



Oathbound

Greg Dent

with

Jim Butler

Todd Morasch

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Credits

Lead Designer

Greg Dent

Additional Design

Brannon Hollingsworth, Jim Butler
and Todd Morasch

Adventure Design

Brannon Hollingsworth, Darrin Drader,
Greg Dent, Ken Marable, and Jim Butler

Additional Concepts

Brian Goings, David McMasters,
and Tristan Uecker

Editors

Jim Butler and Steven Schend

Creative Director

Jim Butler

Art Director

Todd Morasch

Cover Artist

a'lis

Interior Artists

a'lis, Brannon Hall, Ginger Kubic, Jeremy Jarvis,
Kevin Wasden, Stephanie Pui-Man Law,
and Todd Morasch.

Cartographers

Niklas Brandt, Rob Lee and Todd Morasch

Typesetters

Jim Butler and Todd Morasch

Proofreaders

Leonard McGillis, Lita Gratrix, and Mike Dein

Special Thanks

Cathleen Adkison

Playtesters

Aaron Kurihara, Alex Mortenson, Allan Libby, Andy Terill, August Hahn, Barry Chapman, Brendon Hayes, Chad Thornton, Char Ison, Chris Clark, Chris Jackson, Chris Larson, Clint Jones, Corey Remington, Cynthia Hahn, Daniel Gardner, Darren Goddard, Dave McMasters, Diana Marable, Drew Beach, Eric Brenders, Eric Dobrzelewski, Eric Olson, Gary McPherson, Greg Kilberger, Greg Tucker, Heather Hollingsworth, Hiener De Wendt, Ian Joshnston, Jake Taft, Jeff Davis, Jeff Terill, Jeff Welker, Jim C. Kotsonis, John Gay, John Schmidt, Joseph Elric Smith, Josh Hubbell, Justin Jones, Keith Hamilton, Keith Polster, Keith Sitkoski, Kelly Lamont, Marc Briggs, Mark Levy, Maslon Barry, Melissa Allen, Mike Oaks, Nathan Carlos, Frederico Ferreira Harwell, Nikki Craft, Paul Connors, Phillip John Mason, Richard Hollingsworth, Rick Volz, Rob Brine, Robert Duncan, Robert N. Emerson, Sean Marushia, Shawn Duquet, Skeeter Green, Steven Creech, Tad Kelson, Terrell Herzig, Travis Halwachs, Troy Ellis, Tyler Ray, Tyson Moyer, and Zackery Daniel Goddard.

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Bastion Press, Inc.
P.O. Box 46753
Seattle, WA 98146



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Introduction

Welcome to the Domains of the Forge, a world of violence and conflict that exists to test all who find their way to its shores. This is a place of danger and complex politics that are shaped and twisted by those drawn there. All who come are pulled in by one of seven guardians of the land through ravaged portals of feathers and claws. Most come for the promises of profit or power, some come seeking lost loves or family members, while others are ripped from their homes, abducted to awaken in the reflected realm known as the Forge.

The Forge is so named because it draws heroes from thousands of other worlds and pushes them toward their absolute limits, making them sharper, bolder, and more dangerous. The Forge is not precisely a “natural” world; it has been crafted over countless millennia by incredibly powerful beings—the seven four-horned feathered fowl of the Great Oath. These guardians have reached out through gates to other planes and built and populated the Forge with the best and most extreme elements of each world within their vision. Each of the Seven holds sway over a different section of the planet, and its surface reflects its creation by seven very different hands. The Seven are not gods, though it is not known to mortals what drives their actions.

Upon arrival, newcomers find themselves in a violent and overwhelming world. Everything brought to the Forge becomes more exaggerated and potent. Monsters and beasts become feral, and their offspring become even more ferocious. Humanoids and other intelligent races find their lives enriched and their passions inflamed. They find themselves pushed to grow to their full potential. Colors on the Forge seem richer, emotions run deeper, flavors are somehow stronger, and life encourages you to do all within your grasp—or die trying. Outsiders that return to their home world find themselves obsessed with the Forge and feel a deep pull to return. Few are able to resist this urge, and the ones that do so die regretting that they did.

In contrast, many of the peoples born on the Forge taste few such passions and are content to live ordinary lives. These natives are generally resourceful souls born from countless outsiders who found themselves trapped here long ago. Their milder demeanor is thought to be

due to their immersion to the strong sensations of this world. Interestingly, if a native of the Forge travels to another world, he finds his senses dulled until he returns again to his home.

The extreme challenges presented in the world of the Oathbound to creatures from other homelands make it suitable for characters of 7th and higher levels. Characters can enter the world for a brief visit, an extended stay, or a lifetime of opportunities; the choice is yours. Characters cannot leave easily, but few should want to, as the potential for ambitious souls here is far greater than on most worlds.

The Oath of Binding

Your children, your wards, share your sentence clear,
Forever and a year we bind you here.

Seven citadels to hold your fate,
Seven to cradle you in our hate;
Feathered four-horned fowl protect from breach,
And bar all creation from your reach.

None less than the greatest of the grand,
Wielding at their side or in their hands
Not less than the grandest of the great,
May ever aspire to break this fate.

Hear our laughter from pantheons on high,
As you envy mortals who simply die.

Layout

Here's a brief breakdown of what each chapter contains:

Chapter 1—Arrival: This chapter contains information for how to merge the Domains of the Forge with your current campaign and how to use it as a campaign all on its own. It presents various elements of the world of the Oathbound that you'll need to know when you first arrive on the Forge and explains how characters are brought to the world.

