

Sasserine Part One

Cauldron's closest major city is the elusive city of Sasserine. Built perched on the jungle cliff top with the Feather River thundering through it, Sasserine is a city of breathtaking beauty, dark secrets and exciting adventure. The Fortress of Feathers is full of exotic intrigue, shops filled with marvels and mysteries, hidden cults and organizations, betrayal, treasures and above all answers to Cauldron darkest secrets.

*Contains Cauldron AP links and adventure hooks, Maps, City Descriptions including Sasserines famous Inns & taverns and much more. Pages of illustrations, ideas and infinite opportunities for adventure await.

Sasserine Part Two

Sasserine's exotic shops, markets, stalls and sellers are famous across the world for their quality of goods, magical treasures and unique feel. Rising up amidst the beautiful Lakeside Gardens are the beautiful manors, villas and castles of Sasserines powerful nobles. A powerful secret binds the rival houses and a sinister conspiracy of treason may yet bring down the kingdom stemming from one of these nobles houses.

*Part Two contains Shop, Market and Stall descriptions, nobles secret history and related powers, Architecture and History of the city. Illustrations, maps and detailed imagery assist to bring the city of Sasserine to life for your players.

Sasserine Part Three - Baycliff

Baycliff, Sasserines Docklands, rests on a rock outcropping between the towering Skyeciff's and the serene waters of Eaglebay. The great Featherfalls tumble down the cliff face and into the heart of the seaside town before flowing out into the sparkling blue waters of the bay. Sasserine proper looks down over the town, perched high above on the edge of the Eaglecliff and top of the Feather falls, high above.

*Part Three contains descriptions of the dark and sinister town of Baycliff. A write up of the powerful Merchant Families, underworld organizations and the poor commoners forced to live amongst them both.



Sasserine

Jewel of the Frontier Lands Fortress of Feathers

Cauldrons closest major city is the elusive city of Sasserine. Nothing has been officially published on the grand city yet it is a location that is frequently mentioned and probably sought out by adventurers as they advance through the path.

Below I have written up a version of Sasserine that can be used if your party chooses to visit the city.

Feel free to use the background, maps, ideas, venues, festivals, history, personalities, organizations and locations in any way you desire.

Make sure you get a chance to look through Sasserines's Docks – the Town of Baycliff near the end of the document.

I hope you enjoy the exotic city and its surrounding jungle kingdom....

Michael Farrell






Why would the adventurers come to Sasserine?

1. Cauldron is a small city. Sooner or later the city will not have the resources or facilities that the adventurers need. The maximum limit that any item can be bought for in Cauldron is 15,000 gp. Shops such as Skies Treasury may have the rare item they have obtained for over this limit but as a whole the party will need to travel elsewhere to procure items above this limit.

Adventure Hook – (Chapter 4 to 7) Skye is in desperate need for more items to sell in her shop now that Maavu is no longer fulfilling this role. Assuming she trusts the party, Skie asks the characters to travel to Sasserine and obtain items for her and even an alternative seller/merchant for the future. The party may wish to speak to Maavu for advice on the matter.

Adventure Hook – (Chapter 7 +) Skye's Treasury has been damaged and Skye forced to flee like the rest of Cauldron's citizens from the city. The city of Sasserine is said to have a market of such rare and powerful goods called the 'Bid' that powerful creatures travel from thousands of miles away just to visit. Finding the 'Bid' and gaining access is an adventure all in itself. (Stallions Tale Inn)



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2. **The Cagewrights and Ebony Triad have organizations in the city. Tracking down the groups will undoubtable reveal invaluable information on their future operations.**


Adventure Hook – The Striders have explored the Kopru Ruins in the wake of the parties conquest and bean to research the mysterious group and their motivations. In their investigations they discovered that the Ebony Triad has a headquarters in Sasserine and have had dealings with the Cagewrights in Cauldron recently. Hunting down the group and battling its monstrous three headed spiritual leader will uncover strange building plans for a twisted metal tree (Tree of Shackled Souls).

3. **The Chisel have secret contacts within the Seekers who have a headquarters set up in Sasserine who have recently unearthed a strange temple devoted to the elements.**



Adventure Hook – The Chisel are keen to reawaken their earth oracle. They believe that an unscrupulous group of explorers known as the Seekers may have discovered a draconic temple devoted to the worship of the elements. It is their hope that the key to the reappearance of their oracle may lie within the ancient temple walls.

4. **The exotic markets, stalls and shops within Sasserine are famous for their diversity of goods, unique spices and components, rare fruits and foods, and breathtaking jewellery and fabric.**



Adventure Hook – The elderly wizard known as Falliwing has known Cauldron as his home for decades. During his youth he contracted a mysterious disease while he explored the crumbling ruins of an ancient reptilian empire found in the jungles near Sasserine. No magic or common remedies seem to cure the illness.


The rest of his adventuring group have long since died in battle or been overcome by the wasting disease. For decades now Falliwing has relied upon merchants and, in particular Maavu, to procure a certain rare mixture of herb medicines from the Sasserine markets to ease his pain and slow down the disease.

Unfortunately (after Chapter 4) Maavu has been unable to travel to the city to buy the medicine for Falliwing in the wake of the riot. As a result Falliwing is becoming increasingly frailer and is continually wracked by coughing. Without the medicine soon, Falliwing will most certainly die.



5. **Sasserine's Inn's, Taverns and Shops are renown for their diversity, comfort and ability to cater for all needs. They are also full of secrets, hidden treasures, mysteries and an abundance of adventure opportunities. Nothing is what it seems in these seemingly harmless and ordinary establishments.**

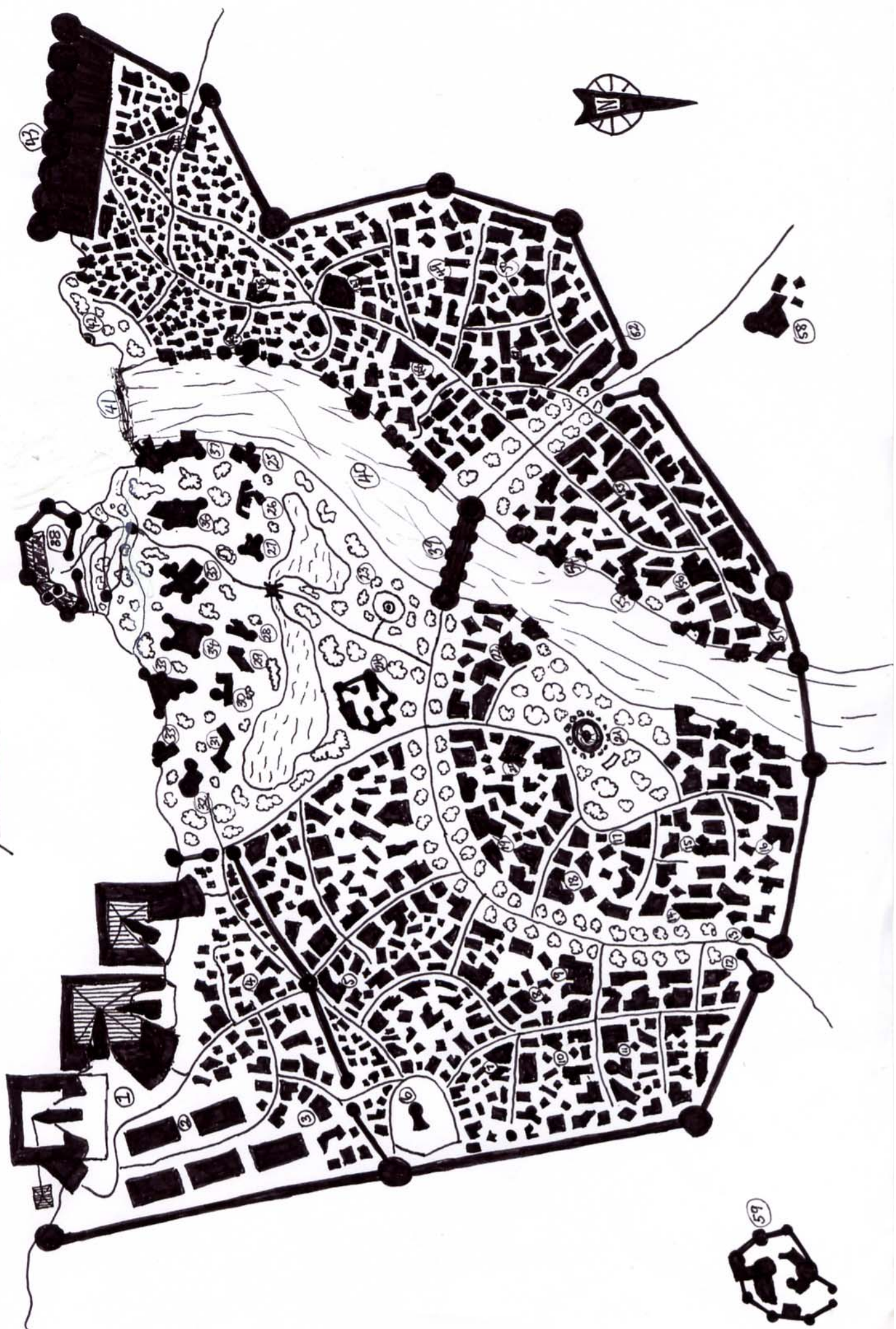
Adventure Hook – The Headmaster of Bluecrater Academy is trying to discover the whereabouts of an old student of his who now lives in Sasserine called Sebastian Brow. He would like to meet with him and possibly offer him a job. Unbeknownst to the Headmaster, Sebastian Brow is now known as Scarbrow and is the ex-adventuring proprietor of Sasserine tavern – The Leafy Branch. Scarbrow will be willing to meet with the old Headmaster, who he remembers quite fondly, if the adventurers can map out a particularly region/dungeon for him.

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6. **The Lord Mayor has gone missing (Post Chapter 7)! No one seems to know what has happened to Tereson and the new mayor – Lord Vhalantru seems nonchalant about the disturbing disappearance.**

Adventure Hook -. Lady Knowlern met with the Tereson the week of his disappearance after returning from Sasserine on a secret trip. The Lord Mayor confided in Lady Knowlern that he had beginning to suspect Lord Vhalantru of attempting to usurp his position and take control of Cauldron. To these ends he had travelled to Sasserine to learn more about the illusive noble. Lady Knowlern had heard he had returned but since this time he has not been seen of again. Lady Knowlern would like the party to travel to Sasserine and retrace the Lord Mayors steps to see what, if anything, he learned about his suspicions.



Sasserine





Sasserine Map

Key

1. *The Skyecranes (Merchants Cranes used to lower (& lift) goods to and from Baycliff)*
2. *Warehouses*
3. *The Stallions Tale (tavern)*
4. *Rheubans Stables*
5. *The Sealed Scroll (Book & Scroll Shop)*
6. *Market Hall*
7. *The Laughing Lady (tavern)*
8. *House of Zulatan (Moneylender)*
9. *The Golden Giant (tavern, dancehall, restaurant, Inn)*
10. *Dulguirs (rental costumes, finery, silks, furs, escort service)*
11. *Shrine of Moradin*
12. *Fempi's Home (sage – history)*
13. *Kings Parade (Sasserines Main Street and venue of the Kings Market)*
14. *The Mithril Mace (weaponsmith)*
15. *Blackhawk (armourer)*
16. *Shrine of Garl Glittergold*
17. *The Sandman (Inn)*
18. *The Lit Lantern Inn*
19. *The Golden Guard (Shrine of Pelor)*
20. *The Leafy Branch (tavern)*
21. *The Queens Fountain*
22. *The Floating Candle (Inn)*
23. *Lakeside Gardens*
24. *The Citadel of the Crown (Knights of the Crowns Garrison)*
25. *Zesster Manor*
26. *Crescentia Manor*
27. *Castil Manor*



28. *Starbe Manor*
29. *Gulkaal Manor*
30. *Rallian Manor*
31. *Jaclin Manor*
32. *Pharios Manor*
33. *Hormis Manor*
34. *Dineth Castle*
35. *Morsee Castle*
36. *Balnos Castle*
37. *Spindal Castle*
38. *The Eagle Loft (Royal Palace)*
39. *The Floating Arch (Main Bridge)*
40. *The Feather River*
41. *Feather Falls*
42. *Ciffside Gardens & Market*
43. *Skyecage Platform (Lifts down to Baycliff)*
44. *The Squeaky Wheel (Inn)*
45. *Sisaroons (Dancehall)*
46. *The Nightcat (tavern)*
47. *The Barracks (Inn)*
48. *All Sorts (Provisions & Equipment)*
49. *Orbul's Fine Carving & Furniture (Carpenter & Wizard)*
50. *Big Top Inn*
51. *Off the Map*
52. *The Winking Eye (Tavern)*
53. *The Toy Soldier (Toy maker)*
54. *The Deep Sleep (Inn)*
55. *Sytrotravins (Inn & Restaurant)*
56. *Shivian Shaves Shop (Potions)*
57. *Iardon's Hirelings (rental servants, escorts, loaders & lifters, mourners, messages or errand runners)*
58. *The Nightgate (Inn & Tavern)*
59. *Borderhold (Garrison of the Bordergaud)*



The Kingdom of Skylocke

Skylocke, Crown of the Frontier lands, is widely believed to be one of the most beautiful and exotic countries in the world. The kingdom of Skylocke, of which Sasserine is its capital city, naturally ascends higher than the rest of the surrounding lands, rising with the mountains into the sky itself, so it is said.

Majestic mountains, blanketed by lush jungles, soar into the clouds and ring the kingdom. Tropical rains feed the mountain streams which spill down mountainsides and pour into the roaring rivers that carve out the majestic valleys and flow towards the lowlands. These rivers quickly change into rapids and thundering waterfalls that cascade down from the heavens into the kingdom, before slowly changing into meandering rivers.


These tranquil waters weave through the shade of the ancient jungles, past the rolling hills and fern covered meadows before emptying into the legendary mirror-like surfaces of the three Skylakes. Ancient jungles of strange exotic and unique trees cover much of the lowlands and Skylocke's rolling hills are frequently blanketed in ferns and flowers.

For all its natural beauty Skylocke is a kingdom with a troubled and uncertain future. It is a kingdom of blended beliefs and customs – those steeped in tradition from a distant land and time, and those of the unforgiving jungle and its secrets. It is a isolated nation run by traditionally aloof nobility who do their best to ignore their mysterious and often threatening jungle surrounds.

It is small in terms of population with less than sixty thousand people living within its borders and most of these, within the kingdom's capital city Sasserine itself. Skylocke has always had a strong king and well-trained and equipped army despite its size. Mountain passes have always been fortified and guarded and the borders were watched vigilantly. For centuries Skylocke relied upon the great mountains that border the nation to defend and deter it from attack from other more ambitious and military people and monsters.

But today Skylocke is nigh defenceless against the approaching lizardfolk in the west and yuan-ti to the east. The jungles were once home to a reptilian empire and dinosaurs are a constant and ever increasing threat in the Skylocke wilds.

The king is dead, struck down with a mysterious disease that no healing, magical or natural, would cure. His only son who is but 15 years of age was forced to ascend to the throne and the king's brother, the Grand Duke, was appointed as steward until the new



kings 18th birthday. But disaster struck once again and the Grand Duke now lies near death with the same mystery illness.

Other problems also have arisen in the kingdom. Delvesdeep, the Mountain Dwarves city that has always supplied Skyelocke with the weapons, armour and iron it has needed, is under siege from above and below. Nestled into the base of the mountains, Tradesdeep, Delvesdeep's trade town, has been destroyed by Rocktrolls and it is believed orcs, grimlocks and illithid attack the city from beneath.


