wiser. That doesn't seem strange to you?" She looked him in the eye. "Have you ever heard of the Executors?"

"They're a myth."

"A myth that kills." She sighed. "The Executors have your partner, and I think they have someone inside the City Guard. How else could they have gotten Jevlan out of the keep without being seen?"

Donnen watched her fidget with her shawl. "Why were you in the barracks?"

"I suspected the Executors had an inside man." She shrugged. "How else could they have gotten poor comte De Favre to open the door to his killer? Since he arranged the sword's purchase for Seamus, he'd been hiding in his own home. The only people he'd seen were Seamus and you."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 15**

## **TALES**

The nobles of Hightown like to imagine that petty crime can only happen in the dank shadows of Darktown or maybe the crooked alleyways of Lowtown between the Alienage and the poorest neighborhoods. Their lofty, ivy-walled avenues could never be the site of something as crude as mugging or a simple assault.

Donnen didn't have much trouble finding an out-of-the-way alcove near the Chantry to wait for the scarred Ander and the tattooed Chasind to catch up with him.

The Ander came at him first, dropping down from the balcony above his head. While Donnen tried to back out of his reach, the Chasind loomed behind him, clamping an enormous, vise-like hand on his shoulder. The Ander's follow-up punch just below his ribs knocked the air from his lungs.

As the Chasind lifted him up by his coat, Donnen got back enough of his breath to say, "You work for Wagner? I need to give him a message."

This earned him a skeptical look from the Ander, but the Chasind set his feet back on the ground.

"Tell him I have his sword. He can meet me in the quays at midnight to settle on the price." For a long, nervous moment, Donnen watched a variety of expressions pass over the Ander's scarred, greyish face before the man nodded. Another long moment, and both Ander and Chasind walked away, leaving him alone in the alcove.

With the sun just setting, there was only one place left that Donnen needed to go.

The tavern in the center of Lowtown sat in its own tiny moat of spilled ale, vomit, and the seawater the owner flung at the walls in a half-hearted attempt to scour the seagull crap from the building. Donnen, like nearly every guardsman who drank at The Hanged Man, walked through the door to a frantic chorus of "Put it away! Hurry! He tried not to smile and completely succeeded when the brooding, white-haired elven bartender greeted him with a murderous glower. "Guardsman."

Donnen placed a handful of copper coins on the bar. "Keep the ale coming, Ferris. I've got some time to kill."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 16**

## **TALES**

Donnen left the tavern and headed out through a moonless night. Fog clung to the streets and buildings like cobwebs, and the heavy air threatened rain. Any other night, he would have gone straight up to the barracks, but he had appointments to keep.

The quays at midnight exchange the cacophony of swearing sailors for the mournful sound of distant bells in the harbor. Donnen found Wagner and his two thugs waiting just out of sight of the harbormaster's office. In the fog, Wagner's white samite coat made him gleam like a smug moon.

"Messere Brennokovic. I trust you've brought my merchandise?" Wagner smiled. Beside him, the tattooed Chasind cleaned what might have been blood from his nails with his dagger.

Donnen reached into his coat and pulled out a small, cloth-wrapped bundle. "We should discuss a few things first."

Wagner's eyes gleamed in the reflected light of his paunch. "The price, of course." He gestured to the scarred Ander, who held up a bag of coins. "One hundred crowns should suffice, yes?"

"That depends." Donnen toyed with the twine securing the bundle's wrapping. "You killed Magistrate Dunwald, didn't you? After my run-in with your friends here, I realized the only blade that could have made that kind of stab wound was your Chasind's stone knife."

Wagner shrugged. "Men die all the time, serah. We should not let that unpleasantness get in the way of business." Another gesture, and the Ander strode forward to stand just inches away from Donnen, brandishing the bag of gold like a flail.

"And Jevlan?" Donnen asked.

"I know nothing of your partner's fate."

Donnen handed over the bundle, and the Ander dropped the bag at his feet to deliver the prize to his boss. Wagner eagerly unwrapped the bundle, revealing an ancient, rusty, and pitted shortsword. He frowned. "This is not the blade."

Both Chasind and Ander drew their daggers.

Donnen held his ground. "Pity you killed Dunwald for it, then"

"You think I'd kill a magistrate and not a guardsman?" Wagner laughed. "Unwise, serah."