It's here that you'll find information about the time of day, seasons, planar astronomy, and gifts bestowed on player characters upon arrival.

Chapter 2—Inhabitants of the Forge: The many races that inhabit the Forge are detailed here, as are the flora, fauna, and animal life one will discover while exploring the world.

Chapter 3—Matters of Prestige: This chapter focuses on prestige classes and ‘enchancements of the flesh,’ alterations that characters can undertake to transform themselves into prestige races.

Chapter 4—The Seven Domains: This section provides an overview of the seven domains of the Forge.

Chapter 5—The Black Flock: The ‘four-horned feathered fowl’ of the Great Oath are detailed in this chapter. Each of the Seven are detailed, providing valuable information as to their motivations and desires for creatures that enter their domains.

The Dark Truth

In a time before time, a great god arose and created an array of incredible worlds of beauty and terror. The god grew in power, and his plane expanded until it touched on the edges of a million others. As his realm grew greater and wider, he attracted the envy of all gods. His dominance threatened the realms and powers of thousands of other gods, and they joined together—good and evil, lawful and chaotic—to lock him away forever.

The army of gods descended on the worlds of the great god and shattered them all, scattering them into dust. The great god himself was bound into a tiny prison in the center of his plane, and seven powerful citadels were put in place around it to seal it forever. No creatures of the world were spared except for seven of the god's chief servants, who—as their penance—agreed to guard the great citadels from all breach.

Through use of incredibly powerful magic, and by the words of the one Great Oath, these seven were bound for all eternity to guard their citadels, each one given their own set of specific instructions and oaths that could not be broken. Time beyond time passed, and then passed again, and these seven four-horned fowl began to see cracks in the laws that bound them to their duties.

Ever so slowly, they drew the dust of the shattered worlds around the prison, and formed it into a new landscape. As the land settled, the Black Flock (as they are called) began to shape seven domains out of the reflections of other

worlds brought to them by the eyes of their black-winged bird children. The Seven constructed their own unique domains, each matching the guardian's own particular desires and styles. When the world was complete, the Seven took advantage of loopholes that they had discovered in their oaths that allowed them to pull in beings from other realms to populate this new one.

Each of the seven domains of the Forge is a lock to the god's prison, while the whole of the world's underbelly is a great twisting maze that is a door forever closed. The Seven are not able to go free until they can find individuals more powerful than themselves to take their places. To this end, the Seven strive to create a world that constantly pushes everything to its absolute limit, hoping to drive a mortal to achieve the power of a god—and thus free them from their own imprisonment.

Inside the prison, the great god stirs, eager to be free. The power and life energy from the god seeps into the landscape and into the inhabitants, making every sensation in the world of the Forge stronger and more pronounced. Though none but the Black Flock is aware of it, the god's power has increased over the ages, and it is straining at the bonds of the prison. The sensations, gifts, and fantastic powers that the world bestows on its inhabitants are not the uncontrolled magics that most assume them to be, but a conscious force that purposely drives all who feel them toward the level needed to break the bonds of the cell and set its lone inmate free.

Chapter 6—The City of Penance: The rule of law, the cost of goods, the Bloodlords, religions, the undercity and the Wrack, and the interaction of the various components of the great city of Penance are detailed here.

Chapter 7—Bloodholds: This chapter details the powerful Bloodlords that rule the city of Penance. Each of the Bloodlords rule under a strict set of guidelines established by the Queen, but each has motivations and desires that serve as a springboard for adventure.

Chapter 8—The Hub Tavern: The largest and most prestigious inn of Penance, the Hub Tavern is a favored home base for seeds from across the cosmos.

Chapter 9—Dark Welcomes is an adventure designed to propel the heroes into the challenges of the Forge.

The Appendices provide new spells, magic items, feats, monsters, and an assortment of other material to bring the Domains of the Forge alive. Also included are a glossary of standard terms and an index.

Terminology

In addition to the game statistics detailed below, there are a number of terms and catch-phrases used by the natives of the Forge. These are all detailed in the **Glossary** (pages 347-349).

While reading through statistics of the various lord and ladies that reside in the Forge, you'll find a number of creatures that use abbreviations in their statistic block. The shorthand used (and the locations that they are detailed) are listed here.

NPC Classes: Adp: Adept; Ari: Aristocrat; Com: Commoner; Exp: Expert; War: Warrior. All of these NPC classes are detailed in the DMG.

Standard Classes: Bbn: Barbarian; Brd: Bard; Clr: Cleric; Drd: Druid; Ftr: Fighter; Mk: Monk; Pal: Paladin; Rgr: Ranger; Rg: Rogue; Sor: Sorcerer; Wiz: Wizard. All of the classes are fully detailed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Prestige Classes: Arc: Arcane Archer*; Asn: Assassin*; Blk: Blackguard*; Def: Dwarven Defender*; Dem: Demagogue; Hn: Hone; Inq: Inquisitor; Lor: Loremaster*; Raf: Rafter; Shd: Shadowdancer*; Sta: Stalker; Vig: Vigilante. Prestige classes marked with an asterisk (*) are detailed in the DMG. All others are detailed in **Chapter 3: Matters of Prestige**.

Races & Gender: Asherake=a; Ceptu=cp; Chromithian=ch; Dover=dv; Dwarf=d; Elf=e; Faust=f; Frey=fr; Gnome=gn; Half-elf=he; Half-orc=ho; Halfling=hg; Haze=h; Human=h; Lunar=l; Nightling=n; Picker=p; Silver=s; Valco=v; Female=f; Male=m; Carrier=c.