The City of
Sasserine
Fortress of Feathers

If Skylocke is the crown of Frontier Lands then Sasserine is its greatest jewel. Sasserine, Fortress of Feathers, was built perched on top of the Eaglecliffs and on either side of the Feather River over 350 years ago. It became Skyelocke's capital had its name changed 90 years ago by Skyelocke's then ruler – King Sasserine the I, the current kings great grandfather.

Sasserine was built to mimic the architectural style of abandoned elvish castle - White Spires, the majestic marble castle left glittering in the countries west hills by the mystic elves before the humans first settled onto the land. Tropical Gardens, ponds, hanging baskets, flower boxes and lifelike statues add to the exotic beauty of the city. Tropical gardens and exotic plants grow between and even over the buildings. The streets are always swept and rubbish disposed of.

Small exotic food and goods markets are dotted about the city opening daily. Once a month the Kings Market is held with merchants from distant cities and lands selling and buying wares. Small churches ring their bells to gather peritonizes on Faithday and town criers call out the news of the kingdom and distant lands.

Brilliantly coloured butterflies of all sizes and descriptions flutter about the city during the day. At dusk, families gather atop their rooftops, by their windows or in the city gardens waiting expectantly with handfuls of seed. At sunset from out of the surrounding jungles, flocks of tropical birds descend upon the city in a chorus of song, to join with the people. Great eagles soar down from the mountains to perch upon the Eaglespire Palaces marble towers, survey the city and feed upon the specially prepared meats left for them.



The mood has always been relaxed and peaceful in Sasserine. People wander from the cobbled roads towards the laughter filled taverns, drawn by the promise of cool mead and the delicious smell of a freshly cooked meal wafting out onto the street.

Recently though, the mood of Sasserine has changed somewhat. Uncertainty and worry hang in the air. The lustre of the buildings and the colours of the flowers give little comfort to the people when talk of war is so widely whispered. Fear is beginning to replace the feeling of serenity and security in Sasserine.

Attire & Dress

The City of Feathers is predominantly made up of humans. Some dwarves, halflings, gnomes, half-orcs, half-elves and even lizardfolk can be found in the city but they are a rarity and curiosity to most. Both Half-Orcs and Half-Elves do their best to hide their non-human heritage to 'fit in' and to the general insular citizens of the city this is not difficult.

Due to the cities relatively remote location and lack of foreign visitors, Sasserine's fashions have taken on a unique feel over the past four hundred years. Even the most prudish of nobles have adapted their dress to suit the tropical conditions.

Sasserine people often don hats adorned with tropical bird feathers and the men wear colourful flowing capes mimicking the colours of the tropical birds in the region. Noble women frequently wear jewellery shaped to resemble exotic birds made with precious metals, gems and feathers while dresses are brilliantly coloured, light and flowing. Women also frequently don headdresses adorned with bird feathers that spill down the sides. Fabric is light and cool and dresses usually armless.

Commoners and the poor, predominantly descendants of jungle tribes that once dwelled within the jungles of Skyelocke, are usually darker in skin tone and hair colour and wear less clothes than their richer counterparts. Men wear loose bright coloured flowing pants, favouring blues, reds, oranges and yellows, while leaving their tops bare or donning sleeveless vests. Women wear light flowing shirts and tunics. Feathered headwear and hair adornments are created from brilliant feathers.

Nobles also use the dress and grooming of the current king, queen and, to a lesser degree, popular or powerful dukes and duchesses, as a model for their own fashion. Many noble men still sport well-trimmed beards to match that worn by the late king.

Merchants sometimes follow similar fashion styles to the Sasserine nobility but only if they have the funds required to do so. Peasants and commoners never have the luxury of worrying about fashion.



Organizations

Adventurers are a rarity in Sasserine and Skyemount in general but there are plenty of organizations that would be of interest to the players in the jewel city.

The Ebony Triad operate within Sasserine and have a hidden temple within the noble villa of House Rallian. They are quickly growing in number and political influence with the aid of the head of House Rallian – Calif. The head of the order is a hideous creature spawned from the demonic union of the three past head clerics of the evil gods. The creature is incredible powerful and ambitious which does not bode well for a city such a Sasserine.



The Seekers have a headquarters here where they openly deal in relics, artefacts, art works, treasures and wonders from archaeological finds. The thick jungles around Sasserine have swallowed up countless ancient civilisations and empires and the Seekers are keen to exploit any wealth and treasure they can uncover. Adventurers and explorers are always welcome in their order.

The Illustrious Chapter of Wizened Wizards have their headquarters here and are eternally searching for explorers and treasure hunters to find powerful relics fuelled with arcane magic. Some of the Wizened Wizards leaders have recently uncovered the


possible location of tablets and stones fuelled with the same incredible magic as their own Arcane tablets possess.

A recently acquired explorers journal indicates stones bearing a similar description to the Arcane Stones being sited within the new frontier land. Another more ancient script indicates the possibility of tablets being buried in ancient shrines as close as deep within the ruins beneath the dwarven city of Delvesdeep in Skylocke. The Wizards are keen to find suitable, discreet adventures to discover if their research is correct.



The Spinal Noble Family have huge holdings in both the countries of Skylocke and Nardina. The current head of the family, Core Spindal, is well known as a trusted advisor to the crown and personally tutored the current Boy King – Cormac the III as a child. When the Grand Duke took ill, Cormac granted Core stewardship of the old seat of power in the kingdom - the White Spires and town of Sheoak. Unbeknownst to all, the Spinal family are working directly for the Nardina sovereign, King Tore, and is secretly behind much of the problems Skylocke is facing.





The Border Guard patrols the wilderness areas of the kingdom and acts as the land's first line of defence. They are trained to battle the fearsome Jungletrolls which plague the Skyemounts, and the gargantuan dinosaurs that increasingly threaten Sasserine and its surrounds. The Bordergaurs wield great axes, hammers and pole arms to battle the beasts and guard against outside dangers. The Bordergaurs are frequently absent from the city but during times of great need they can be found within its walls. The escalating dinosaur attacks and the organised siege on the dwarven trade town – Tradesdeep by the Jungletrolls, are of largest concern to the Guard, and many of their organisation secretly fear their small numbers will not prove enough to combat these threats.



The Crown Knights are the most prestigious and elusive order in Skylocke and have their headquarters in the City of Feathers. Charged with protecting the king, they are honoured and respected by nobles and commoners alike. Many attempts have been made upon the young king's life already and it is the knight's duty to protect and find the source of these attempted assassinations.

'The word and orders of the king is law and truth, never to be questioned nor wavered' reads the dictum of the order. This code has provided many knights numerous moral conflicts in the distant and more recent past.




The Cagewrights has operants in the city, researching the overgrown runes found just to the west of the city and in the lowland jungles. Currently they are being as careful as possible not to elude other interested parties of their find such as the Striders of Fharlanghan or the Seekers.



*The Legend of
The Eagle Princess*





Tropical Birds play an almost spiritual role in the city. One of the legends of King Cormac speaks of him rescuing a beautiful girl from the castle of an evil Storm Giant hidden high upon the windswept peaks of the Sleeping Giant Mountain. According to legend the girl was a princess to her people called the She, a group of Were-Eagles who had lived in the mountains around the Skylakes for generations. As a reward for her rescue the princess gave the king the Featherblade, which has been wielded by every king of Skyelocke to this present day. The legend also goes that Cormac married the exotic princess who became the first queen of Skyelocke.

In Sasserine it is a grievous crime to harm a bird and it paramount to murder to kill one. At dusk every evening thousands of tropical birds flock to Sasserine creating a cloud of brilliant colour and a chorus of bird song. Each home has a bird feeder on their window or roof which they fill daily to ensure the visit from the birds. Feeding the exotic birds at sunset is a ritual for almost every family and it is said that the day the birds cease to return to the city, Sasserine will fall.

Finding a fallen Eagle feather is believed to grant good luck and most citizens' prize and wear such a feather on their persons daily. Some feathers have been passed down through the generations and can be barely recognisable as such to the casual observer.

Sasserine Festivals


Sasserine has a number of holidays and city festivals. The most notable of these are the Founding Festival, The Midsummer Morn, The Druids Moon and the Feather Festival.

The Founding Festival

The Founding Festival celebrates the day when the city was officially renamed and made Skyelocke's capital. Originally, before it became a city, it was known as the town of Lakeside. When King Sasserine decided to change the counties capital from the mystically She castle of White Spires in the countries west to the lake town of Lakeside, he decided to completely rebuild the recently devastated town. After 5 years of construction, on the 5th day of Glimbal (first month of Autumn) in the year 311 IR (Isles Reckoning), the town officially became Sasserine, the city of feathers, and capital of Skyelocke.

Every year on the 5th of Glimbal, the city holds a great official parade down the promenade that ends in the royal gardens and the great statue of King Sasserine. This garden is closed to all but the royal family except for this one-day every year.

King Sasserine famously stated on the Sasserine's foundation day that 'all citizens of Sasserine would be seen as kings and queens to all others such is the splendour of



Sasserine'. Since this time it is custom for Sasserine Citizens to celebrate foundation day by wearing crowns themselves. Children place paper crowns upon their heads, women don beautiful crowns of flowers while men wear metal crowns typically made brass, copper or tin. All residents of Sasserine are given a holiday on this day. (The commoners from Shoremount are still expected to work though!)




The Midsummer Morn

The Midsummer Morn is a traditional festival for all people living in the frontier lands. It is the longest day of the year but more than that it is the day when the world seems at peace and happy. Evil seems to shrink away and cower in fear and nature seems to rejoice in the sun's light. It is a day celebrated with kindness and gifts beginning with the dawn light.

Gifts are traditionally exchanged at dawn between family members and lords are obliged to give serfs, commoners and servants gifts of gratitude for their years work and servitude. This particular tradition was waved during the reign of King Sasserine but was once again reinstated during the rule of King Edward the II, the current king's recently deceased father. All people across Skyelocke gain a holiday on this day.

People usually spend the day basking in the sun's light, having picnics amongst the old stone ring ruins or enjoying the city's gardens. A Feathership race is held every year upon this day, beginning in Sasserine travelling up the river and around the Skyelake before returning back down the river. A famous swimming race is also held called the Salars Favour. A great wooden sun is dropped upstream into the fast flowing waters to float down through Sasserine and towards the Featherfall waterfall and over the cliff. Participants attempt to be the first to swim out and reach it without flying over the edge. Holding the wooden sun aloft first is said to gain great favour from the heavens and winners receive much acclaim and rewards from all in Sasserine.

The Druids Moon



The Druids Moon is a day and night feared by most inhabitancy of the Isles. Also known as the Dark Gaze by the evil and deceitful, the day of the midwinter solace casts darkness and shadow across the earth. While the day of the Midsummer Morn causes the evil to hide and cower, the day of the Druids Moon causes evil to emerge with a renewed sense of strength.

The festival of the Druids Moon begins the night before the Midwinter Solace. Small communities, friends and family gather outside the city about great bonfires where they sit with torches and sing ancient songs to ward off the evil and to ask the moon to turn her gaze elsewhere. People paint around their eyes with yellow paint in the shape of the sun and wear clothes or long flowing robes coloured red, orange or yellow.

People bring along something of value to them and wrap it in an article of clothing which they have worn when committing a sin or evil in their eyes. At the end of the nights festivities the people throw the item into the roaring flames and watch the embers float to the heavens. Most people do not know the meaning behind the ritual but the old and learned believe the 'evil embers' float all the way to the heavens and appease the moon goddess thus leaving the people in peace for another year.

During the night and for the whole of the Midwinter Solace day, people burn crystal lanterns fuelled with special scented candles in their windows and hang ancient brass symbols of the sun upon their door. These objects are said to ward off evil particularly the dark spirits of the jungle who escape their gnarled trees in search of souls to feast upon during this night and the dark day that follows.

Feathered Festival

The Feathered Festival celebrates the rescue and marriage of the Eagle Princess to Cormac and the beginning of the Locklorian lineage from this joyful union. The festival is held on the first day of Waken (Spring) every year and is a very popular festival. During the evening dances and grand dinners are held in the communities and musicians, poets, jugglers, jesters and bards entertain the city throughout the day. Actors retell the rescue and courtship of Cormac and the Eagle princess and a joust is held outside the cities walls attracting knights from all over the Isles and beyond.

During the Feathered festival young women wear a single colourful Eagle feather in their hair and during the evening festivities they choose a man to gift the feather to. If they accept the feather the holder is expected to do whatever the young lady requests of them for the remainder of the night as if 'bewitched by their otherworldly beauty'. This can be very entertaining to all who watch and during the past, many couples have come together during the festival. The festival is a popular day for engagements and marriages.



Taverns

Below is a sample of inns and taverns the adventures may frequent during their stay in the City of Feathers.

The Laughing Lady

The Laughing Lady was originally named after it's huge jovial patron who was as friendly and happy as she was rotund – Mary Grundal. Mary's portrait hangs above the fireplace still laughing and her grandson - Lorus, equally rotund, now runs the tavern.

The Laughing Lady Tavern is a moderately priced establishment that sits in Sasserines West close to the docks and Plumes Garrison. It has a small loyal cliental which travel from all over the city to dine on large hearty meals and warm mead.

Lorus brews his own ale that is an acquired taste, thick and creamy with a heavy aftertaste but many other brews are available including Stouts from Delvesdeep, Lagers from the Cauldron environs and even wines from the elvish kingdoms of the north.


The Laughing Lady only serves one type of meal – large. Stews and soaps are most popular but pork, fish and venison are also served. Most meals are accompanied by hot buttered bread. Lorus' most popular dish is his rich stew he calls Lady's Choice that some nobles have begun to frequent the tavern just to eat.

The Laughing Lady is usually frequented by a mix of patrons keen to enjoy a good meal, good drink and good company. Many of the regulars have been coming here every day for year's even decades. The customers are usually a mix of merchants, sailors, nobles and travellers who are keen to keep their drinking hole safe and the same way as it always has been.

An old blind man wanders in every night with his white wolf to warm himself in front of the fire. Lorus always has hot stew and bread on the fireside table waiting for the old man. In payment the old man recounts stories, legends, myths and poems to any that would listen.

The Leafy Branch

The Leafy Branch Tavern is a haunt for travellers, explorers, scholars, sages and philosophers. The Leafy Branch has is cluttered with high shelves filled with overflowing tomes, scrolls, books and parchments. Walls not obscured by shelves are covered with maps and drawings.



People could be excused for believing this tavern some type of library instead but while a library is a quite sanctuary, the 'Branch' is alive with loud conversation, debates and outright argument.

Adventures are welcome here and employers are easy to come by. Many sages, scholars and collectors are continually looking for explorers or adventurers to prove a theory, discover a lost artefact or just map out a previously uncharted area for them.

Food is usually light and portions small. Wine and spirits are most commonly served. The Leafy Branch has no bar to speak of but waitresses quietly weave about the many tables, desks and books taking orders and delivering meals.

The owner of the branch, a retired explorer and treasure hunter called Scarbrow, is just as likely to be found in the kitchen, the cellar, the private attic libraries as he can be retelling past adventures or pawing over a new map in the common room.



The Winking Eye




The Winking Eye is one of the most expensive taverns in Sasserine. Patrons need to pay to enter and mediocre beverages and meals are sold for over inflated prices. Yet the Winking Eye remains one of the most popular taverns in all of Sasserine. Sailors, merchants, scholars and disguised nobles all rub shoulders in this crowded establishment willing to pay the exorbitant prices for what the tavern has to offer.