"That's all we needed to hear." Captain Hendallen stepped around the corner behind Donnen, a dozen guards with her. For the first time in months, he saw what might have been a smile on her face. "Good work, guardsman. We'll take it from here."

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 17**

## **TALES**

Donnen left it to his captain and a dozen of Kirkwall's finest to drag Wagner and his thugs to the stocks. The heavy air gave up and turned into sheets of rain. The ancient grey stone stairs leading up to Lowtown turned into a waterfall. Donnen slogged up the narrow passage, boots squelching with every step.

He almost didn't hear the ambush coming.

As he reached the top of the stairs, a faint rasp of steel made him throw himself aside into a vegetable seller's table. A sword swung through the air where he'd been and chimed against the rock wall.

Donnen fumbled at his scabbard and just managed to catch the second blow with his sword. He had one moment as they locked blades to recognize his attacker. The younger man had shed his guard uniform for dark leathers, and his left arm no ended in a bandaged stump, but there was no mistaking him.

"Jevlan?"

"Where is the Blade of Hessarian?" Jevlan recovered from the parried blow to slash at Donnen's legs.

He dodged back, slipping and nearly stumbling ass-first down the stairs. "It was you. The inside man. You're the one who killed De Favre." Donnen lunged at the recruit. Jevlan quickly moved to block, but Donnen's blade sliced his arm, drawing blood.

"Give me the sword! I know that pirate hag gave it to you!" Jevlan swung a series of hard slashes, trying to break Donnen's guard or knock him down the stairs. In the darkness and the driving rain, the guardsman struggled to see his attacker.

Still, Donnen grinned. "You left it at the quay. I guess you ran off without it when the lady took your hand off. Not my fault you picked a fight you couldn't win." He tried to edge away from the stairs, but the rookie kept him pinned between the vegetable stall and a fall to his death.

Jevlan lunged, his blade punching through Donnen's armor just below his ribs, but the recruit slipped on the wet stone during his attack and stumbled into his enemy. Donnen shoved him away—and over the stairs. His fall ended with a sickening crack of broken bones.

Donnen drew a ragged breath and pulled Jevlan's sword from his side, trying not to slip on his own blood. The Chantry was a long way off.

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER 18**

## **TALES**

The rain stopped with a suddenness that suggested some enterprising footpad from the Coterie had climbed up to shank the clouds. The fog drifted off to haunt a better part of the Wounded Coast, and as Donnen reached the Chantry Courtyard, the clouds parted to let a sliver of moonlight shine on the rain-swept flagstones. He stopped to catch his breath and tighten the torn-off coat sleeve he'd used as a bandage. The bleeding was slowing, which meant either the wound in his side wasn't that deep or he was running out of blood to lose. Trying not to dwell on the latter, he pushed open the Chantry doors.

At this Maker-forsaken hour, the Chantry was lit only by the Eternal Flame at Andraste's feet. A single soul occupied the space, lighting a candle for the dead. She rose as Donnen staggered into the firelight.

"Guardsmen!" Lady Marielle rushed to help him in one of the pews.

"Might want to wake up one of the healers. He managed a pained smile. "I wasn't sure you'd be here."

"Neither was I. Your message was a little vague." Marielle tried to examine his makeshift bandage, but Donnen waved her away.

He pointed toward the golden statue of Andraste. "I had a friend deliver something for you. Under the altar."

Marielle cast him a sceptical look, but she climbed the dais and returned with a small oilcloth bundle. She picked apart the wrapping's knot and peered down at the rusty blade inside, specks of dried blood still clinging to the pitted guard.

"The Sword of Hessarian," she breathed, almost a prayer.

"You can get it to the Divine?" Donnen asked.

She wiped at her eyes. "I'll take it to her myself. What do you want in return?"

Donnen struggled to his feet. "Just put in a good word for me with the Maker, your ladyship. You never know when I might need it." And he walked away, leaving her standing in the firelight with history in her hands.

## **HARD IN HIGHTOWN: CHAPTER ???**

## **TALES**

By Varric Tethras

Donnen wiped spilled ale off the bar, listening to the cries of the birds and the crashing of waves outside. Another slow day on the Amaranthine Coast. The tavern didn't get many visitors—just a little too far south of the Antivan border to catch the caravans—but he hadn't opened it to make a profit.