The abbreviations work as follows: (AL/Gender & Race/Class & Level). This means that Megaera (LG fdv Pal20) is a lawful good dover female paladin of 20th level.

Reading List

In addition to the core books (*Player's Handbook*, *DMG*, and *MM*), you'll find it handy (though not required) to have a copy of *Minions: Fearsome Foes and Arms & Armor* (both published by Bastion Press and available at better hobby and game stores worldwide). *Minions* completely details some of the races of the Forge, while *Arms & Armor* provides unique weapons and magical qualities that you'll see used in *Oathbound*.

Adventuring in the Forge

The world of the *Oathbound* is a complex web of machinations, plots, and counter-plots. The dungeons explored by the heroes are rarely self-contained domains whose rise or fall will go unnoticed. Laying waste to some ancient temple in the undercity might have immediate repercussions against the heroes by the Bloodlord that rules the canton above. The consequences could be a huge victory celebration from the Bloodlord or a visit by a few assassins; diplomacy is an art form worthy of attention..

Official adventures always have non-combat encounters that allow the less martial of characters their time to shine. This certainly gives an opportunity for bards to excel, but any class that takes non-combat skills will eventually be glad that they did (and probably sooner rather than later). When the Bloodlords or razor of the canton asks you a question, you can't always have the bard speak on your behalf...

Oathbound takes the exciting parts of city adventuring (political intrigue and NPC interactions) and mixes it with dungeon adventuring and the discovery of ancient knowledge. This presents players with numerous role-playing opportunities while still providing the dungeon environments where characters can truly polish their combat talents. Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate become as valuable as Listen, Spot, and Tumble.

Secrets and Common Knowledge

The Forge contains a great many secrets, and such knowledge is something that the heroes must learn on their own. Throughout this text, you'll find shaded boxes and 'Secret' headers that contain these hidden truths. This material is for the GM so that she can better prepare adventures; players should resist the urge to read through it. This material exists to allow GMs to better understand the direction of future products and to give them a clearer picture of the world.

Of course, GMs are free to alter the realities of the Forge to suit their own purposes. Players that try and take advantage of knowledge their characters do not yet possess should expect painful revelations.



A Judge from Penance

Chapter One: Arrival



"The thread of your life on this world has run out. Take my hand and I shall give you a new one, and weave it into a beautiful tapestry of dreams and visions such that you have never imagined."

- Israfil, The Queen of Penance

Getting to the Forge is a simple matter. It does not require the use of spells, nor rituals, nor even a knowledge that the place exists. It requires only that one attract the attention of one of the Black Flock in some way. The Seven have the power to bring anyone into the Forge from any other plane at any time. They may take people individually, as a group, or even an entire army at once.

The Black Flock constantly send their birds through portals into thousands of different worlds, searching for talent and potential. The interest of one of the Seven may be aroused in many different ways. A party may defeat a powerful enemy against great odds, or perhaps simply become caught in a desperate situation and display signs of courage and valor. The Seven are also always on watch for heroes whose story on their own world has come to an end, such as those whose lives are about to be snuffed out, those who have run out of lands to conquer, or simply those wasting away in a dank cell. When the attention of one of the Seven is piqued, it manifests, pulling the object of its attention into the world of the Forge.

The Pull

The first sign that one of the Seven is interested in an individual is a single black bird. A Feathered Fowl can separate a small part of its consciousness and send it anywhere within its domain. This fragment takes the form of a black bird, and any member of the Flock can create thousands of them at any given time. Anything viewed by one of these birds is observed by the conscious mind of one of the Seven. If its interest is captivated by anything it learns, it can manifest its power around one of the birds. The original bird is suddenly accompanied by a second bird, then by a third, then by a dozens, until the forms of the birds begin to blur together. There is a swirl of blackness, and then suddenly the Feathered Fowl appears before the object of its attentions.

A Feathered Fowl is typically clear in its intentions, offering a chance to live one's life to its full potential and requesting that the person or group chosen accompany it back to a world of extreme possibilities. At will, a Feathered Fowl can transport itself back to the Forge to anywhere in its domain. Anyone in contact with it—voluntarily or not—is transported with it, appearing in the world of the Forge. A member of the Black Flock may use its birds as an extension of its body, allowing it to pull many people at once.

The Seven do not always offer those they draw into the Forge a choice in coming. It's not unheard of for creatures to be transported into the Forge via a dizzying attack of black birds without any other explanation. In such cases, the birds fly down into a group of creatures and swarm around, totally blocking out sight and senses. When the birds finally disperse, the creatures then find


Forging Your Campaign

The appearance of one of the Seven is not an opportunity for combat; there will be plenty of opportunities for fighting once the character has been brought to the Forge. The Feathered Fowl should not appear threatening, simply mysterious. They give a short speech to introduce the world of the Forge and to explain what is about to happen to those they have selected. The quotes in this chapter are good examples of what has been recorded by other abductees. When the speech is completed, the pull commences. The pull is instantaneous and offers no opportunity for avoidance, as the Seven are creatures of divine power.

All characters that are pulled into the Forge are initially gifted by the innate power of the world. These gifts usually manifest themselves as new powers or heightened talents, and are explained further on in this chapter.

Although unlikely to happen onstage in a game, the Feathered Fowl also constantly search the worlds for the most powerful magic they can find. Many of the lost artifacts that disappear from other worlds find their way to the Forge, the combined power of all these items in one place leading to a ferocious clash of bizarre magics. This allows you to continue epic quests from your home campaign on the Forge, as holy relics from the characters' home world might well be lost somewhere in the Forge.