What keeps the patrons coming back is two simple things; singing and company. The Winking Eye attracts the best bards, minstrels and singers to entertain their patrons every evening and the large dance floor is always full.

The second attraction is the company. The Winking Eye seems to always have the most attractive men and women frequenting its bar room who love to chat, flirt and mingle with all.

The patrons of the Eye, is a middle aged couple keen to make everyone happy, well feed and at least tipsy by the time they tumble out of the door when the music stops early the next morning. Gean and Jennifer can always be found flittering about the tavern.

But for all its popularity, the Winking Eye has a secret. Gean and Jennifer believe it to be a harmless little lie geared at making people feel happy and attractive themselves. The secret is that many of the friendly beautiful women and men who frequent the Winking Eye are in fact actors. The taverns prices more than pay for the cost of their duplicity and most of the actors enjoy the company of the regulars now. The attractive actors are payed to converse, flirt, mingle and dance with the patrons, beyond this is left up to them.



The Stallions Tale is smoky drinking spot with cracked leather cushioned chairs, polished timber tables and floors and a wall stacked with barrels and kegs. Merchants, travellers and lovers of unusual and exotic beverages largely frequent the Stallions Tale.

The Stallion's Tale has brews, wines and spirits from all over the world, and some whisper, even beyond. Visiting merchants sometimes pay for weeks of food and drinks by handing over a barrel of beer or box of wine bottles as payment instead of coin. But the beverages need to be well kept and in good condition before they are accepted. Scarlet, the taverns owner, tests every brew herself and has a keen palate and decades of experience to draw upon when choosing to keep or discard a new drink.

Upstairs in the Stallion's Tale is known as the Bid, it is where merchants from the Barter Guild, Skyelocke's Merchant Guild, take up samples of their most unusual, expensive and valuable goods to sell to other merchants or to trusted and valued special customers. Artefacts, maps and magical treasures are sold in the taverns attic. Passes, red coins with the guilds symbol imprinted, are sometimes given to those who have helped the guild in someway, befriended a prominent member or handed over enough coin. Thieves and robbery never seem to be a problem...





The Night Cat

The Night Cat is an establishment that mimics its namesake – dark, sinister, sly, and dangerous it is not a place for the unwary or naive. It is the pit to find the underbelly of Sasserine, the pirates, thieves, burglars and smugglers. Most of the worst criminals are ‘relocated’ by the Plumes to Shoremount at the base of the Eaglecliffs at the first sign of trouble but some continue to evade the law and secret out a dishonest living in Sasserine.

The Night Jaguar once was known as the Waterwatch, sitting firmly in the river district with beautiful views of the sea and mountains behind. But as the tavern began to become more run down and neglected the more mundane guests began to seek newer more comfortable places to drink and the more seedy elements began to move in.

The tavern took its current name when the gambling and betting began in the establishment. The most popular game to bet upon in the tavern is the cat fights. One particularly large Black cat won for months in the den and in it’s honour the regularly began to refer to the tavern as The Night Jaguar. The current owner, Jasper loves the name for secretly he and his staff are all Werecats with allegiances to the Spindal family.

Gambling of all descriptions occurs in the Night Cat and it is rumoured that gladiatorial fights occur in its higher levels. Slavery is also linked to the Black Cat but no evidence has ever been returned of such activity. Both Skyelocke thieves’ guilds have agents that frequent the tavern and it is believed that deep within its cellars monsters are bought and sold.

A secretive organisation also uses the back room of the Night Jaguar to meet regularly. Calling itself the Broken Bell, the group believe that the commoners and poor that once lived within Sasserines white walls, should be given the right to return to live once again. Unlike the bulk of the organisation who work predominately out of Shoremount, this small group is particularly fanatical and dangerous, believing that revolution and the death of all nobles is the only way to achieve their goal.

Jasper is well aware of the groups aims and pretends he is an actively member. Secretly Jasper spies on the groups actions and plans and sends this information to his benefactor – Core Spindal.





Sisaroons

For decades, music and laughter have echo through the alleyways of Sasserine at night from Sisaroons. The fest hall is a place to dance and sing, drink and be merry. A small cost is incurred upon entrée and drink prices are slightly inflated but the atmosphere of Sisaroons and the chance to dance with young ladies and gentlemen, have keep this fest hall popular for decades.

The fest hall is shaped like a basin, with a level containing tables and seats ringing the dropped down wooden floor. Banisters and stairs descend to the great dance floor that is well worn from decades of use.

A large stage sits above the dance floor at the back of the hall and two balconies sit to either side overlooking the stage. These balconies are usually crowded with bands and musicians, who keep the infectious tunes flooding the floor.

The stage is home to great troops of dancing girls who are there to inspire and titillate simultaneously. Four bars open up in the walls at each 'corner' of the establishment.

Murder Mystery

Recently, a young couple, flushed from a night of dance, turned up butchered in an alleyway with strange marks covering their bodies. Their dismembered bodies were discovered in an alley off Trickle Street, only 5 minutes walk from Sisaroons. Sisaroons owners are anxious to avoid making this event public knowledge lest it destroy their business and the Plumes (city watch) hope to hire investigators to find the murderer before they strike again.





The Golden Giant

The Golden Giant was once the family manor of the Caspervitch Noble Family who have long been exiled from the kingdom. Five decades ago, a particularly ambitious and industrious young noble from the Eaglelore family bought the manor. Most nobles believed the young gentleman purchased the property for his own future family but they were quickly proved mistaken.

The young noble, Vigor Eaglelore, set about completely changing the large walled manor into a immense tavern, inn and fest hall. Today it is the most prestigious, comfortable and luxurious taverns in the whole of Skyelocke.

The Golden Giant stands five stories in height and has expansive grounds, stables and gardens. All serving staff are polite and well spoken, proper etiquette is essential. Customers are greeted by well-dressed guards at the gates and directed to the main doors to enter the Golden Giant. Unsavoury individuals are turned away at this point.

Stable boys are also waiting at this point to take customers steeds to the grand stables. Special services are available to have steeds pampered while the customers enjoy the facilities for a cost.

Waiting at the doors are butlers who guide the people to the desired areas within the manor. For an additional cost a herald can be hired at this point to herald the customer's arrival, calling out titles, exploits, accomplishments, holdings before they enter the restaurant, tavern, fest hall or private rooms. Some particularly vain customers even hire herald to herald their arrival into the lavish bedrooms upstairs.

Personal servants can also be hired at the front doors to get all drinks, meals, relay messages or prepare areas for their arrival.


Bottom Level

The bottom level of the Golden Giant is the restaurant, tavern and private function rooms. Hundreds of people fill this level and private parties, gatherings and meetings are held in the private rooms.

The Hungry Giant

The restaurant, called the Hungry Giant, serves local cuisine plus more exotic dishes from distant lands. The meals are considered unparalleled in Sasserine but the nobles have limited experience in this area though considering most have not even frequented any other tavern in Skyelocke. The restaurant also serves a huge variety of beverages including teas from imported from the mainland.

The Toppled Giant



The tavern is known as the Toppled Giant, and is fitted with cushioned booths, hardwood tables and has a long gold gilded bar. At the end of every booth is a tap and at the customers request, barrels of ale, beer stout, wine or even spirits can be carried over and hooked up to the tap. Barrels are pre-purchased and locked in behind the tap and the customers are given mugs or glasses to fill themselves. Light meals such as soaps, spiced breads, cheeses and fruits are served at the tavern but customers wanting larger meals are directed to the Hungry Giant down the hall.

The Giant Gathering

The function rooms are collectively known as the Giant Gatherings. Some hold no more than a small table and 4 chairs while others hold up to 500 people with a loft for a band and great dining tables and fireplace. This larger room was once the feast hall of the estate but now is hired for particularly large banquets, private balls and ceremonies. Most nobles prefer to have their special feasts in their own estates and manors but sometimes these are either too small or a neutral location is required. The banquet room has an adjoining kitchen.

Second level

The second level is one immense fest hall where great dances, balls and noble gatherings are held. For the majority of the time this level is only partially used. In this area a great stage productions are held - theatre productions, plays, performance's, famous minstrels and bards perform here in front of great crowds.

Third, Fourth and Fifth Levels

The top three levels of the manor are collectively known as the Sleeping Giant. The third level has 10 large luxurious rooms with their own bathrooms and toilet. The fourth level is divided into four huge suites the each the size of house. Finally the top level is all one beautiful suite with room for servants, a kitchen, toilet, dinning room and 4 large bedrooms. All levels have magnificent views of the city, lake, surrounding countryside and distant ice capped mountains.

Caspervitch's Caves

The Caspervitch Noble Family was exiled from this manor and all of Skyelocke because of Talosis Caspervitch's, the family head at the time, attempt on the kings life. Before Talosis was executed and his family exiled he claimed he had been forced to try and assassinate the king lest his own family be drawn into the darkness beneath and devoured for all eternity.

Talosis also said in the hours before his death that he had discovered caves leading deep beneath his manor and ruins of reptilian empire and other more ancient structures, lay waiting full of riches, alien treasures and artefacts. Talosis frantically warned that he had unwittingly opened a dark portal while he searched that lead to Ebean's dark underbelly.

A winged giant of utter darkness and its dark shadow stained minions had begun to seep through.

Whether this story was a crazed attempt to save his own life or the true confessions of a desperate man may never be known. What is known is that very few of the Caspervitch family were exiled on the day of Talosis' execution the rest simply fled on their own account or disappeared utterly from Sasserine.





The Floating Candle

The Floating Candle was constructed as part of King Sasserine's grand rebuilding project almost 90 years ago. The two-story building is built in the grandiose style of the time - King Sasserine's attempt at mimicking the architectural style of She. White washed walls, flower boxed attic windows and a shingle roof, the building has been beautifully preserved and is constantly maintained.

The Floating Candle has been a number of other things before it became an Inn. When it was first built it was a private residence, then a boarding house, a brothel, a private residence once again all before becoming the Inn. The Inn has changed names and owners many times over the years also before being purchased by the current owner Malcloth Mippelspoon, and becoming the Floating Candle.

A large portrait of a matronly lady holding two children on her lap adorns the wall behind the front desk giving the Inn an old world feel.

The Floating Candle is a magical place to be nurtured and cared for. Unseen servants tuck you in at night, stir the fires during in the middle of cold nights, shut the window shutters and guide you step with floating magical candles as you walk down darkened corridors. A soft female voice sings lullabies to guide you off to sleep.

There is a definite aura of peace and safety in the Floating Candle and people feel content to relax and sleep soundly the night through. People who struggle to properly sleep are directed to the Inn and parents with wakeful babies often visit the Floating Candle.


The inn is open every day of the year except on the anniversary of the Night of Flame where Malcloth honours the memory of those who died on that horrible night by closing his doors.

The Anniversary of Flame

There is no unseen servants, magic mouths or any other special spells cast in the Floating Candle to make their stay more comfortable. And there is a good reason why the building has had so many owners.

The Floating Candle is haunted.

Before the city became Sasserine and the building was rebuilt, an orphanage once rested where the Inn now stands. An old group of women devoted themselves to helping the poor and protecting the children who had no parents or home to go. On the Night of Flame, the orphanage was burnt to the ground. Desperate to save the little children's lives



the women risked their lives over and over again to enter the burning building to rescue the crying infants. Just before the building collapsed the matron of the orphanage tried to find the remaining children, but never made it out.

Since that time the matron has cared for the residences of the building that is now known as the Floating Candles as if they were one of her little children. To her the customers of the Inn are orphans and she protects them, comforts them and sings to them to get them to sleep.

The large portrait of the woman nursing two children was rescued after the Night of Flame from the smoking ruins centuries ago and has hung in its rebuilt walls ever since. During the weeks leading up to the anniversary of the Night of Flame the portrait seems to change disturbingly.

While the rest of the year is a place of peace and care in the Floating Candle, on the anniversary of the Night of Flame it is the complete opposite. The whole interior of the Inn appears to be ablaze, smoke obscures all sight, radiating heats seems to burn the flesh from your bones. Most disconcerting though is a chorus of desperate voices of the trapped children who cry in vain for help. The matron's voice adds to the din and she frantically races about the building searching for her burning children.

Malcloth wants to help the matron who has unknowingly helped him so much. He wants to make sure that the truth of his Inn never gets out but if he can find a group of adventurers he can trust he hopes they can help the old lady. Malcloth believes the answer is in finding the orphans, or at least their remains, on the anniversary of the Night of Flame.





The Lit Lantern

This 3-story Inn has a small bottom level, a bigger 2nd level and a still larger, 3rd level. Every window in this strange looking building has a lantern affixed that eternally burns. Hanging above the front entree is a huge magical lantern that never goes out. Every night the Inn shines like a beacon across the city, attracting people, birds and thousands of moths. Galf, the Innkeeper, is widely known as an eccentric man but to possess a warm and friendly nature.

The Lit Lantern is always warm and is particularly popular in the summer months when tall mugs full of cool refreshing beverages are served. The bottom level is designed for people to lounge in comfort couches before the fire while sipping at hot mugs of tea, coffee or chocolate during winter or cold mugs of beer or wine during summer. Travellers enjoy the chance to relax and talk to friends and fellow customers. The Innkeepers wife, Falxineen, accepts guests in the daylight hours but never after dark.

All rooms are well lit with candelabras and heated with small fireplaces. Canopy beds are comfortable and well cushioned. Affixed to every windowpane, in every room, is a continually burning, ancient lantern. These lanterns are usually only used by people during the festival of the Druids Eye, with crystal housing and a bronze sun symbol facing out into the night. Shutters can be closed to dim the light but each room is never truly dark because of the lanterns.


The Dark Tide

When the Innkeeper was a child he lived in an outlying farm on the edge of the Feyjungle. On the night of the Druids Eye, the family enjoyed the festival with their friends before returning home to go to sleep. During the night Galf could not sleep because of the old candle-lit lantern resting on his room's windowsill. Peering around at his other 4 brothers and sisters just to make sure they were asleep, he tip-toed over to the window and blew the candle out.

As he crept back to his bed, he heard a strange wailing carried on the wind through the open window. Shivering from fear Galf watched in the moons light a wave of black spirits wash over the hills towards his lonely home. Frozen in terror he saw the spirits scream through his window and descend upon his sleeping brothers and sisters tearing at their bodies.

Galf screamed in fear as he witnessed the spirits rip his brothers and sister's very souls from their bodies and hold them aloft. He watched in horror as they began to feast upon them as they thrashed about trying vainly to escape.

Galf will never forget the sense of utter helplessness he had felt when they turned to him as one and opened their mauls impossible wide and wailed. As their wispy fingers



reached for him and began to pass through his chest, he felt his soul shudder and cry out in agony. He knew the endless darkness was close.

But as the darkness began to swallow him up a wave of light turned the tide of darkness that had sort to swallow him. Forcing his eyes open he saw the spirits shriek in fear and frustration and flee from the light. It was only the appearance of his parents, bursting through the door and holding Salars lanterns that had saved his life.

To this day, the guilt of this night and the terror of the Dark Spirits of the Jungle, linger like the pain of a fresh wound. He still bears the white scars of the spirits fingers upon his chest. He believes without any whisper of doubt that the same spirits that had sort to feast upon his soul, will continue to seek to finish the meal that they were unable to complete all those years ago.

The Lit lantern is testament to this fear and his obsession of keeping protecting himself and his wife, spawned the Inn. Galf's obsession extends to not only the night of the Druids Eye but to every night in the year.