*If Stroud was left behind in the Fade during Here Lies the Abyss...*

He poured a glass of plum brandy from a chipped decanter and carried it out to the patio, where an impressive Orlesian mustache was keeping company with an old Grey Warden playing a minuet on a lute.

Donnen handed the brandy to the Warden, in some deference to his mustache, and the gentleman accepted it with grace, placing the glass on the table before finishing the last measure of his song.

"You have my thanks, guardsman." The Orlesian set the lute on a nearby chair and allowed the brandy to approach his mustache. The mustache did not appear impressed with the vintage.

"It's just Donnen these days," he replied, looking out over the waves. "My time in the Kirkwall guard is over."

"I spent so many years in and around the City of Chains," the Warden sighed. "We're both lucky to have escaped her clutches."

The sun was setting behind them, drawing long shadows on the ground that stretched toward the sea.

"Maybe." Donnen shrugged, watching the waves turn dark in the distance. "Some days, I'm not sure all of me made it out."

"To what we've left behind." The Orlesian raised his glass in a toast, and the two men watched the light fade over the ocean in peace.

*If male Hawke was left behind in the Fade...*

He poured some noxious Ander stout from an oak cask into a heavy tankard and carried it outside to a dark-haired nobleman on the patio idly strumming a lute so out of tune, it sounded like some other instrument, perhaps a tuba or a kettle drum, trying to invent music from scratch.

Donnen handed over the tankard, only half-hoping it would stop him from playing any more.

"That's very kind of you, guardsman." Thankfully, the gentleman set aside his lute and took the tankard, putting his feet up on the table in front of him.

"It's just Donnen these days," he replied, looking out over the waves. "My time in the Kirkwall guard is over."

"It's never really gone." The nobleman smiled. "Kirkwall. It finds its way into your soul, and once it gets there, you carry it always."

The sun was setting behind them, casting long shadows from the tavern down to the water. A flock of cormorants took advantage of the fading light to dive for fish making their way back out to sea.

"Maybe so." Donnen smiled, too. "But the world can always use a Champion or a guardsman wherever they happen to go."

The gentleman raised his tankard. "I'll drink to that."

And the two men watched the last of the light disappear in peace.

*If female Hawke was left behind in the Fade...*

He poured a glass of red Orlesian wine and carried it out to the patio where lady Marielle sat, playing a lute for the benefit of a distant flock of cormorants and a sleepy mabari hound.

Donnen handed her the glass with a smile. "Can I get you anything else, your ladyship?"



"That's very kind of you, guardsman." Marielle set aside her lute; the sleepy hound looked up, annoyed at having its lullaby interrupted.

"It's just Donnen these days," he replied, looking out over the waves. "My time in the Kirkwall guard is over."

"Is it?" She smiled slyly over the glass. "You don't think naming a tavern The Watch was a sign that perhaps you can take the guardsman out of Kirkwall, and even out of the Guard, but he never... quite leaves?"

The sun was setting behind them. The hound stretched and ambled over to the table to lay his head on Lady Marielle's knee and beg for table scraps. In the distance, the cormorants took off in a single motion to return to their roosts up the shore.

Donnen smiled back. "Maybe you're right. But tonight I'm off duty, your ladyship."

"Marielle," she corrected. "And to answer your question, you can get me some company. One guardsman might suffice."

And the two of them watched the last of the light disappear together in peace.

*If Alistair was left behind in the Fade...*

He poured a glass of smoky Fereldan whisky and carried it out to the patio where a sandy-haired fellow was attempting to play the lute. Or murder the lute. Or murder the concept of music itself. It probably didn't help that the man was holding the lute straight out in front of him as if he feared it were a snake that might bite him.

Donnen offered the fellow the glass, fervently hoping it would make the playing stop.

"Guardsman! You came to my rescue just in time!" The blond man took the glass with a sheepish laugh and all but threw the lute into a nearby chair.

"It's just Donnen these days," he replied, looking out over the waves. "My time in the Kirkwall guard is over."

"Retirement is grand, isn't it? No more responsibility, no more senior officers yelling at you, no more Kirkwall..." The other man looked wistfully out at the birds diving into the waves down the coast.

The sun was setting behind them, turning the Amaranthine Ocean a deep sapphire and sending the seabirds back up the cliffs to their nests.

"Kirkwall's still out there. Along with all those other things. I just didn't bring them to the bar." Donnen grinned. "So what did you retire from?"