The heightened sensations associated with the Forge push all that come here to their fullest possibilities. Villains are made more villainous, heroes are made more heroic, assassins more deadly, and so on. This has little effect on game mechanics, only the situations that characters find themselves in and the varied roleplaying opportunities.



themselves in the lands of the Forge. The Black Flock can be somewhat uncaring at times, simply abducting those that they deem good additions to their domains.

Choosing a Character

It is generally assumed that a party that begins play on the Forge is pulled in from another campaign setting. It's fine to generate a new party or character specifically for play in *Oathbound*, of course. A wide number of options are available for such characters, including 12 new PC races, six new prestige classes, and a bevy of new skills, equipment, and powers.

While some players may choose characters that are native to the Forge, most may want to play outsiders—characters that begin their careers on the Forge at the 'invitation' of one of the Seven. Both natives and outsiders can be of any race.

All outsiders feel the intense pull of the Forge on all of their senses. Joy is more joyful, pain is more painful, flavor is more flavorful, pleasure is more pleasurable, and so on. This tends to make outsiders more likely to lead exceptional lives in pursuit of great emotions and sensations. Although at most 5% of the population of the Forge is made up of outsiders, 95% of adventurers, conquerors, and mercenaries are from other worlds. The main game advantage of playing outsiders—beyond the initial arrival gift—is that the Black Flock watch them quite closely and often grant magical items or assistance.

Natives do not generally feel the exceptional emotional pull of the Forge, and are less interested in rash adventures than in building a livable home for themselves. As a rule of thumb, natives are the peacemakers of the world, and the outsiders are the bringers of strife and war. The main game advantage of playing natives is that the Seven pay them little notice, and they are more able to choose their own fate than outsiders. Natives also are more likely to know the language, history, and layout of the Forge.

Not all who are pulled into the Forge are at the height of their power. The Flock have the ability to sense the potential in a person, and often pull adolescents or even newborn babies, giving them to native Forge families to raise. Such characters, when grown, are a good compromise for players, as they receive the benefits of being an outsider—gifts, heightened sensations, and attention—without the drawbacks, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and external agendas.

Gathering a Party

The easiest way to pull a party into the Forge is to take them all at once from a single world. Typically this is done to allow a group to transition their characters from another campaign setting to *Oathbound*. In such cases, the rules for which races can start in which domains can be ignored, as long as the party members all start from the same plane. The GM can choose any of the seven domains for the party to begin their adventures, although Penance is the most common jumping-off point.

If the party does not all arrive in the Forge together, some special arrangements must be made. Native party members can start anywhere, but outsiders may need a few story hooks to get them from their starting domain to the party's meeting point.

It is highly advised that the PCs all start in Penance. Conveniently, the Seven occasionally make trades amongst themselves of new and promising heroes. If no other hook presents itself, such a trade may allow a character of any race to start in any location. In exceptional cases, a Feathered Fowl may even pull or trade for a disparate collection of heroes, placing them all in the same location and suggesting that they work together.

Barring a trade, the easiest way to get characters from place to place is through merchant caravans. New outsiders typically need money or a way to make a name for themselves, and it is common to sign on with a caravan as a mercenary guard. The pay is reasonable and caravans are common, running between Penance, Arena, and Eclipse. Races that start in Wildwood or the Vault may pay for passage aboard a seagoing vessel to get from place to place. Races that start in the Kiln or in Anvil are more difficult to introduce, as travel across Anvil is nearly impossible.

The Sifter

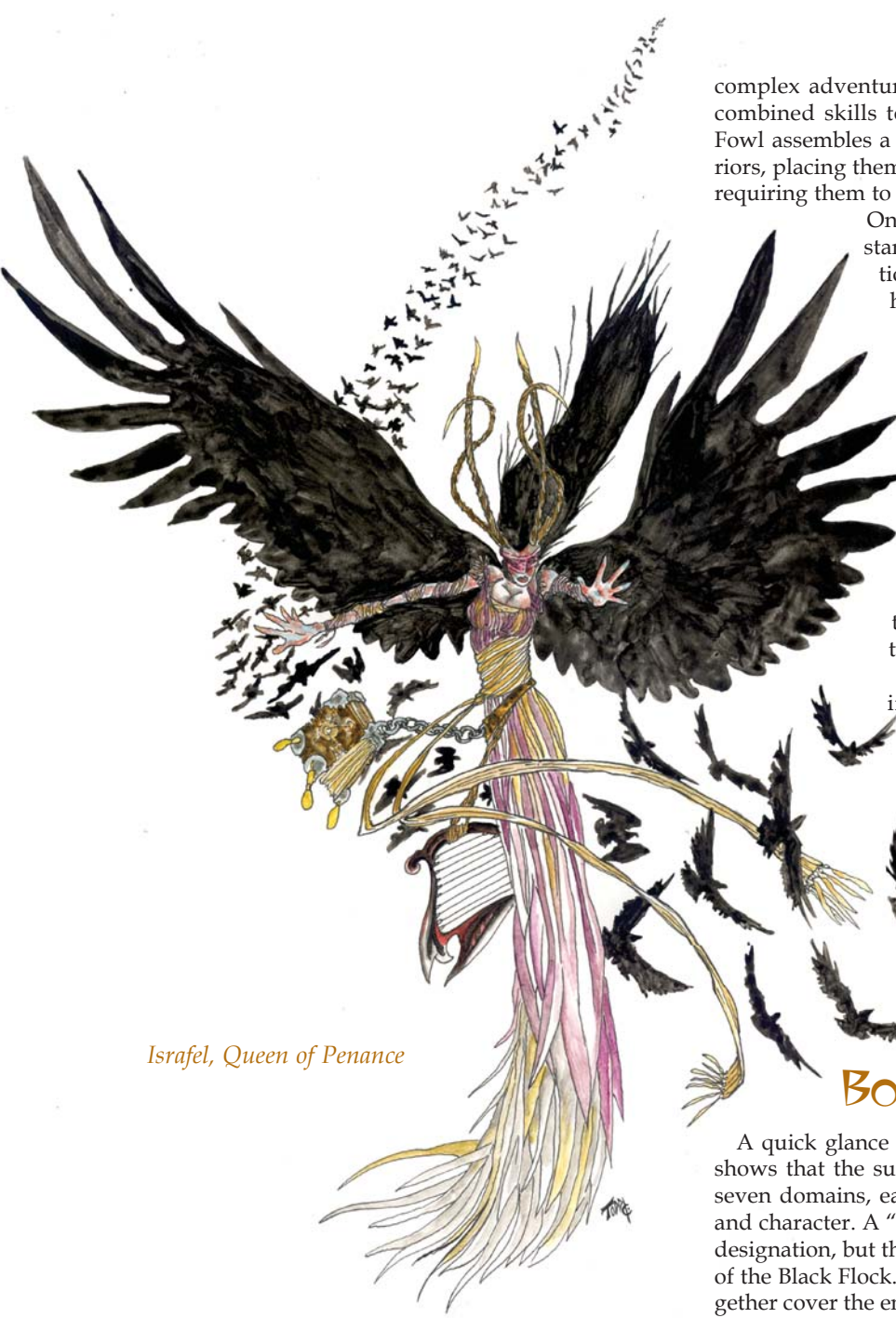
All creatures that enter into the world of the *Oathbound* must endure a process referred to as the Sifter. The Feathered Fowl are concerned with pulling powerful items and weapons into their domains in addition to heroes. When a creature is pulled into *Oathbound*, a member of the Black Flock has the option to sift through all his possessions, taking or adding whatever it feels is best for the individual's development.