Galf has quite a stockpile of light making devices and items, both magical and mundane but is always on the lookout to acquire more. Occasionally Galf can be persuaded to sell or even give such items to people who wish to force back the tide of night.





Deep Sleep

The Deep Sleep is a large single story inn that stretches over the area usually reserved for four common houses. A colourful painted sign depicting a child sleeping on a crescent moon hangs above the main door. The doors of the well-known establishment open at dusk and the mouth-watering aroma of freshly cooked biscuits and cake waft out to the waiting customers. Through the doors is short corridor that leads to a small room with a large desk. It is here that Mallios, the innkeeper, greets weary travellers and guides them to their rooms.

Two long corridors branch out from the desk room covered in portraits and old ornaments. Heavy doors dot the corridor opening into comfortable, if somewhat badly lit, rooms. A plate of warm cake or biscuits always await guests and they are offered a complimentary drink of their choosing that is brought to them before sleep.

Beds are comfortable and clean, and baths can be prepared for customers upon request. Prices are cheap and the staff are always friendly and accommodating. Customers find sleep easy to come by in the quite, cosy Inn.





Cake & Biscuits

Deep Sleep Inn hides an enclave of vampires.

The vampires use the Inn as a ready and easy supply of blood that they draw from their sleeping customers. The vampire's feed the customers drugged biscuits and drinks to ensure they do not wake up during the process and take only what they need to satisfy their thirst.

The conclave's leader –Volusis an ancient and extremely powerful vampire fey was born before man first walked upon this land. Such is his power he no longer recoils from garlic nor holy symbols and sunlight causes him no harm. Volusis frowns upon killing a customer unnecessarily. Repeated offences means death by his hand or fangs.

Members of the conclave are given a small ring that enables them to cast minor healing to erase the telltale bite marks they leave upon the victim. Victims that awaken while a vampire is in their room quickly join their numbers or join the pile of bones hidden in the vampire lair deep beneath the Inn.

Volusis and his conclave occasionally search for victims elsewhere in the city but they are extremely careful to keep their existence a secret. Volusis has spies everywhere in Sasserine and Skyelocke, even the royal court has not escaped his withered grasp.

The Barracks

The Barracks is the cheapest Inn within Sasserine. As its name would suggest it was once the barracks for the city guard that have long since moved to the Plumes Citadel in the city's southwest.

The Barracks offers a very cheap, if rough, alternative to overnight accommodation in the city. Rooms are small, barely squeezing in a bed, desk and wooden chest. Customers can hire a key to both the door and chest for extra. Beds are fitted with a straw mattress and the walls are dotted with holes, cuts and scratches. In some rooms the walls are so poor that you can see straight into the room adjacent to it.

Sitting on top of each of the box chests is a small basket filled with rags. What the barracks is most famous for are their cats. Upon arrival customers are recommended to hire a cat for the night to guard over them and their sleep from the Jaguars, mice and large insects that infest the old building. For a few coppers, almost the cost of a normal room, a cat will guarantee customers an undisturbed sleep.

The old mesh hall plays home to these felines. Another more secret room plays home to the specially bred Jaguars and mice that are released in the Inn to keep the cats and their owners in a job.



Game Of Cat & Mouse


Unbeknownst to the owner - Sinthigh Hackelweed, one of his cats is actually an advanced doppelganger that has the ability to alter itself into any creature of tiny, small or medium size. During the night the doppelganger attacks its victim and then assumes their identity until they leave the Inn, where it changes back into a cat and wanders back inside.

The doppelganger recently unwittingly killed a girl travelling to Sasserine on an errand for a wizard hailing from Cauldron called Cinderlan. The girl was to become one of the Cinderlan's apprentices and she had taken great joy in watching the girl grow into a young woman from infancy.

When the girl failed to return, Cinderlan travelled to Sasserine from her home in Cauldron, in Skyelockes northwest, in search of the missing young woman. Cinderlan's search led her to the Barracks. Since this time Cinderlan has sent her familiar, a Jaguar called Sniffle, to spy on the Inn. Cinderlan is looking for outside assistance in the matter from qualified adventurers.

The Nightgate

The Nightgate is a large Inn and tavern, catering for those who arrive after the city gates close at night and for the farmers who live in the region.



The Nightgate Inn is one of Skyelockes oldest buildings and is full of history and stories. Initially constructed as a fortified hall for the village of Cliffside 350 years ago when Cromac first lead the Skyts into the land.

From these humble beginnings the building has now become a large three-story building with adjoining stables, small docks and vegetable garden. Scores of rowboats can be found docked at the Inn at dusk as farmers who live along the lakeshores or riverbank travel to the Inn to enjoy some company, the pint of ale, a hearty meal and maybe even a few puffs of a pipe. Watching the lantern lit rowboats take to the water can be both beautiful and humorous depending upon the rowers state of intoxication of a night.

Even though the village of Cliffside eventually moved from around the building, to further east along the lakes shores, the Nightgate has always stood firm and remained where it has always been.

The Nightgate has some of the freshest food in all of Sasserine as farmers are always looking for an excuse to travel to the Inn to ‘sell their goods’. Food is bought daily and meat is never spoiled or heavily spiced to disguise the flavour. The Nightgate does not have an extensive selection of beverages on sale. Ale and mead is brewed in the cellars and wine is occasionally available.

One of the most popular dishes in the Inn is the Sykt Trout found in the Skyelake , Featherfall River and local mountain streams. It is served whole with a lemon with fresh bread and wine or ale is included. Rooms are comfortable but, with no protection or obvious barriers, a cold as an icy north wind often blows in from the snow capped Skyemounts and across the lake straight to chill the bones.

The Inn has heavy fortified front doors and has arrow slits instead of window on the first and second floors. On top of the roof the Inn has a mounted ballista with a pile of bolts prepared. The Inn has been the target for many raids by bandits, goblins and even pirates over the years and has been pillages many times in its history. The Nightgate is always prepared for another such occasion when it may need to defend the local farmers and itself.

The She


Long before the humans first rode into the region, the She lived along the Skyelake shores, Feather River and the Eaglecliff. The She have now all but abandoned the jungles, mountains, lakes and rivers but their traditional city, lost beneath the Sleeping Giants Peak still remain undiscovered by the humans. One of the secret gates to the city lies beneath the Nightgate Inn.

The owner and bar keep of the Nightgate is a descendant of the She, Doilena Silkwave. Doilena is a beautiful woman with long flowing golden hair and deep blue eyes who possesses a grace and charm rarely seen today. Doilena is a gifted sorcerer and has the

ability to assume the form of a Eagle and charm at will but lacks the more powerful abilities of a full blood She.

Doilena is visited every spring by a group of She who make an annual visit to observe the mountains, the city and the descendants of the Eagle princess. Recently Doilena discovered an old statue in the heart of Sasserine that had strange runes engraved into its base. Doilena found the writing to be She and read - 'When the Sky and Land are reunited, when the stone, tree and hill merge, shall the Eagle nest once more upon the mountain and the city again shall rise'. Doilena is currently attempting to discover the meaning behind the inscription and how it came to be written on the base of a human statue.





Sasserines more 'mundane' Inns

The Squeaky Wheel

The Squeaky Wheel is a boarding house owned and run by a middle-aged lady by the name of Mynster. Mynster is an old fashioned, mothering type who only accepts long-term customers of good morals and manners. Mynster lives on the top story of this two-story building that rents out the bottom 5 rooms of her abode for every reasonable prices and is happy to cook for renters for next to nothing.

Rooms are comfortable but small, with clean soft beds that are made daily. Mynster has the unfortunate habit of listening behind doors and even putting her ear to the floor just to check up on her renters.

Mynster does not tolerate drunkenness and late revelling in her boarding house.

Sytrotravins Inn

Sytrotravins Inn and tavern is a small Inn that has serves a selection of unusual foods and beverages based on typical jungle gnome meals and small but cosy rooms. Meals are a selection of roots, berries, spiced mushrooms, fruits, vegetables and game birds. The common beverages found in Sytrotravins are heavy and thick stouts and ales.

Roast pheasant with herbed potatoes, spiced mushrooms, leafy vegetables and served with a mug of warm ale is the most popular meal in Sytrotravins.

Rooms are cosy to say the least and humans have to stoop to enter through the doors. Beds are not small though (not anymore at least) and rooms are scented with pine leaves and pinecones are used as fuel in the small fireplaces. Food and drinks can be pre-ordered and brought to customer's rooms.

Owned and run by one of Sasserine's very few non-human citizens – Sytrotravin is a jungle gnome who chose to leave his people in the search for wealth at an early age. Sytrotravin Inn was designed with smaller people in mind with tables, chairs and bar all only three quarters the normal size.

When designing and building the Inn when he first moved to Sasserine, Sytrotravin underestimated the size of humans. The Badger Beer Inn in his childhood home of Glimnar, had all furniture under half the size of typical human Inns so Sytrotravin estimated that three quarters would be more than big enough.

The Sandman

The Sandman is an average Inn with a strange Inn Keep. The Inn Keep is a small beautiful gnome girl called Glenden who ensures that he customers are always at ease and comfortable. Many customers are put off by the Inns run down appearance but few can argue to the comfort, sense of ease and restful sleep experienced in the Inn.

Glendin achieves this feel through excellent alchemy. The Sandman is, in reality, one great big alchemy experiment for Glendin. The money acquired from the Inn customers is a secondary bonus. Glendin places powders in the pillows, incense burning in the rooms, dried concoctions on the door handles and mixtures in the complimentary sweets. Most are very beneficial - relaxing people, sending them to sleep or calming them down but a few cause unusual side effects.



Big Top Inn

Big Top Inn is built to resemble a great circus tent from the exterior. Walking through the front 'flaps' can be very overwhelming for first time visitor. Where not a foot from the entrance not a sound can be heard, upon walking within the tent the customers is struck by a wave of sound.

The bottom level of this Inn is one great open are with straw covering much of the floor. Huge animals from distant lands wander the area along with clowns, acrobats, jugulars and other acts. An audience of hundreds sit around the edges of a ring, all cheering, clapping and laughing at the entertainment.

A stand is set up a few feet from the entrance where the Ringmaster awaits with a great smile and colourful attire. 'Welcome to the greatest Inn on this Earth' he always begins.

Paying customers can watch the show at their leisure and those seeking a nights lodging are directed by clowns to the ladder which climbs up to the second level some 20 feet up or the elevator that is lifted by elephants.

When you reach the second floor the great noise of the circus ceases immediately as if silenced or stopped by the floor. Rooms ring the exterior all with colourful beds, paintings and furniture. The interior area is filled with cushions, couches and soft rugs to lounge upon and engage in conversation with the other guests.



Dorlars Circus

Dorlar once had one of the most successful circus acts in the entire mainland. He, his beautiful wife and troop had regular audiences exceeding the thousands. That was until they were found out.

Dorlar had made a fortune with his amazing animals and acts but none of them had really existed. His beautiful wife, Launa was an accomplished illusionist who had weaved her magic to create a wondrous show while Dorlar had raked in thousands. When they were finally found out by a cabal of mages, Dorlar and his lovely wife fled across the Stormy Straight to the Frontier Lands before eventually settling in Sasserine.

Today they do not attempt to deceive their customers and instruct them that the circus acts are one great-programmed illusion. Many customers actually find this comforting knowing that the acts will never go wild and attack them or visit them as they sleep.

Interesting & Unusual Sasserine Shops

Shivian Shaves Shop

A ramshackle shop lies hidden away in Sasserines eastern quarter squashed up against the cities White Wall. Multiple chimneys sprout from the roof and walls of the strange dwelling, producing columns of multicoloured smoke. Disturbing noises, mixed with the sound of haunting music, echo down the maze of narrow alleyways that lead customers towards the shop.

Walking through the doors visitors are greeted with a disorganised jumble of shelves, boxes, cabinets, barrels and chests filled with vials, flasks, bottles and parcels of all shapes, sizes and descriptions. Concealed behind the clutter, at the back of the room is the shop counter where a small silver bell rests. Ringing the bell summons the proprietor of the shop - a skinny, pasty skinned man with greasy hair known as Shivian Shave.

Shivian Shave is only a young man but has little regard for his appearance and speaks with a heavy lisp which has made more than one of his would be customers chuckle involuntarily. Doing so guarantees escalated prices at the very least, a swarm of poisonous insects in their bed the very worst.

Shivian Shaves sells all manners of potions, salves, components and poisons of all descriptions. All wares are of excellent quality and Shivian creates a huge array of unique concoctions and specialises in extraordinarily potent poisons. Customers are asked to



wash their hands in a small bowl that Shivian produces and then fills with every purchase.

Shivians shop receives little customers and even the few that browse its wares can afford its prices.


Shivian Critters

Shivian has always had an obsession with insects ever since childhood which quickly began to ostracize him from the other children. As he grew so did his collection and the size and danger of the insects. Shivian's obsessions in insects lead to experimentation with their parts and poisons and to his interest in components and chemicals. Shivian quickly became an extraordinarily skilled alchemist specializing in insects.

Today Shivian is internally searching for insects of all shapes and sizes. Shivian regularly sponsors exhibitions to kill or capture rare or monstrous insects within Skyelocke and in more distant exotic lands. Shivian pays handsomely particularly if the insect is well preserved or still alive.

The Toy Soldier

The Toy Soldier is the unofficial name for a house hidden away in Sasserine's southwest corner, close to the Red Gate. The Toy Soldier is the home of an old man who creates marvellous toys for those children who he feels will most value his creations. Thangrin never creates a toy for someone who he distrusts finds rude, arrogant or secretive no matter what the reward offered. Wealth is of no consequence to the mysterious craftsman and the children of nobles and the poor are just as likely to treasure one.



Thangrin is a remarkable toy maker, creating toys of breathtaking beauty and incredible worth. People often remark that Thangrin must be old indeed because many grandparents can recount the time when they first were given one of his toys as a small child themselves.

The venerable man's work can never be rushed which frequently frustrates his impatient clientele. Sometimes toys take years to craft, other times mere weeks. Time seems of no consequence to the elderly smith.

Thangrin has created dolls that can walk, talk and cry, birds that can fly about the room and sing beautiful melodies. He has created music boxes that contain dancers that enchant the viewer with their beautiful movements and miniature soldiers that war with each other on a battlefield directed by excited children. Thangrin also has also been known to create jewellery and toy weapons for children to wear.

Thangrin creates artwork not mere toys owners boast. His toys are always unique and appear almost magical in their function and actions. Indeed some people claim their toys sometimes act upon their own accord and some have even claimed to have been awoken from danger by the old man's creations!



Thangrin's Secret

Thangrin is a golem. A unique golem with incredible abilities, skills and powers, Thangrin is a golem none the less. He disguises himself using a magical cloak that he is



never without. He has collected a huge array of magical wands, devices and items to protect himself with.

Thousands of years ago the High King of Crescentia, Kingdom of the She, created Thangrin. Legend speaks of King Melinsee creating 3 golems from earth and cloud, iron and oak, and imbued within them intelligence and spirit that equalled his own.

To each golem he imbued a task. The first he created to protect his children, the second to teach the mysteries and marvels of the world and the final golem was to create wonders of metal, rock, gem and wood for the children to be entertained by.

Thangrin loved nothing more than to make the children happy and gasp with delight and astonishment at his new creation.

As the princess and the two princes grew into adults the king sent one of the golems with each. The princess chose first and asked that Thangrin would come with her. Thangrin had always cherished the company of the young princess above all others and was delighted to come with her.