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you." The man gave him a lopsided grin in return. "You want to hear a badly told story about a bastard prince with an unholy love of cheese?"

"Why not? We've got time."

And while the blond man spun his unlikely tale, the two of them watched the last of the light vanish in peace.

*If Loghain was left behind in the Fade...*

He poured the last dregs of a pale Fereldan larger into a mug and headed out to the patio where an old soldier sat strumming a particularly battered-looking lute.

Donnen held out the mug like a peace offering.

"Thank you, guardsman." The soldier set aside the lute in favor of the mug with a businesslike efficiency. The grizzled mabari curled up at his feet flicked one ear, dreaming.

"It's just Donnen these days," He replied, looking out over the waves. "My time in the Kirkwall guard is over."

"Is it?" the soldier sighed, looking down at the sleeping dog. "If you don't still wake up from dreams about patrols, you're luckier than most."

The sun slipped down another notch in the sky behind them, and the wind coming in off the sea turned cooler.

"You know what I miss?" Donnen said. "The smell of the Lowtown Bazaar in the morning. Tow dozen bakeries with loaves of bread and sweet pies in the oven."

"There are worse things," the soldier laughed, "to remember about home than the smell of pies baking." Then he sighed again. "You really are luckier than most."

Donnen smiled. "Maybe so."

The old soldier raised his mug. "Here's to home."

At his feet, the hound twitched her paws, chasing rabbits in her sleep, and the last light faded from the sky in peace.

## MOONLIGHT ON THE FEAST OF SHADOWS

## TALES

*The front cover of this novel has a group of armed men and women fighting a horde of imaginary monsters, while a winged horse with a horn flies in the background against an enormous rainbow. There's text on the back:*

In the far future, a disparate group of men and women from all corners of the land band together to end an unstoppable evil! As these bold adventures go from traveling companions to friends, will their secrets and desires tear them apart?

Klode Lunelily: An ancient elf pulled out of time, this brawny warrior-scholar seeks only to return to her liege in the distant past... but the voices calling her forward aren't what they seem!

Ren: This mysterious thief used to sing in taverns while deftly lifting items from the wealthy. Many have fallen in love with the diminutive heartbreaker, but Ren has a dangerous pact with a sinister figure in the shadows...

Lancaster Marlowe: A gifted but eccentric mage traveling the wider world for the first time, Marlowe's ambition for power is matched only by an uncanny ability to thrust his new acquaintances into danger!

Elena Brightstone: A knight of low birth under a mysterious curse, the idealistic Brightstone seeks to bring honor to her family name while divesting herself of calamitous death magic that may doom everything that she holds dear...

Till'Ka: An orphan of great resolve, young Till'Ka seeks to restore the balance of magic in the world. To do that, she must seek guidance from her foster parents... if she can find a way back to the surface of the moon!

**Not all may survive their journeys, for these are the perils of a land unrecognizable... a time immemorial... join them in "Moonlight on the Feast of Shadows" at the end of the 13th age!**

*There is a note slipped into the novel.*

Enjoy the book, my dear! It's Lord Fleming's most ambitious yet. I'm not sure what a "moon-whale" is, and at times there is a *scandalous* amount of attention paid to young men's backsides, but I doubt that will put you off in the slightest.

## STORMS OF TEMPTATION

## TALES

*This tattered novel bills itself as a "sweeping romance on the eight seas, by Dan'el Mythril!" The cover shows a dark-skinned elf with long platinum hair hanging by one hand from the mast of his ship, a dagger in his teeth. A woman in an elaborate mask, low-cut dress, and almost as much hair as the elf, gasps up from the base of the mast. The elf is glaring at a tanned and chiseled human pirate, grinning as his vessel pulls alongside the Elf's ship.*

For the first elven captain in the Antivan Navy, Kiel Zebulon's inaugural assignment was a routine trading mission down to Wycome. Little did he know that the fiery Amethyste Couronne, a passenger he picked up in the Free Marches, was heir to an enormous fortune... A fortune Rivaini pirate Prince Elrado Huracan would do anything to get his hands on! Unable to resist Amethyste's pleas for help, Kiel found himself racing to get her back to Val Royeaux even as the ferocious Huracan pursued them-and their passions ensured the eight seas would never be the same!

*There is a note scribbled on the inside cover in dainty handwriting:*

If found, please return to Lady Yvette Montilyet