For example, one of the Seven pulls in a low-level fighter with a powerful *vorp* sword. The Feathered Fowl is likely to realize that the warrior is more likely to learn how to fight better if he isn't relying on his sword to do the work, so the Fowl sifts the sword from his body during transit to the Forge. The sword is now the property of the Fowl. It may decide to bestow the sword upon a favorite warrior in its domain, or it may bury it deep in the Maze as a reward for a skillful rafter, or it may sift it into a different warrior's possessions when pulling her into the lands, or it may simply decide to keep it and use it as its own.

Magic is more plentiful on the Forge than it is in a standard campaign. Using Table 5-1 from the DMG, characters have approximately 1.5 times more wealth than standard PCs. The GM should use the Sifter as a device to balance out the power levels of the party when pulling the PCs into *Oathbound*. Any item, powerful or mundane, can be added or removed from a PC's equipment list at the whim of the GM when the characters are pulled. Much of this depends on whether the GM's home world is of standard, low, or high-magic levels.

First Impressions

The trip to the Forge is nearly instantaneous, leaving at most an impression of swirling color and a dizzying sen-



Israfel, Queen of Penance

sation. A new arrival may be brought to any location in the domain of the Feathered Fowl who has transported him; populated areas are a favored arrival point. A Flock member normally brings a new arrival—called a *seed* by the natives— to a place that nourishes an outsider’s potential. A rogue may be taken to a criminal stronghold, a fighter may be brought into the headquarters of a mercenary group, or a ranger may be brought in to a dangerous wilderness area.

It is actually quite common for one of the Seven to bring a new arrival into a dangerous situation, such as the middle of a fight or in the path of a horrible monster. This type of trial-by-fire is used to weed out all but the strongest from gaining a foothold in the Forge. A Flock member that pulls an entire party in at once does not usually split it up, but instead may drop the characters into a

complex adventuring situation requiring the party’s combined skills to survive. Sometimes, a Feathered Fowl assembles a party on the spot from scattered warriors, placing them together in a dangerous position and requiring them to work together to survive.

Once his feet hit the ground, a seed is instantly hit with a wave of intense sensation. The brightness of the colors hurts his eyes, his heart swells with passion, the dizziness of the traveling lingers, and waves of electricity tingle up and down his spine. It is at this point in time that the character’s arrival gift is bestowed upon him (see **Gifts** at the end of this chapter).

All new arrivals are considered *dazed* for 1d4 rounds upon arriving. Common courtesy in the Forge disallows attacking seeds until this initial shock of arrival has worn off, although most monsters pay little attention to convention.

A Flock member typically leaves immediately after transporting new seeds into the Forge, although sometimes it lingers for a few moments to speak a few words of advice or to bestow some magic item. The black birds that marked the arrival of the Feathered Fowl remain for a few moments to survey the situation, typically dispersing once the seeds have regained their bearings.

The Land and its Borders

A quick glance at the map of the Forge (pages 72-73) shows that the surface of the world is visibly split into seven domains, each noticeably different in appearance and character. A “domain” in this sense is not a political designation, but the sphere of control of a single member of the Black Flock. These spheres do not overlap, and together cover the entire surface of the Forge. Each domain is physically unique, as each creator has a different personality, intent, and limitation than the others. Boundary lines are not as readily visible in the ocean regions, although they are still present, and are obvious when viewed at the ocean floor. The seven domains and their borders are detailed in **Chapter 4: The Seven Domains**.

| Domain | Terrain |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| Anvil | Mountains, desert, and seas |
| Arena | Desert, jungle, and ocean |
| Eclipse | Underground |
| Kiln | Volcanoes and shallow seas |
| Penance | Cities, grasslands, and plains |
| Vault | Frozen wastelands |
| Wildwood | Forests and jungles |

Arrival

Oathbound Glossary

Alliance – One of the major populated areas within of the city of Penance. It consists of twelve allied bloodholds, and is administered by the Lord Pietro Penates.