Thangrin spent less than a year alone with the princess as her servant before the giants led by Corrunice the legendary white wyrm, swept into the kingdom of the She. The war ended upon the Battlefield of Tears when the princess rode into battle wielding her flaming sword leading her people to battle. At the end of the battle the princess lay dead, mortally wounded from an elven blade not a giant, betrayed by her guard when she most needed them. Out of anguish more than defeat, the She fled and hid from Corrunice.

Thangrin would have never believed he was capable of such feelings of terrible sorrow and refused to flee with the She. Instead the golem spent decades creating a magically tomb for the princess and then returning to the hiding elves, secreted her body away with him to place within his beautiful tomb where he could forever protect her.

Today, thousands of years later, Thangrin still protects the princess but does not spend ever moment by her magically preserved body like he once did. Thangrin is confident his tomb will remain protected and undiscovered without his continuous presence.

Thangrin still returns to the princess's tomb on the anniversary of her death where he mourns her passing next to her marble coffin amidst her remarkable tomb..

What ever happened to his two 'brothers' Thangrin may never know but his worst fear remains that one day the She or the Giants that sort her death, may one day seek to find the missing elven princess and take her away from him forever.



Off the Map

A swinging sign shaped like a treasure map hangs above this small shop heralding the name of the shop to all who pass. The doorway to the Off the Map is 5 feet in height and stepping through the door reveals that the roof is no more than 6 feet high. This causes tall customers to stoop and bend to avoid hitting their heads while attempting to not bump into the shops may obstacles. Rows of shelves fill the room and in its centre a low weathered table sits blanketed in parchments and maps of all kinds. Sitting here, immersed in her work, customers will usually find the proprietor of the shop – Tally Twindelkin.

Tally is a Fiddlekin (halfling) who has lived in Sasserine most of her years. Tally came from a family of explorers and developed a love of maps and exploring from them. Tally sells and buys good quality maps for reasonable prices and can make multiple copies of existing maps on demand.

Customers are welcome to browse the shop or ask Tally for more specific assistance as per their desire or need at any given time. Tally has a story for every map in her shop and given half a chance will recount the tale to any who show half an interest.

Tally has a huge array of recent maps of almost every location across the Inis Isles, the Mainlands and even some other partial maps of more distant unconfirmed, exotic lands. Tally also has a good collection of more older maps of now lost cities, dungeons, towers and keeps and will buy quality maps of adventurers of similar locations.





The Journeyman's Quill

Tally not only inherited her parent's love of mapping and exploration but in her younger years, when her parents passed on, she also inherited the Journeyman's Quill. The Journeyman's Quill is an amazing item that enables Tally to lovingly draw up completely accurate and flawless maps.

Most remarkably Tally can use the Journeyman's Quill to create magical maps that enable the owner to speak a magic word, point to a location on the parchment and be instantly teleported there. Tally can use the Quill to create maps of varying ability, transporting the owner varying amounts of time per day. To create such a map Tally must use extremely rare and expensive ink of which she is always seeking its components.

Tally does not sell the Journeymen's Maps to unfamiliar customers and only reveals the secret of her Quill to her trusted friends.

Tally is an accomplished explorer and occasionally seeks adventurers to accompany her or explore for her, new maps of exotic lands, ancient cities and forgotten treasures.

Sasserine *Shops, Stalls & Markets*


Not every shop, Inn and Tavern in Sasserine holds some secret, mystery or adventure. By far the majority are run of the mill, common establishments. Most shops are more like covered stalls than rooms and customers approach the counter off the street to buy their wares or services.

Merchants that belong, or have ties to, one of Baycliff's Merchant Families run over half of Sasserine's shops and stalls. The rest of the merchants keep their independence by paying fees to the crown rather than taking membership to a family.

Kings Parade is Sasserine's main street which loops from Horngate to Redgate, from one side of the city to the other. To the south of Kings Parade lies the Eagles Loft, the royal palace, Lake Cormac, the nobles manors and estates and the royal gardens.

To the north of The March lies the homes of the middle class, Sasserine's Taverns and Inns, the Queens Gardens and some of Sasserine's more unusual shops. Besides Kings Parade, Sasserine has two other smaller markets that can be found in the city's southwest corner called the Cliffside Market and to the city's east called the Merchants Corner.

Merchants Corner



The Merchants Corner is where most of the city comes to purchase fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, breads, grains, roots, berries, beverages, cheeses and foods in general. The market opens every day just before dawn when the noble's servants arrive to purchase their goods before the day begins. As the sun rises the Skyecages rattle up the cliff face bearing the common workers, servants and employees many of which travel straight across the Floating Arch and to the market to buy they need for themselves and their employers.

The Merchants Corner is always a buzz with business. Farmers, fishermen, hunters and gardeners compete to advertise their goods by yelling, chanting and even singing to get peoples attention. Some farmers and merchants have recently been sending their older children and even hired help to wheel and carry some of their wares directly into the nobles area of the city to sell. Many nobles find and their servants find this extremely convenient but others find the 'morning invasion' off putting and disturbing. Most stalls are closed in the Merchants Corner by midmorning and the rest by noon.

Kings Parade

By and large most stalls and simple shops can be found along Kings Parade. It is where you will find a tailor, candle maker, carpenter, wheelwright, atilliator, potter, moneylender, plumber, town cryer, joiner, builder, roofer, blacksmith, mason, fletcher, thatcher, trencherman, musician, alchemist, armourer, weapon smith, beautician, barber, engineer, scribe and even gong farmer! Basically almost every craft and service can be found somewhere along Kings Parade.

Where Kings Parade moves past the Royal Court the cobblestone street widens to become a large oval 'City Square'. In its centre is the regal statue of King Sasserine riding down the street holding his standard aloft.

Cliffside Gardens

More an impromptu collection of goods and foods than an official market, the Cliffside Gardens opens mid afternoon and is packed away by nightfall. It is were the workers and commoners of Bayside make a wayside stop before returning to their homes via the Skyecages in the evening.

Fruit, vegetables and other foods that could not be sold at the Merchants Corner in the morning are brought here to be sold cheaply in the evening. Damaged items, slightly soiled carpets, incomplete sets, rusted tools and chipped pottery are all sold here for very cheap prices.

Many nobles and the middle class send people or even attend the market themselves to find cheap bargains and hidden treasures.



The Nightbell

The Poor's nightly voyage

Sasserine was built on the back of the natives. When King Sasserine beautified the lakeside town and built his grand palace, he decree that the commoners or natives of the jungles, would no longer despoil his city and would have to live outside its walls. For years the poor dwelled outside the city walls, building a sprawling shantytown. Crime and sickness were ripe in the makeshift community and disease began to spread.

Finally when diplomates and dignitaries began to comment about the shantytown, more out of embarrassment than any sense of compassion, King Sasserine acted. King Sasserine decided to send the poor workers to Shoremount, which lay on the other side of the Skyelake. He then commissioned great ships to be built to transport the commoners daily to and from Sasserine so they may work for the nobles and to keep the city running.


Since this time when the Nightbell rings every evening the commoners leave Sasserine and board the Eagleships to return home to Shoremount before returning when the Mornbell rings in Shoremount every sunrise.

Some commoners are entitled to stay within the walls of Sasserine such as personal servants to a noble or city lamplighters, but they must possess a rite document authorised by the Royal Court and the Plumes (city guard). A commoner needs to have the backing of one of the noble or merchant houses or from a prominent citizen, to even be considered such a rite.

The Night of Flame

The Nightbell is also used for another purpose in the city. Just over 100 years ago, before King Sasserine rebuilt and renamed the city, a great fire almost completely burnt the city to the ground. Many important and historical buildings were lost and thousands lost their lives.

The most creditable story to the origin of the disastrous fire was that it that it began in a commoners dwelling, on an icy winters night, when he fell asleep leaving his small fire burning. Other less accepted stories talk of a noble beginning the fire herself to cleanse the city of the wretched poor and yet another claiming it began in a mad wizards laboratory when a great fire elemental escaped. Whatever the truth the fire quickly spread through the densely packed and makeshift dwellings of the city slums and soon became unstoppable destroying much of the city.



When King Sasserine rebuilt the city the Greyhawk sent him a great-engraved bell as a sign of friendship and to be used as a warning when the next fire began. Instead of using as a warning the people when a fire had already begun King Sasserine decree that it would be used to warn people and remind people to put their fires out every night.

To this day when the Nightbell rings, except for taverns and Inns, all fires must be put out to save the city from another disaster such as the Night of Flame in Sasserine.

Origins of Skylocke

The Skylocke people are all derived from the same warlike, nomadic tribe called the Skyts that were lead across the Storm Straight from the mainland by the high chief and first king of Skylocke, King Cormac Locklorian the 1st. Skylocke history remembers him as the Feathered Prince, hero of the Crown Kingdom. The Locklorian family have led Skylocke ever since.

Many people across the Isles believe the name Skylocke is derived from the myth that the land of Skylocke was torn from the heavens in the sky, forced to earth and held beneath the great mountains by the titans of old. Others claim a less fantastical explanation. These sages believe the name was created through combining the name of the Skyt people and kings family name – Skyt and Lockorian.

This explanation seems the most probable but one linguist scholar claims that she has found giant runes in the Sleeping Giants mountains calling Skylocke by that name thousands of years before the first human set foot on the land and that the King Cormac only took the name Lockorian when he took the throne. Whatever the truth few people in the kingdom have little time to ponder the question with war looming so close to their homes.

City Architecture

The City of feathers, Jewel of the Crown, was designed with beauty and tranquillity in mind.



Streets, roads and alleyways


The cobbled streets are wide, even and a deep blue colour. Kings Parade, Sasserines main road, is wide by most cities standards, 30 feet in most places depending upon the size of stalls and street side shops that sit upon various portions edges.

Tall bronze curved lampposts line the main streets accentuate the white marble and washed buildings that rest along the streets edges. Great flowerpots hang from the lampposts bringing the city alive with their vibrant colour. Windows set above common street level are set with flower boxes which brim with seasonal flowers year round. Flowers play an intricate part of Sasserines beauty and most homes will be decorated in some manner with them. Street stalls and sellers selling flowers are always popular.

Most mains streets are also wide but residential streets, hidden from most visitors view, quickly begin to narrow and suffer from lack of light. Clotheslines span these buildings in upper levels and unintentionally provide colour to these back streets all on their own.

Building Tax

King Sasserine had spent the majority of his reign attempting to turn Skyemount and in particular – The City of Feathers, into the most breathtakingly beautiful kingdom in all of the Inis Isles. Unfortunately the countries coffers ran out before his vision to come to complete fruition.



King Sasserine had been able to build the cities great white walls, its wondrous gardens, streets, docks, royal court and palace and had just finished the beautiful marble buildings that lined Kings Parade before his death. The nobles had also followed the king's directions and had built their noble manors and estates mimicking the same architectural style that they had erected south of Kings Parade. But behind street fronts the city stilled remained makeshift and temporary while citizens waited for the King to build their homes. When King Sasserine died it became obvious that they would have to build their own permanent dwellings.

When King Sasserine died his son, Malward, was left with his fathers vision but with no gold to fund it. To these ends King Malward sort to raise funds and came upon the idea to create a new tax to achieve his goals. Malward felt he would be remembers as a fair and just king by taxing his citizens according to their wealth. He felt the best way to do this was to tax them on the size of their buildings and homes which tax collectors would measure to arrive upon the correct taxation. So king Malward instructed his subjects that the bottom floor of each home and establishment would be measured and its owner taxed upon its size.

The King was instantly rewarded for his idea and funds raised from the new tax began to pour in. As the years progressed though a strange thing began to occur. In an effort to avoid the tax people began to construct taller rather than wider buildings that with each new level up became larger in dimensions. The effect was that homes and establishments began to resemble up side down pyramids with the top level leaning right over the street it was built upon.

In some streets in Sasserine today people who live in buildings on either side of a street can climb to their top floor, open their window facing the street, lean out and shake the hands with the people on the other side of the street hanging out of their windows! In the kings honour this style of building is known as Malwardian architecture.

In the newer and poorer portions of the city, looming buildings cast heavy shadows and block off morning and afternoon light. Some narrower street buildings have almost formed canopies above the traffic below and many of the cities alleys have buildings almost touch in the upper floors and in fact some buildings have formed bridges where they have come together, unintentionally and intentionally, creating street tunnels beneath.

Malwardian buildings can be found built off Sasserines main roads and in Sasserines more residential areas and indeed in other of Skyelockes cities where the tax was also imposed.

Side Note – This may seem a bit far-fetched to some who read this but the truth is that this is based upon an actual tax that was imposed by the English monarchy during the reign of the Tudor family. Those who have visited England and in particular cities like York will see Tudor seemingly precarious buildings hanging out across the street resembling the buildings I have just described.



When Sky Meets Earth

As a child, King Sasserine had been brought up upon the legends of the first king of Skyelocke – Cormac the Feather Prince. One story in particular he would always beg his nanny to tell him every night was the heroic and romantic tale of the Eagle Princess. The story told of how Cormac found an old man crying by the lakeside who told him that his daughter was stolen away by a hideous giant and had her trap in his castle beneath the waves.

The story went that the brave king dived beneath the glassy waters of the Skyelake and battled the evil Storm Giant within his underwater castle to free the beautiful maiden. The story speaks of how Cormac triumphantly slew the Storm Giant tyrant but shattered his mighty axe with the deathblow.

The young Sasserine loved to hear how the beautiful young maiden revealed herself as a princess of a mystic elven people called the She. The She were Were-Birds who traced their heritage back to the mystic She and who had once claimed this land as their own. The She had centuries ago lived permanently upon the lakeshore but now only returned to the Skyelake every spring. As a reward for the rescue of his daughter the old man, King of the She, granted Cormac the legendary blade Featherblade that would be passed down to each of his heirs henceforth.

As Sasserine grew older the beauty and romance of the story haunted him and he sought to learn the truth of the legend. His search led him to the small town of Lakeside built upon the shores of the glassy top lake called the Skyelake.

In disguise the young prince Sasserine asked the locals of the story from his childhood and discovered that not only did they believe the story they also claimed their town was built upon the ancestral home of the She. When the prince feigned disbelief one of the locals lead him to the town centre and to a strange stone.

Etched upon the stone in a flowing script. When the prince asked the elderly local what it said the old man whispered that it was written in the tongue of the She and that spoke of a prophesy of the return of the She ‘When Earth and Sky were once again reunited’. As the young prince turned from the stone to ask the elderly man more about the writing he found where the man had just been now stood a brilliantly coloured Eagle. Looking around for any sign of the man Sasserine watched as the Eagle took to the air and flew across the rooftops towards the jungles and the windswept Skyemounts behind it.

That was all the proof the young prince needed – he believed the legend was true. When Sasserine finally became king he was devastated by the sudden destruction of the town of Lakeside. Rather than seek to rebuild it as it once was the young king decided to rebuild it into what he envisioned would become the most beautiful city in all of the world and to make it Skyelockes capital – Sasserine the City of Feathers.



The Kings Competition

King Sasserine was a romantic visionary but he didn't have the first idea about the practicalities of planning, designing and building a house let alone a city. So to achieve his goal the King sort to hold a competition for architects, builders, draftsmen, masons, designers and artists of noble birth to create the city that would match his lofty expectations.


The King sent heralds around the land and messenger pigeons to other kingdoms across the Isles announcing his competition. The reward was substantial and within weeks drawings, plans, sketches, paintings and models began to pour in. There were as many visions of the capital as there are flecks of snow upon the Skyemounts but none seemed to capture neither the soul of his vision nor the sense of magic of the mystical She whose story he had been enchanted by as a child.

The King spent days and night pawing over the entrees and began to become dishearten. King Sasserine wanted to both honour his heroic forefather and the princess of the She who had become Cormac's bride with his city but none of the entrees seemed good enough to him.

Finally one day, when the King had all but lost all hope, a tall, cloaked servant approached the forlorn sovereign in his library high within his palace tower.



Normally Sasserine would not even acknowledge a servant or any subject not of noble birth but something about this woman's bearing gave him cause to listen. Slowly reaching into her robes the elderly servant took out a wrapped piece of worn leather. She carefully passed the leather to the king and then quietly slipped out of the library.



Staring after the tall old lady for a moment the young king wondered at her courage in approaching him before he moved under the soft glow of a candle that sat upon his desk and opened the leather parchment. The leather revealed parchments brimming with intricate sketches of buildings, statues, gardens and ponds. Drawings of exquisite detail showed elegant Feathered ships gliding across the mirror-like surface of a lake and a marble court and palace with pillars and carvings with likenesses of tropical. Looking over beautiful lines, plans and pictures of work King Sasserine knew he had found his city.

The next morning the king sent guards to seek out the mysterious servant and found her deep within the bowels of his palace washing clothes. When she arrived the King commanded her to tell him which noble she had been sent by and what lord had drawn up the plans she had given him the night before. To his disbelief the lady told him that no lord or lady had drawn up these plans, it was her own son who had created the work, one of the king's heralds.

This was too much for the king to comprehend. A common servant? It could not be! It went against all he had come to believe. Servants, commoners, serfs and labours he had always seen as nothing more than an embarrassment to the kingdom. They were far from beautiful in appearance or bearing and held none of the gifts of noble or royal blood that he believed was so important to a person's character and bearing. Yet here it was, a mere herald creating breathtakingly beautiful drawings sketches and plans that no noble had even come close to.

When the elderly ladies son walked through the door the king gasped in amazement. The King was surprised he had never noticed the man. Standing 8 foot tall and with broad shoulders the man he had to dip his head and move sideways to enter the room. He dwarfed every one in the room and the king noticed that his guards all took an involuntary step backwards as they stared up at the huge man. The King asked the man to prove to him that the plans and drawings were his work.

Taking a parchment and piece of coal from a guard the man began to sketch out an incredibly lifelike drawing of a statue of the king riding aloft his noble steed, holding the Featherblade high in one hand and grasping his royal standard in his other. With a voice as deep as chasm the man spoke – "This my lord will be the statue that will grace the city square for all time – the visionary king, King Sasserine".

The King knew he had found his architect.

Even though the King quickly knighted the architect known as Carmal Surlize to appease his own sense of snobbery as much as to reward the marvellous architect, thereafter, Skylocke's commoners have always remembered that it was a simple servant not a noble who designed Sasserine, City of Feathers.





Carmal Surlize

Carmal Surlize was born in the Lakeside, the very town that the city of Sasserine would one day be built atop of. As a boy some people found it difficult in the large town to accept Carmal's increasing stature and he was ostracised and feared by many. Years before Lakeside was destroyed in the Night of Flame, Carmal was forced to leave his lakeside home with his aging mother to find work to survive.

Carmal and his mother travelled west along the Queens Road and to the small town of Sheoak that nestled high amongst the Sleeping Giants foothills. Struggling over the last rise on his journey, Carmal's breath was stolen away by the breathtaking beauty of the sight before him.

Set against the grand mountain range called the Sleeping Gaints, White Spires' marble stowers reached high into the heavens, shining in the sun's light out over the land below it. The castle looked over the small town of Sheoak and was built precariously upon a crag on the side of one of the snow-capped mountains. The majestic Featherfall waterfall tumbled into the depths behind it adding to the serenity of the sight.


Carmal walked towards the majestic castle in a daze. He seemed unable to take his eyes off it until he found himself in the heart of Sheoak, craning his neck to stare skyward. Transfixed for hours it seemed, Carmal stared high into the clouds up into the heights of the castle's wind-swept parapets, smooth walls and flag-tipped spires. He didn't realize at the time but it was a defining moment for the young Carmal.

For centuries the Locklorian family, Skyelockes royalty, had ruled from the beautiful castle. Ancient preserved tombs revealed that thousands of years previously the mystical elfish people who built it had mysteriously abandoned the castle. The She had been masterful and magical architects, creating works unseen by any human before. Untouched by age or damaged by its previous giant inhabitation, the beautiful castle was remarkably preserved.

Carmal and his mother found a small home on the outskirts of the town and his mother found a job as a washerwoman in the royal castle. Carmal raised money for his mother and himself by selling paintings and in particular portraits to the rich merchants and nobles who passed through the town to the royal castle. But this was never his passion.

For years afterwards Carmal devoted himself to sketching, drawing and painting the marble castle, the majestic waterfall and the jungle-blanketed mountains that seemed to frame it. After a few years Carmal no longer had room in his home to put all of his work.

Carmal took to researching other She architecture and took trips to the south to marvel at lifelike elven statues and harbours built beside the Coelake. He travelled north along the Hallowed Highway under the Star Arch and to the empty She tombs carved into the Hallowed Hills. Carmal even entered the ancient and dangerous Fey Jungle where he was



lead by a Fey guide to an overgrown marble temple devoted to a long forgotten sun god. Carmal drew everything he saw.

As the years flowed relentlessly on Carmal's mother became increasingly frail and dependent upon him. Carmal made the decision to stop his lengthy excursions to find more of the ancient elven people and instead took a job in the castle so he could be both close to his mother and within the castle he loved.

The Stone Workers

As with most notable people in Sasserine and Skyelocke for that matter, Carmal has a secret. Carmal is not a mere commoner or a mere ma for that matter. Carmal is more than what he seems.


Even though Carmal designed the City of Feathers over 90 years ago, the huge man is not dead. In fact Carmal now lives with his fathers people, the Stone Giants of the Skyemounts, and is known as 'Quarry' to them. Carmal's father Granitel, is now a powerful Rune Smith and Elder of his people but in his early adulthood he was fascinated by the short lived, diverse and exciting world of the humans and chose to live among them.

Granitel magically disguised himself as a human mason and worked for years studying and learning from them before he met and married Carmal's mother. One night without a word or explanation, Carmal's father disappeared. Carmal's mother was forever heartbroken.

After designing the City of Feathers, Carmal spent years overseeing its construction and lived for decades within the comfort of its walls and the beautiful mansion he was given by the appreciate King as a further gift for his work. Unfortunately Carmal's mother died only a few years after her son's grand city was erected and was never united with the husband she has so cherished and loved in life.

When King Sasserine died Carmal decided to leave his home and search the mountains for more ruins of the She it was here, by mere chance or by fate, that he was discovered the truth of his heritage and was reunited with his father and people.

In truth, the disappearance of Carmal's father – Granitel, was made out of fear and love. A local magician had accidentally witnessed Granitel lifting a massive block of granite when he visited the mason and became suspicious. Years later the magician finally found a spell to discover if his suspicions were true and dispelled the stone giants disguise. The malicious wizard threatened to gather a mob to destroy their home and kill them both if Granitel did not pay him a considerable fee and leaves the town outright.



In fear of discovery and knowing he had no time to get back to his wife, Granitel agreed and handed over all of his life savings and the deed to his business if the magician vowed not to reveal his secret to anyone including his wife who he had never told his secret. He disappeared that very night determined to find some way in the future to return to his love one day.

As he left under the cover of night to return back to his people in the mountains, he never knew his wife was pregnant with Carmal.

Carmal now has a daughter of his own who, like both his grandfather and father before her, now lives in Sasserine. But unlike his father and grandfather Carmal's son is openly revered and respected by commoners and nobility alike. Glandine the Giant has acted for decades as royal council and king's general and to the Locklorian family. Glandine is a powerful warrior and Rune Smith who stands over 10 feet high but otherwise resembles her stone giant brethren. Wise, rational and strategic Gandar has proven an excellent advisor to two generations of Skyelocke kings to date.



Sasserine & Skyelocke Nobility

Chiefs Council – Of Noble Origins

The Skyelocke nobility can trace their history back to Cormac the Feather Prince and his most trusted bodyguards, generals and advisors. When Cormac first led the Skyt 'tribe' across the Storm Strait and into the Inis Isles he regularly sort advise from his five friends and councillors.

Each of the five families is powerful entities in their own right and shares a secret that can be traced back to the She'en and the powers of the past.



Cormac's Tribal Council

Fortuneous the Wise


Fortuneous is remembered as spiritual council to the young king and as a holy man. Old and withered, he forewarned Cormac of many trials, decisions and actions that steered the future king to numerous victories. Fortuneous crowned the prince with the blessing of the land and sky when he first became King of Skyelocke.

Balnos the Powerful

Balnos was Cormacs chief bodyguard and was fearless in battle. Remembered for his great strength and stamina, Balnos lead and inspired his men with his dogged determination, loyalty to his chief and unwavering belief in victory.

Dineth the Beautiful

Dineth was an extraordinary woman, warrior and general of Skyt people. Female warriors were a rarity in the Skyt's and a female general was unheard of before Dineth. Dineth was of slight stature and weak compared to the brawny men of her tribe. In her youth she learnt to combat the more brutish axe-wielding soldiers with her much slender blade, manoeuvrer ability and speed. As she gained the respect of those around her as a leader, Cormac began to value Dineths lateral thinking and brilliant combat stJaguaregies and made her general of his people. Dineth rose to become Cormacs greatest general and was a brilliant tactician.



Morsee the Sleek

Morsee was Cormacs master spy, sleuth and scout. Morsee was the kings eyes and ears in the enemy camp and often his own. Loyal and watchful, Morsee guarded the kings from traitors, assassins and surprise attacks before most had a chance to get anywhere near the King.

Spindal the Serpent

Spindal was remembered as the most intelligent and unpredictable of the councillors. Spindal was widely travelled and educated man who could read and speak many different languages which was something that was extraordinarily rare to the mostly illiterate Jaguare Skyt people. As with most barbarian people the Skyts had little trust or use for writing or its 'witchcraft'. Cormac saw beyond his people's traditional mistrust and enlisted Spindal as his translator, record keeper and message taker. Spindal joined Cormacs council when he was able to translate the stories that the king found written and etched upon the abandoned castles, statues, monuments, tombs and buildings of the kingdoms previous owners, the She.

The 5 elitist noble houses have taken the name of their ancestors and are known as House Fortuneous, Balnos, Dineth, Morsee and Spindal.

Guardians of the Forefathers


Secrets of the Five Houses

Before the humans took their first steps into the land that would one day be known as Skyelocke, the isolated mountainous kingdom was haven to many unique, rare and wondrous creatures and people. The beautiful mystic elven people, known as the She, and their 'cousins' the She'en, of which the She were a 'tribe' of, were the most notable.

The She and all the She'en tribes disappeared from history not long after the arrival of human tribe known as the Skyts entered into their lands three hundred years past. Legend has it that after rescuing the fair maiden, Cormac married the She princess and to this day his descendants still bear the bloodline of the She and the heroic king. Legends persist of Skyelocke kings and queens of ages past could call upon the powers of the She and even change into majestic Eagles themselves.

If the age-old rumours are true, then today's 5 great noble houses share similar mystic bloodlines and wondrous abilities almost as powerful as their king.

It is said that when the Skyts first settled the land that Cormac was secretly approached by a small group of She'en chiefs. Cormac had spent years after his marriage learning the history of the She'en people from his young wife and was honoured but surprised to be sort out by the leaders of these magical people.



The Eagle Princess had told Cormac that when the world was still young, the She'en were the guardians and protectors of the Forefathers. The Forefathers were the first of their species, epic animals that were created by the Earthmother so that all others animals of their kind would be spawn from them and then spread them across the land and oceans.

The young queen explained how the legend of her people spoke of how the Animal Forefathers granted the different She tribes that protected them special powers and abilities. One such power enabled them to change into the animal form mimicking that of the Forefather they guarded. It was said that this is how these She tribes all gained the magically strength of the forefathers and how lycanthropy was born into the world.


Each of the 5 chiefs had been allies and enemies with the others over their long history in the region and now their numbers were dwindling. The other She'en tribes had already drifted from the old kingdom centuries earlier leaving the last five waring tribes and the peaceful She tribe behind. When the Skyts swept into their land the She'en understood that with their tiny numbers they were no match for the numerous humans and knew they would have to leave their ancient homeland like the rest of their people had before them.

Forced to hide in the great jungles, the She'en chiefs gathered for the first time in centuries and discussed the fate of their people and the beautiful land they had needlessly and greedily fought with each other over for thousands of years. It was here they came upon a plan. The She'en chiefs decided to leave a legacy behind.

Each of the chiefs had watched with great interest the union of the Eagle Princess with the human king and marvelled at the strength and unique abilities of their young children. The children shared the strengths of both their human father and mystical abilities and powers of their She'en mother. The She'en chiefs saw the humans as a means to leave their bloodline behind so that their magical gift would not be completely lost to this land. When the time proved right they foresaw a time when one day the She'en people would return to live with the new race of children they had helped conceive.

So it was that the She'en chiefs slipped into the Kings chambers and spoke to him and his wife of their plight and offered their magical gift to his people and the all the people of Skyelocke that would follow. The king was hesitant at first to accept such a strange yet alluring gift and was suspicious. Cormac also found the ease at which the chiefs had appeared to him while he and his wife lay unprotected in their chambers also disconcerting, but his own happy union with his She'en wife made him at least consider the offer.

Once the She'en chiefs had left he spoke for hours with his beautiful wife before gathered his trusted council around him. Cormac told them of the She'en chiefs offer and his own wish to have each of them marry the daughter or son of the one of the chiefs. His advisors were at first outraged but after many hours eventually the 5 advisors were unified in their decision to accept.



A message was sent to the jungle edge informing the She'en chiefs of the decision and each of the 5 advisors walked into the jungle and was guided away and into the different She'en tribal villages. When they each emerged months later, they brought with them their new wives and husband. The She'en people left their jungle homes and Skyelocke in their wake.

The current 5 major noble houses of Skyelocke have the power and magical abilities of the She'en flowing through their veins to varying degrees. The She'en bloodline is very strong and all members of each family gain differing abilities depending upon their line. Each head of each major house has mastered the full powers and abilities of their line.



Skyelockes Nobles

The Five Families are the most powerful and influential noble houses in all of Skyelocke and many believe, in all the Inis Isles. The 5 houses can tie their heritage and origins back to the conception of the nation and the Cormac's Chief Council. Each House has grand estates and manors dotted all over the kingdom and a few have lands and holdings in outside kingdoms as well.

In the city of Sasserine, the beautiful marble manors of the five noble families rest amidst the Royal Gardens and rest along the edge of the man-made Cormac Lake. Each of the wondrous estates stands behind the Eagle Palace which rises from the Cormac Lakes mirror-like waters. Each of the manors have statues, carvings, fountains and columns being the likeness of their founder and the She'en tribal animal that they unified with.



House Fortuneos

House of Wisdom

The great noble house of Fortuneos traces its origins back to Cormacs spiritual advisor. Fortuneos was drawn to the She'en tribe that could change their form to that of the wisest of all creatures – the owl. As a result all of his descendants have a special bond with owls and share some of their strengths.

All family members are born with differing Blood Ties to the ancient She'en people and this is linked to differing levels of power and control over their abilities.

Each progressive 'Blood Tie' gains the benefits/abilities from the tie below it.

Blood Ties

Weak Tie

Most Fortuneos family members have only a weak tie to their She'en ancestors. Such a tie gives members a +2 to any wisdom-based skill.