Anahita – The larger of the Forge's two moons. Anahita appears to be made entirely of water.

Anew – The first day of the week.

Anvil – One of the seven domains of the Forge. Anvil is a mountainous region watched over by the Feathered Fowl Orif'elle.

Arena – Arena is the largest of the domains of the Forge. It is a vast red desert filled with mines and warring armies. It is watched over by the Feathered Fowl Barbello.

Atonement – The last of the thirteen months of the year.

Axis – The seventh of the thirteen months of the year.

Bailiff – A deputy law enforcement officer in the city of Penance, reporting to a judge. Some bailiffs are granted the full power of a judge, while others are only given the power to make arrests.

Barrowhold – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is the Lady Hyperia Trinakia.

Blackwall – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is Lord Galak Mabon.

Bloodhold – The territory belonging to a bloodlord. ex: *"Lord Follo's bloodhold now numbers 65 cantons."*

Bloodlord – The ruler of at least one canton in the domain of Penance. ex: *"What bloodlord holds sway over this place?"*

Blooming – The first season of the month, lasting from days 1 to 7. Blooming is similar to spring.

Bound – People native to the Forge. ex: *"That poor inquisitor is just wasting his time. The bound are easy to convert, but impossible to convince."*

Bounder – One of the Bound, the native peoples of the Forge. ex: *"Oh, don't bother asking him to come with us, that bounder has no ambition."*

Canton – The smallest political subdivision of Penance. Cantons with a bloodlord in charge of them are referred to as "active". ex: *"Lord Abbydon holds sway over more than a hundred active cantons in the lower city."*

Cell – Slang term for a neighborhood. ex: *"I hear Follo's men took another cell back from the wrack yesterday."*

Champion – A person who defends the title of a bloodlord by force of arms. The champion takes the place of his lord with regards to assassination attempts, allowing the lord to rule without fear for his life. ex: *"This new lord had better get himself a champion if he wants to keep his head on his shoulders."*

Citadel – One of the seven mysterious and impenetrable structures that serve as bases for the Feathered Fowl.

Citizen – Someone who has lived in Penance long enough to know their way around. ex: *"Don't ask that seed for advice, go find yourself a real citizen."*

Crux – The name given to the yellow sun that shines above the Forge. Crux rises every day at the hour of spark (noon), and sets at the hour of shroud (midnight).

Delver – Someone who makes her living by navigating ruins in order to find treasure. The term is term similar to "Rafters", except that Rafters implies someone who has levels in the rafter prestige class or membership in a rafter's guild. As a verb, 'delving' means to ven-

ture into the undercity. ex: *"Sure, that delver is rich now, but what's the point, he'll be dead in another fortnight."*

Demagogue – An individual who has taken the Demagogue prestige class, a class that uses a special form of magic which imbues one's very words with power. ex: *"Be sure to take a demagogue with you when you meet with lord Mabon, or he'll never hear your case."*

Demure – The second day of the week.

Divinia – The largest of the minor bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is Lady Scylla Salamis.

Domains of the Forge – The surface of the Forge is divided up into seven distinct regions, each presided over by a different member of the Flock. The seven domains are Penance, Wildwood, Arena, Eclipse, the Vault, Anvil, and the Kiln.

Eclipse – The northernmost of the seven domains of the Forge, watched over by Colopitiron, the youngest member of the Flock. Eclipse is a land of eternal night, located in a deep crater at the top of the world.

Enchantments of the Flesh – Enchantments that one can perform to enhance one's body or mind by channeling the inherent magic of the Forge. The enchantments manifest themselves in a genetic mutation, or evolution, also referred to as a "Prestige Race".

Fade – The seventh and last day of the week.

Feathered Fowl – The seven members of the Flock. See "Flock" below.

Flock – The seven four-horned Feathered Fowl who are not considered true gods, but take the role of the divine powers in control of the Forge. ex: *"Aye, we all were brought here by one of the Flock."*

Focus – A particular evolutionary pathway that a character follows when taking prestige races.

Forge – The name of the planet around which the Oathbound setting takes place.

Gifts – Gifts are minor magical enhancements that characters receive from contact with the powerful energies of the Forge. Everyone gets a gift when they first arrive, and some earn more as they continue to live on the planet.

Glory – The fourth day of the week.

Golden Shore, the – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is the Lord Atticus Narcis.

Grey Stranger – The mysterious figure that hails travelers on the borders between the Domains of the Forge, prying them for news of the world. ex: *"That sojourner said he met with the Grey Stranger on the way from Arena."*

Grinder – The legendary figurehead of the undercity. The Grinder is a mysterious, knowledgeable and hungry albino gnarl. ex: *"I heard that the Grinder was spotted beneath your canton last week!"*

Hammerfall – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. It's ruler is Lady Megaera Tasmon.

Haven – One of the eight named hours of the day. Equivalent to 6 PM.

Hell's Cocoon – Derogatory nickname for the bloodhold of Utopia. The term is derived from the last name of Utopia's bloodlord, Abbydon Helicon.

Hermit – A person living in the domain of Penance, but outside of any of the cities. *"Here come a couple of hermits sailing up the river with a boatload of goraks."*

Hone – An individual who has taken levels in the hone prestige class, which teaches an extremely focused art of fighting, centered around a single weapon.