Moderate Tie

A small percentage of family members gain the ability to cast Augury (as per spell of the same name) 1/day and gain a +1 to Wisdom.

Strong Tie

Once every generation a child is born with the ability to transform into an owl hybrid. Fortuneos nobles in this hybrid shape become blanketed in feathers, with an owl head and have long claws and sharp beaks. This ability on set always occurs gradually and can begin at any time in the noble's life. Once the ability manifests itself, one nights of the full moon the noble instantly transforms into an owl hybrid and loses all control over themselves and has no recollection of any thing they do over this period.

Full Tie

Some extremely rare individuals gain full control over their hybrid shape change ability and can transform into a common owl or giant owl at will. Nobles with this type of tie also gain the ability to cast one spell from the Divination Domain 1/day depending upon their character level (ie a 12th level Aristocrat can cast up to 6th level spells from the Divination Domain)





House of Balnos

House of Strength and Power

The great noble house of Balnos traces its origins back to Cormacs loyal chief bodyguard. Balnos was drawn to the She'en tribe that could change their form to that of one of the most powerful and strong of all creatures – the gorilla. As a result all of his descendants have a special bond with great cats and share some of their strengths.

All family members are born with differing Blood Ties to the ancient She'en people and this is linked to differing levels of power and control over their abilities.

Each progressive 'Blood Tie' gains the benefits/abilities from the tie below it.

Balnos Blood Ties

Weak Tie

Most Balnos family members have only a weak tie to their She'en ancestors. Such a tie gives members a +2 to any strength-based skill or check.

Strong Tie

Once every generation a child is born with the ability to transform into a gorilla hybrid with a similar appearance to a red gorilla. Balnos nobles in this hybrid shape become covered in short fur, with a gorilla head and have sharp teeth and clawed hands.

The on-set of the ability can begin at any stage during a nobles life. It always occurs gradually and initially causes great discomfort and concern. Once the ability fully manifests itself, on nights of the full moon the noble instantly transforms into the bull hybrid and loses all control over themselves and has no recollection of any thing they do over this period.


Balnos nobles that manifest this 'Blood Tie' gain the ability to leap (see jaguar description in MM) and gain a +2 to Strength.

Full Tie

A noble that gains full control over their 'blood tie' only occurs once every few generations and frequently becomes legendary in their own right. These powerful individuals gain full control over their hybrid shape change ability and can transform into a common bull or giant bull at will. Nobles with this type of tie also gain the ability to Rage as per the barbarian ability of the same level.

#Balnos nobles that manifest this 'Blood Tie' gain an additional +4 to Strength & +2 to Constitution.

(#Note that these bonuses do not stack with the bonus granted with the 'Strong Tie' trait).



House of Dineth, Morsee & Spindal

Houses of Leadership, Silence & Scholars

Due to their heritage, most of the major nobles have begun to take on a physical resemblance and personality attributes to the animal of the She'en tribe they unified with centuries ago.



Each progressive 'Blood Tie' gains the benefits/abilities from the tie below it.

Blood Ties

Dineth – Mascaw

Morsee – Jaguar

Spindal – Serpent

Weak Tie

Every family member of the major noble houses have some abilities tied with their She'en origins. Most have only a weak tie to their She'en ancestors. Such a tie gives members the following benefits –

Dineth - +2 to Charisma based skills and checks

Morsee - +2 to Dexterity based skills and checks

Spindal - +2 to Intelligence based skills and checks





Strong Tie

Once every generation a child is born with the ability to transform into an animal hybrid. The on-set of the ability can begin at any stage during a noble's life. It always occurs gradually and initially causes great discomfort and concern. Once the ability fully manifests itself, on nights of the full moon the noble instantly transforms into the hybrid and loses all control over themselves and has no recollection of any thing they do over this period.

Dineth - +2 to Charisma Score, Inspire (as bard ability), Mascaw Hybrid

Morsee - +2 to Dexterity Score, Invisibility 3/day, Jaguar Hybrid

Spindal - +2 to Intelligence Score, Poison 3/day, Serpent Hybrid

Full Tie

A noble that gains full control over their 'blood tie' only occurs once every few generations and frequently becomes legendary in their own right. These powerful individuals gain full control over their hybrid shape change ability and can transform into a common bull or giant bull at will. Nobles with this type of tie also gain additional abilities/powers -:

Dineth – Charm Monster 3/day, Dominate 2/day

Morsee – Etherealness 1/day. Shadow Walk 1/week.

Spindal - Tongues 3/day, Eyebite 1/day, Cloudkill 1/day


The Secret Pledge

As the years marched on in the new kingdom, Cormac's newly married advisors were granted lands and noble titles. They continued to advisor, protect and serve their leader but also began to move their attention towards having families of their own.

Within a few years all of the council shared the joy of parenthood and marvelled in their children's growth and small successes. More children followed and their Noble Houses grew in size and stature.

But beneath the joy and pleasure of life, the 5 began to secretly worry. No one other than their king knew neither the truth of their spouses nor the truth of their children and they feared what would happen if they were discovered. The Skyt people were generally suspicious of difference and the strange yet wondrous powers that the noble's children were beginning to show would be seen as witchcraft and evil to most.

Fearful for the children's lives from angry mobs, rivals and other kingdoms, Cormac's Council secretly met to discuss their fears. The 5 rarely agreed but on this occasion there



was little argument. The five unanimously agreed upon a course of action. As one the 5 pleaded to keep the secret of their union with the She'en tribes and their children's mysterious powers the strictest of secrets. Death would be the punishment to any who spoke the secret beyond their Houses and death would come to any that learnt of it outside their walls.

Since that meeting, for over 300 years, the secret of the She'en Bloodlines has remained the strictest of secrets to the 5 houses. Over the years many unexplained noble disappearances and murders have occurred due to the plead but to this day the truth of the powers remain hidden from all but the Five Families.

Minor Noble Houses

Currently there are 9 minor noble houses in Skyelocke. Over Skyelocke's brief history their have been many rises and falls of minor houses. Many have come and gone. Skyelocke's current nine minor houses have risen to nobility through accomplishments, deeds and occasional heroics and have titles and holdings rewarded by past kings.

Skyelockes noble houses are ranked according to the Kings favour and are continually competing for wealth, property, station, reputation and to become irreplaceable to the monarchy. This ranking is verified by the official position and proximity each of the house heads are given to the King in court. During a royal audience each house has a specific place/spot where their representative stands. These places are awarded every year on Foundation Day by the current king and indicate the minor houses 'ranking' for the year.

As a result the minor houses are highly competitive and political. Character assassination and business undermining are commonplace. In the past houses have gone to war with each other but this type of unsavoury engagement has since been made illegal with any houses engaging in such forays banished from the land. As a result all conflict is kept hidden and murders masked in lies and super fudge.



Sasserine's Minor Noble Houses

House Hormis

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 1st

Standard – Divided into four quadrants - Pick, Dove, Horse & Hand

House Hormis is the largest and most reputable house currently in all of Sasserine and Skyelocke beneath the Five Families. They initial were a family of merchants who, many believe, bought their way to nobility with their considerable wealth. House Hormis land and estates around the northern planes of the Skyemounts where they have numerous successful mines and herds of huge, hardy Clydesdales that are used by the countries knights, merchants and farmers alike.

House Hormis' current head is a stalwart noble lady who is both intelligent and ruthless when it comes to her house and bettering her station named Lady Baroness Bridgitian. King Douglas, the current boy kings father, had a particular fondness for Bridgitian and they had been childhood friends. Bridgitian secretly assisted the king in many financial enterprises and warned him of many traitors (real or imagined) which he was forever grateful.

House Jaclin

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 2nd

Standard – Feathership gliding across the mirror-like surface of a still lake.

House Jaclin has recently risen to its lofty position due to its affiliation and loyalty to the Major House of Spindal. They have holdings and land to the east of Dunhigh in the kingdoms western realms beneath the shadow of the Sleeping Giants Mountains. House Jaclin has investments in shipping and is responsible for building and repairing Sasserines Feather Ships which are invaluable to the city and the merchants of Baycliff below.


House Jaclin's current leader is a rather rotund, middle-aged leader, as much interested in his attire and in obtaining delicious and exotic foods as he is in his business and noble ventures. Despite appearances the large noble has been secretly assisting Lord Spindal in his venture to appose the young king with visions of grandeur his motivation.

House Starbe

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 3rd

Standard – Sword, Shield and Stars

House Starbe rose to nobility with heroics on the battlefield. Valith Starbe was initially a royal guard when he saved the kings family from an ambush and the lead repelled a



rebellion that threatened to destroy the monarchy. For bravery unbeknownst and selfless deeds Valith was granted land and title that has passed down his line from that day on. House Starbe has lands and an estate in the kingdoms western realms between the Windswept Waters (Skyelockes Middle Lake) and the kingdoms western border.

The houses present head is an elegant, regal leader who prefers the don armour rather than fineries. Lord Disline is loyal to the crown beyond respite and leads the Crown Knights in the king's name.

House Pharios

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 4th

Standard – Compass and Map

House Pharios was elated to nobility early in the kingdoms history due to the houses famous travels, exploration and exploits into wild and uncharted areas within the Frontier Lands and beyond. Calif Pharios became famous across the Isles and was an extremely popular figure in every court and council hall across the land where he would recount his adventures. Calif named many of his discoveries after the current King of Skyelocke at the time and earned much accolade, titles, land and rewards as a result.

The current leader of House Pharios has more interest in his own wealth and local estate than he does in any exploration. In fact Desre Pharios would rather read about his ancestors adventures than actually go on any himself. House Pharios's lands rest just north of Sasserine.

House Rallian

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 5th

Standard – Balance & Coins

House Rallian was once a powerful merchant family that developed such a monopoly on trade within Skyelocke the king decided to make them nobles to have more control over their businesses and share in their wealth. House Rallian still possesses many moneylenders and makes a nice profit from their loans across Skyelocke and beyond.

Lord Relward the 3rd is the present leader of House Rallian who foppish in behaviour and dress. Sporting a goatee, buckled shoes, silk billowing shirts and pontoons, Lord Relward has raised many a snigger to the unfamiliar but usually ends such sounds with a precise slash of his bejewelled rapier.

Lord Relward considers himself an ally of Core Spindal and has much to offer the dower major house head. Besides a substantial treasury, Lord Relward and many of his family and servants years ago were infected with lycanthropy from a Werepanther and now act as Spindals rooftop spies in Skyelocke.

House Castil



Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 6th
Standard – Open Book

House Castil is famous for it's affiliation with the Illustrious Order of Wizeded Wizards that have their base within the Citadel of Feathers. The house rose to nobility for political reasons when the queen at the time had to justify why a lowly wizard was entitled a place and voice in the royal court. Rather than to eject the wizeded wizard whose advice had proved invaluable to her in the past, the queen decided to grant him the title of baronet.

The current head of the Illustrious Order of Wizeded Wizards is in fact the current head of House Castil also. Willican Castil is a tall stooped man with a tremendously long black beard that ends at his waist. Willican is more interested in his magical and scholarly pursuits than his noble ranking and is continuously surprised that the monarchy seeks him out for advice at all. All of the other houses wisely avoid any sort of conflict with the house of wizards.

House Zesster

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 7th
Standard – Rearing Leopard


House Zesster was once a noble house in the country of Sorresk at a time when both Skyelocke and Sorresk were at war, later known as the War of the Way. One of the telling factors of the conflict turned out to be the defection of the house of Zesster from Sorresk who had a considerable force of pikemen under their control. Without the use of the pikemen Sorresk's invading force fell beneath the charge of Skyelockes Crown Knights. As a reward for their defection the King entitled House Zesster an equivalent station and holdings of what they possessed in Sorresk in their new home of Skyelocke.

The current head of house Zesster is Lord Balnor the 2nd. Lord Balnor is determined to earn both the trust and respect of the King and nobility in Skyelocke which he feels consider him and his ancestor untrustworthy and innately disloyal. Lord Balnor is both honourable and unwavering in his loyalty to the Skyelocke crown and wants nothing more than respect.

House Gulkal

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 8th
Standard – Lance & Red Eagle Feather

House Gulkal was awarded its place within the noble houses through heroics on the field of battle. During the deciding conflict during the War of the Way (Sorresk v Skyelocke), Fistak Gulkal lead the charge of the Crown Kinights that won the day and the war.



Today Fistak the 6th is obsessed with trying to emulate his ancestor and pays little attention to politics or business. In reality Fistak's main reason for attending court and noble gatherings is to win the heart of Baroness Bridgitians daughter – Jeanne Hormis.

House Crescentia

Current Noble Ranking/Position –: 9th
Standard – *Crescent Moon*

House Crescentia is the newest of houses. Originally a group of adventurers known as the Crescent Blades, the current king has awarded each of the group with the title of baron and granted them wild lands around the isolated lake known as Golems Grave to the north of the Skyemounts and the kingdom.

The group has little interest in politics or the day to day running of an estate and therefore appointed a man known as Tremos to act as their political spokesperson and property manager in their absence.

The other houses have reserved judgements on this new house but fear their strength of arms and gaining popularity.

Baycliff


Sasserine's Docklands



Introduction

Baycliff rests on a rock outcropping between the towering Skyeciff's and the serene waters of Eaglebay. The great Featherfalls tumble down the cliff face and into the heart of the seaside town before flowing out into the sparkling blue waters of the bay.

Visitor to the bay side town by sea often marvel at its beauty. Behind the old wood and stone docks rise towers and spires overhanging water. Ships from kingdoms and distant lands fill the harbour and framing all is the jungle peaked Skyeciffs that soar into the heavens.



Beyond the dockside though, the impression of beauty quickly fades. Old architecture hint at a time of splendour but they are now neglected and uncared for. Amidst the old, clambering at its base, squashing up against its sides and rising up in front of its fading magnificent like a weed, is the new. Hurriedly constructed ramshackle buildings are propped up against the older, sturdier buildings. Where no older building is available, poorly constructed buildings are squashed up against each other or made with flimsy materials.

The further you move away from the docklands and the Featherfalls the worse the buildings become, until you reach the foot of the Skye cage Keep where they become little more than piles of wood and rock. More than one visitor has arrived in the town with feelings of awe and wonderment only to leave in sadness and pity once visiting the outer slums.

Parts of the Same

Visitors to Sasserine and Baycliff usually come away feeling that the two settlements and parts of the same city. Baycliff acts as Sasserine's docklands and slums, home to powerful merchant families and sinister criminal organizations vying for control. Citizens of Sasserine and in particular, Sasserines more aloof nobility would adamantly deny this claim stating that Baycliff is a necessary evil and nothing more. Whatever the argument, Sasserine relies upon Baycliff to supply it with its workers, goods and gateway to distant lands. It is the underbelly of the city proper, hidden away at the base of the cliff and very much a need yet embarrassment to most in the beautiful city high above.