Hope – The third day of the week.

Hub Tavern – The most popular destination point on the Forge. The Hub is located in the city of Penance, wedged between seven different bloodholds.

Illumina – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is Lord Nich Belus.

Inquisitor – A person, typically a zealot, who has taken levels in the inquisitor prestige class. Inquisitors dedicate their lives to converting others to their religion, usually though whatever means necessary. ex: *"You should have seen it! A crowd of inquisitors came though here yesterday. I was converted six times in two hours."*

Judge – An officer, appointed to a particular canton, who is responsible for the enforcement of the area's laws. A judge acts as judge, jury, and executioner, and may either work alone, or assisted by a number of Bailiffs. ex: *"Quick, into the maze, here come the judge!"*

Kiln – The smallest of the seven domains of the Forge. The Kiln is a volcanic area directly opposite the city of Penance on the globe of the Forge.

Kith – Large feline beasts that home in on their stables and can be ridden like horses. Kith are the primary means of transport in Penance. ex: *"Kith for hire here! The fastest in Barrowhold!"*

Lifer – A person native to the city of Penance who still dwells there. ex: *"This guy's truly a lifer, he's never stepped foot off the pedestal since the day he was born."*

Linger – The sixth day of the week.

Lost City – The parts of the city of Penance that are currently in ruins or otherwise uninhabited. ex: *"I'd stay clear of that gate if I were you; it leads out to the lost city."*

Lower City – The outer portions of the city of Penance that have not yet been built up to the level of the rest of the city. ex: *"From the pinnacle of lord Belus' palace one can look out over the broad expanse of the lower city."*

Maze – Slang name for the undercity. ex: *"I'm looking to hire a rafter to take me into the maze."*

Mercenary – A sword (wand, dagger, etc.) for hire. These are people looking to join, or already joined to the forces of a bloodlord or another power in Penance. Employed mercenaries report to a Vanguard. ex: *"I hear Narcis picked up a couple hundred new mercenaries in preparation for his assault on Lady Santhusa."*

Oasis – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is the Lord Nairb Flollo.

Ombudsman – A guildmaster in Penance. Ombudsmen have the right to speak with local bloodlords, and typically petition them on behalf of the workers. ex: *"By the Queen's beard, your situation is indeed tragic, why don't you speak with your ombudsman?"*

Outsider – An inhabitant of the Forge who was born on another world and was pulled here by one of the Seven. ex: *"We're all outsiders here, why don't you go find a bounder or buy a history book."*

Overlord – A major power in penance. Typically a bloodlord whose holdings number 40 or more cantons. Seven overlords dwell in the city of Penance, and one more dwells in the coastal city of Beacon. ex: *"Lord Penates may not exactly be an overlord, but he still seems to carry quite a lot of clout on the Pedestal."*

Passion – The fifth of the thirteen months of the year.

Pedestal – Officially, the Pedestal refers to the raised plateau of the city of Penance, but many people simply use it to refer to the city itself. ex: *"Have you dwelled long here on the Pedestal?"*

Penance, domain of – Penance is the most accessible of the seven domains of the Forge. It is located on the equator, and consists mostly of fertile plains and grasslands, light woods, and a number of massive cities.

Penance, city of – The most populous area on the Forge, located at the center of the domain of Penance, and holding 40 million souls. It is an ancient settlement, built upon itself up to a quarter mile high. The city of Penance is really more of a landscape of buildings than a true city. The bulk of the city is in ruins, and over fifty different lords claim control over a part of it.

Prestige Races – Mutations that inhabitants of the Forge may evolve towards by channeling the inherent magic of the Forge. Prestige races are obtained through a series of rituals known as "Enchantments of the Flesh".

Prime – The first of the thirteen months of the year.

Prosper – The second month of the year.

Provincial – Person living in one of the outer cities in the domain of Penance. ex: *"That sour provincial Pandarus can go hang himself if he thinks we'll let him get a foothold on the pedestal."*

Purity – The sixth of the thirteen months of the year.

Queen – Israfel, the Queen of Penance, who has laid down the rules and boundaries of the domain. ex: *"Sure, you can break her laws, but don't come looking to me for help when you face the fury of the Queen."*

Rafter – A person who has taken the rafter prestige class, which trains characters to delve into the undercity. ex: *"You won't get far in the maze without a rafter in your party."*

Rasher – Someone seeking the thrill of adventure. Specifically someone who wishes to undertake missions for treasure, reward, excitement, power, or gold. The term literally refers to one who acts rashly. ex: *"A couple of rashers delved into the maze a week ago and haven't been seen since."*

Ravage – The twelfth of the thirteen months of the year.

Razor – An officer in the service of a Bloodlord who reports directly to the lord himself. ex: *"Lady Megaera must mean business, she sent a razor to settle this matter."*

Red Desert – Another name for the domain of Arena.

Regale – One of the eight named hours of the day. Dinnertime. Equivalent to 9 PM.

Repast – One of the eight named hours of the day. Lunchtime. Equivalent to 3 PM.

Sate – The fifth day of the week.

Savage – The tenth of the thirteen months of the year.

Scheming – The fourth of the thirteen months of the year.

Scourge – The eleventh of the thirteen months of the year.

Seed – A person who has recently been pulled into the Forge by one of the

Seven, and who doesn't yet know their way around. ex: *"Check out those seeds across the street, someone should tell them they're talking to a judge."*

Seething – The third season of the month, lasting from days 15 to 21. Seething is similar to summer.

Shroud – One of the eight named hours of the day, equivalent to midnight. Bedtime. Shroud also is used to denote AM. The first twelve hours of the day are Shroud

through eleventh Shroud. Third shroud, for example, is equivalent to 3 AM. The term Shroud indicates that the yellow sun is not present in the sky.

Sleeping – The fourth season of the month, lasting from days 22 to 28. Blooming is similar to winter.

Sifter – A term used to refer to the process whereby the members of the Flock take items from individuals when first pulling them into the Forge, distributing them later to others.

Sinking – A term describing the collapse of part of the pedestal, whereby surface areas sink into the undercity.

Slumber – One of the eight named hours of the day. Sleeping time. Equivalent to 3 AM.

Sorrow – The third of the thirteen months of the year.

Spark – One of the eight named hours of the day, equivalent to noon. Work time. Spark also is used to denote PM. The second twelve hours of the day are Spark through eleventh Spark. Fifth shroud, for example, is equivalent to 5 PM. The term Spark indicates that the yellow sun is present in the sky.

Stillness – The eighth of the thirteen months of the year.

Stir – One of the eight named hours of the day. Awakening time. Equivalent to 6 AM.

Stirring – The ninth of the thirteen months of the year.

Storm – The name of the red sun, that orbits the Forge on a one month cycle. The short cycle of the red sun is why the seasons on the Forge are only a week long.

Seven, the – An alternate term for the Flock. See “The Flock” above.

Sojourner – A person from a domain other than Penance. ex: *“A couple of sojourners wandered in here from the Wildwood yesterday and trashed the place.”*

Squatter – A person who dwells in the lost city in order to avoid the rules of the bloodlords or the expense of the city. ex: *“I wouldn’t go into that cell if I were you, there’s nothing there but squatters and skeletons.”*

Stalker – A person who has taken the stalker prestige class, which instructs characters in the arts of spying and detective work. ex: *“I have an eerie feeling I’m being watched, do you think there’s a stalker on our tail?”*

Stormbringer – The term used for the wild mountaintop masters of Anvil, who spend their time channeling and shaping the power of the winds.

Talon – A term used in Penance for the head of a crime ring.

Toil – One of the eight named hours of the day. Time to begin working. Equivalent to 9 AM.

Undercity – The ancient and abandoned layers of the city of Penance, located beneath the surface of the present day city. Because of the immense age of the city, the undercity is a quarter of a mile deep, containing an indeterminable number of layers, and a vast wealth of forgotten lore. ex: *“I pursued the thieves for nearly a dozen blocks, but they finally escaped me by slipping into the undercity.”*

Utopia – One of the major bloodholds of the city of Penance. Its ruler is Lord Abbydon Helicon.

Vanguard – A military officer in the service of a bloodlord. A Vanguard commands a troop of mercenaries and reports directly to a Razor. ex: *“I give you my praises Timogen, cunning like that will get you promoted to Vanguard in no time.”*

Vault – The Vault is the southernmost domain of the Forge. It is a barren land of ice and death, watched over by the Feathered Fowl Nemamah.

Verger – Person living toward the outer edge of the city of Penance. ex: *“These vergers will be the first to fall when Lord Pandarus decides to make his move.”*

Vigilante – A term used for individuals who have taken levels in the vigilante prestige class, which prepares characters to be effective as solitary warriors.

Warlock – A term used to denote the mysterious wizards and hermits that dwell in the heart of the Vault, beyond the reach of mortal ken.

Warlord – The powerful military lords of the domain of Arena, who vie with one another for the precious gems and metals that lie beneath the red sand.

Wasting – The second season of the month, lasting from days 8 to 14. Wasting is similar to autumn.

Weller – Person living on the inner edge of the city of Penance, near to the Wellspring. ex: *“Those wellers lead such a sheltered existence, they’ve never even discovered that the city has an edge.”*

Wellspring – The Wellspring is a freshwater lake located at the center of the city of Penance. All the waters of the Forge begin here, bubbling up from below the surface of the Wellspring.

Wildwood – One of the seven domains of the Forge. Wildwood lies east of Penance, and is dominated by thick foliage. It is overseen by the Feathered Fowl Haiel.

Worker – A laborer, specifically in Penance. Basically anyone who does not make his living through combat, exploration, or politics. ex: *“Lord Mabon is notoriously cruel to his workers.”*

Wrack – Slang name for the lost city. ex: *“My brother went into the wrack three days ago, and I fear ill may have befallen him there.”*

Zadkiel – The name of the smaller of the two moons of the Forge. Zadkiel is rust colored, and orbits around the poles of the Forge instead of around the equator.

Zealot – A religious zealot, almost always a non-native, intent on converting others to his particular faith. The term is quite similar to the term “inquisitor” above, excepting that it does not imply that a person has taken levels in any particular class. ex: *“That zealot Salamis really gave those squatters the inquisition.”*



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Introduction: The section beneath the 'Terminology' header that details the abbreviations used in the book.

Chapter One: Arrival: All Gifts (pages 19-21).

Chapter Two: Inhabitants of the Forge: Tables 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4; the text beneath the 'Racial Traits' headers; the 'Powerful Races as PCs' sidebar on page 42.

Chapter Three: Matters of Prestige: Everything in this chapter is Open Content.

Chapter Five: The Black Flock: The text below the 'Powers of the Avatars' header and continuing through Israfel's Avatar on page 111.

Chapter Six: The City of Penance: The d20 game statistics for: the Grinder, Odyar Khan, Sestos Malavacius, Ness Panthus, Briseis Sigurne, and Lucius Tristram.

Chapter Nine: Dark Welcomes: The NPC Statistics (pages 314-319).

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