Baycliff





Baycliff Map Key

1. *The Featherfalls*
2. *Queen's Walk (Bridge)*
3. *The Fairyflow*
4. *Skyecage Fort*
5. *The Black Boot (Inn)*
6. *The Hidden Hole (tavern – frequented mainly by halflings)*
7. *The Dancing Damsel (festhall)*
8. *Gibbs (Boarding House)*
9. *The Gentle Grin (Temple of Yondalla)*
10. *Cog & Tackle (Smithy, Horses & Transports)*
11. *The Welcome Wench (Tavern – Last Laughs Guild house)*
12. *Riverbridge*
13. *The Whispered Step (Church of Olidammara)*
14. *Hallowed Hall (Church of Heironenous)*
15. *Strength & Power (Temple of Kord)*
16. *Vammos Manor*
17. *Guldar Manor*
18. *Arhagdal Manor*
19. *Thorsar Manor*
20. *Dhostar Manor*
21. *The Feather Pillow (Expensive Inn)*
22. *The House of Silks (fine clothing, jewelry – very expensive)*
23. *The Soaring Eagle (expensive restaurant)*
24. *The Kings Crown (Jeweller, Art Appraiser, Fence)*
25. *The Leather Tome (Bookshop, Scrolls)*
26. *The Black Tower (City Watch, Jail, Dungeons Beneath)*
27. *The Purple Lady (tavern, festhall)*
28. *Hammerhome (tavern – frequented mainly by dwarves)*
29. *The Tattered Sail (tavern)*
30. *Peghook ('Sailors' Supplies)*
31. *The Harbour Tower*
32. *Gorbrims House (Moneylender)*
33. *The Locked Gauntlet (Armourer)*
34. *Merchant Family Warehouses*
35. *The Broken Blade (Weapon smith)*
36. *The Dragons Horde (Magical Shop, Adventurers Equipment)*
37. *The Royal Navy Base (Dragonship Fleet)*
38. *Pinch & Tickle (Tavern & Brothel)*
39. *The Gentle Moon (Inn)*
40. *Cliffdocks (Goods drop off point with cranes)*




Earning a crust

The battle to survive and even prosper, rages fiercely in Baycliff everyday. Most citizens are rarely there. Over half of the people who call Baycliff home work in the city above. Each morning they board a Skyecage and rise up the cliff face and into Sasserine high above. Here they go about their daily jobs, following their orders and earning their wages. At dusk they once again climb into a Skyecage and descending down to Baycliff below to see their loved ones, eat their meals and sleep.

Baycliff's streets are very quiet during the day. During the night though they transforms into crowded thoroughfares, people laughing, singing and talking as they get a drink or bite to eat before retiring for the evening. Some shops only open in the morning and evenings in Baycliff because of the business.

Contrasting with this is the Merchant families and their workers. The Merchant Families are continuously striving to outdo each other and work extremely hard each day to achieve this goal. Dockhands endlessly unload goods off ships and onto great wagons. Wagons are driven from the docks and roll down towards the Cliffdocks. Workers unload the goods onto the Skyecranes where they are winched up the cliff face and into the city above. Goods are also sent down from Sasserine to be shipped and sold in distant cities.



Alternatively there is a group of Baycliff citizens who only work at night. They are also coincidentally the people most citizens fear. They are the thieves, pirates, drug dealers, harlots and criminals of all descriptions who fall into this category and Baycliff has more than it's share. The power these criminal organizations wield is only second to that of the Merchant Families in Baycliff. Without a sufficient or competent law force in the town or an interest from the city above, this is not about to change either.

Lastly there are the shopkeepers, the shipwrights, the carpenters, the market sellers and even the beggars who rely upon the others to survive. Visitors are rare to the town so the health of the local economy depends directly upon the needs of its populace and the money they make.

Baycliff Fashion

Whereas the fashion and dress of the current monarch, popular nobility and legend of the Swan princess often direct Sasserine's fashion, Baycliff citizens have far less time and finances to worry about such 'trivialities' as the make and style of their clothing. The wealthy and power Merchant Families among with the more successful criminals that run Baycliff are the only people who can afford to care.

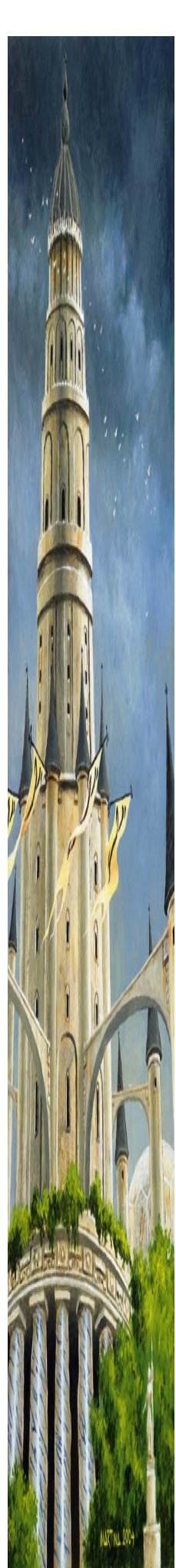
Fashion in Baycliffs more elite usually indicates more than good taste. It is an identifiable symbol of both allegiance and respect to the Merchant Family the citizen affiliates with.

Guards and soldiers of a house don brimmed hats while on light or no duty which are adorned with coloured plumes. The colour and shape of these plumes are dependent upon their Family affiliation and standing amongst the guards. Hats with small plumes indicate a standard guard of little importance whereas a long plume demonstrates significance, strength and rank.

Coloured capes, high boots, pantaloons and loose vests are also common among the guard, rogues and toffs that are affiliated with the Families or who wish to signal a higher level of importance and readiness to wield the blade within the lakeside town. .

High-ranking members and the Merchant Family Heads themselves attempt to follow Sasserines nobility in terms of dress and in many circumstances, manner and lifestyle. With little culture or breeding many of the Family Heads often adorn themselves in fashions approaching the high ridiculous in terms of practicality and opulence. But beneath the decadent clothes often lies a ruthless and calculating leader quite willing to teach the disrespectful some manners with a trip to the bottom of the Eaglebay.

Common merchants, sailors, commoners and farmers wear clothes and fashions born out of necessity and practicality in Baycliff. Commoners who are aligned or 'protected' by a Merchant Family or one of Baycliffs guilds, organizations or syndicates wear a simple



ring on their little finger of their right hands. Rings are made of different metals and have etchings, sigils and sometimes gemstones to identify which organisation is currently giving them protection. People who do not work directly for an organisation, are travellers or fool hardy do not wear such adornments.

Baycliff Customs & Laws

Deck & Earth

Captains always kiss the ground when they first dock and throw a handful of dirt upon their ship deck. This has now become an ritual to gain good luck but was initially began to honour the stalwart pirate hunter Admiral Helben who successfully defeated an invasion by a pirate fleet lead by the infamous Stardarc the Shark.

Legend goes that Stardarc had surprised the Admiral and his fleet as they lay in harbour sinking most of his fleet before the alarm was raised. The Admiral managed to sail out of the harbour in his flagship, avoiding ramming ships and heavy artillery fire but found himself quickly out numbered 10 to 1.

With unsurpassed seamanship the Admiral was able to win the day and sent the remaining pirate vessels scurrying away across the bay and out to sea. Somehow the Admiral managed to keep his vessel together until it limped into Baycliffs docks. His beautiful vessel had begun to take on water and was alight.

Stepping off the ship with the last of his crew, the Admiral kissed the ground thankful to ever set foot upon it again before looking back at his ship littered with his brave crew. As the ship began to sink the Admiral took up a handful of dirt and cast it over the deck speaking aloud ‘Sink with soil at your feet, wind on your backs and the sea always in your heart. May we all know such glorious deaths’.





Empty Palms

Baycliff customs can also seem peculiar to the newly exposed. Baycliff men tend to greet each other with arms outstretched and palms up before grabbing each person's hands. This came about as a sign of good will and to demonstrate that you had no weapon in either hand. Commonly the person who places their hand over the others in greeting with palm down is recognised as the more senior of the two. The stronger the grip, the more familiar and caring the man are about the other. Women usually greet each other with a brief hug. Shell-less turtle

A law in the settlement within the mountain shadows is that no armour can be worn inside the township. It was decree decades ago by King Edward in an attempt to stop the open warfare that was occurring in the streets by the rival merchant families at the time.

Since this time this law was but one of the few that the town watch actively upholds. The rationale behind this is simple. Most guilds, organizations, syndicates and even the current Merchant Families are rife with guards, rogues, assassins, wizards and soldiers that are perfectly adapted to rapid, highly manoeuvrable combat where heavy armour is both restrictive and a hindrance.

Most outsiders entering the township find this type of combat foreign and off-putting placing the locales at a distinct advantage. As a result the usually neglectful law is always quick to ensure that this law is upheld so their pockets are just as quickly filled.






Baycliff Slang

Many travellers visiting the streets, alleys, taverns and markets of Baycliff frequently swear that the people of the town have their own language. This is not correct but the slang and customs of the harbour can be very disconcerting and nigh incomprehensible to the ill prepared and unfamiliar.

Baycliff slang is a mixture of sailor talk, rogue cant and the common tongue all meshed and abbreviated over centuries of use. Baycliffs large rotund underbelly tends to use the slang most frequently during normal conversation but most citizens have a good understanding of the slang and can use it with varying degrees of proficiency. Terms such as 'Knockers', 'Steadiers', 'Holdin' the Haul' and countless others are meshed with ill pronunciation to create a unique Baycliff 'language'. By and large though, Common is still the most regularly used language heard in the large town.

Baycliff's Origins





Centuries past Baycliff grew up as a harbour to transport wares from distant kingdoms by sea to Sasserine, and in turn the rest of the kingdom. Merchant Families grew in size and wealth quickly and built castles and compounds around the little docks creating large manors and estates on the rock ledge to protect their wares, workers and families.

In 94 IR, when Baycliff was in its infancy, the young Queen Amilia would regularly descend the cliff and stay in Baycliff to relax and holiday with a merchant's daughter, a childhood friend, by the bay. Within 5 years Baycliff became extremely fashionable with Skyelockes nobility.

Beautiful manors were erected and town buildings constructed. Baycliff became a place to be seen and its market quickly a place to buy from. For many nobles' exotic wares and clothing from distant lands would be bought here for huge prices attempting to out do their competitors and rivals.

A Market Tower was built to guard the market funds. The great black bell tower was erected adorned with a statue of beautiful Queen Amilia gazing across the Bay. The statue stands regally in an alcove halfway up the structure and a great bell rests within a domed balcony at its peak. Great trees were planted around its base.

The Black Bell has only been rung thrice in Baycliff's long history – once at the towers opening, again when the great kopru army attempted to destroy the harbour town and finally when Stardarc the Black tried to invade with his fleet of pirates from the sea.

As the years progressed another element began to move into Baycliff. An element that was less than welcomed by the nobles in the harbour town. Attracted by the wealth of the locale and the lack of suitable authorities, undesirables began to move into town. Within another few decades the nobles had all but deserted Baycliff leaving the merchant families and the riff-raff to the spoils.

In the year 311 IR King Sasserine decree that all the new capitals poor would be relocated to Baycliff. King Sasserine immediately set about building housing for the peasants using cheap builders who built even cheaper, ramshackle hovels. Within the year Baycliffs population tripled.

Baycliff Today

Baycliff is still used as a harbour town. Merchants from Baycliff and foreign countries ship their goods from the town up to Sasserine or up the coast to sell. The Merchant Families of Baycliff are the wealthiest in all of the land. The families have long ceased going to the town watch for protection and justice and instead have employed their own guard.

The old market area of town is still used to sell anything from everyday items to strange and wonderful wares. Known as Tower Square - expensive clothes, jewellery, ornaments and other such goods rarely find their way the old market stalls now days. There is neither the business nor the security set in place to warrant it.


By night the Tower square takes on a completely different function, it's more profitable and true function many in Baycliff believe – it becomes home to harlots and drugs. The glaring fact that Black Tower, the city watches supposed headquarters, rises up directly in the centre of the old market square demonstrates the obvious powerlessness and corruption of the authorities in the town.



The Baycliff Watch are a dangerous mix of inept, corrupt and outright evil members. Known collectively as the 'Tolls' by those on the street, the Baycliff watch is rarely catches a criminal or prevents a crime, unless the criminal is dirt poor and unconnected. The watch gained its name 'Tolls' because they always give plenty of warning of their approach to those who pay enough coin.

The Merchant Families are not the only powerful organizations in Baycliff. Two thieves guilds work within the old town – The Last Laugh and the Shrouds. Both guilds also have agents and safe houses in other towns and cities such as Cauldron.

Countless other smaller dealers, thugs and thief clusters also operate in Baycliff, each fighting for their own piece of the Baycliff pie. Pirates also sail from Baycliff or nearby coastal villages on a consciously small scale. The pirates are very selective of their targets because the Sasserine navy are always quick to respond depending upon the importance of the plundered vessel and its cargo.



The Plague of the Poor

In the year 209 IR, two years after the City of Swans was founded, King Sasserine decree that all those of common or native birth who once lived within the old city, would be moved to the bayside town of Baycliff. Sasserine decided that his beautiful architectural masterpiece would not be despoiled by the taint of dirt, squaller, crime and disease he felt was brought with the company of the Poor.

In the Kings eyes, the Common were a blight on every city found within his kingdom and the kingdoms of other nations, bringing with them the dreaded plague, sickness and malcontent. Even in his youth the King had decided that the majestic city of his dreams would not be tainted by their presence.

From the Ashes

The grand capital of Sasserine was built up and around the ruins of the river town known as Cliffside that was burnt to the ground in a devastating fire a few years previous during a evening known as The Night of Flame.


When King Sasserine began his grand project constructing what would become Skyelockes capital city, most of Cliffside's former inhabitancy and the city builders, workers and their families who had come to construct the city, were forced to build makeshift dwellings around the growing city and along the lakeside.

Once the city was finally completed the poor found that there was no place for them inside the city and so decided out of necessity, to continue to live within the Shanty town they had hastily built around the grand marble walls of Sasserine.

Poor with the Problem

For a time, the King was content with this arrangement but as the dignitaries, nobles, ambassadors and royalty from rival kingdoms began to visit his beautiful city it became obvious that the Shanty Town was an unpleasantness that needed to be remedied. But where could the king hide such a blight? And then there was the problem of keeping his city running. Who would do the jobs that were beneath his nobles and merchants? It was a quandary that causes him great worry. It was news of riots occurring in the lakeside town of Baycliff that first gave him the idea.

At the base of the Skyecliffs, where the Featherfalls spilled into Eaglebay, rested the once beautiful bayside retreat of Baycliff. Over the years the once quite little merchant town had increasingly attracted a seedier element of thieves, prostitutes and pirates who all fought for the crumbs left behind the rich merchant families. It had become a cesspit of crime and squaller causing the King great dissatisfaction and distain. It was a problem for the king and one that just didn't seem to want to go away on it's own.



Baycliff was only a short trip using the old Skycages down the cliff face yet it was a locale most citizens of the city wisely chose to avoid and most nobles consciously tried to forget. It was here that King Sasserine chose to send the cities poor.

He would put the poor with the problem, so to speak.

Forgotten Fear

So it was that the king had some of his most powerful mages and engineers construct great Skycages to transport the poor to and from the town of Bayside at the base of the cliff in which Sasserine perched high upon. Sasserine gathered a great team of builders to travel down to Baycliff to begin to build the poor a home. Within months hundreds of small ramshackle homes had been erected in, up and around the dilapidated township and the poor were gathered from the Shanty town they had built next to Sasserine with what little they owned and taken down to their new homes.

From this time on, every morning the servants, the gardeners, the street sweepers and the city workers, all gather in the Skycage Keep and to clamber aboard a Skycage and travel up to the city as the Mornbell sounds. Every evening when the Nightbell chimes in Sasserine, the poor gather once again along the platforms, this time Sasserines, to travel home to their loved ones and their houses in Baycliff.

So is the life of the more blessed of Baycliffs poor. The remainder struggle to carve out the living in the dangerous streets of squaller and crime, barricading themselves in and only sneaking out during the daylight hours when necessary. Those who still have hope pray for a time when fear is not something they need to live with as part of life and to find a way out of the town of Baycliff - where the poor are forgotten.