

KRAETOL'S WAIL

Concerning commerce and technology, few folk are as advanced at the Aurumel. But these strengths are largely built upon the backs of slaves. Being a society that endorses slavery results in the culture of Veile to being held in low regard in many circles on several shards. In some instances the cruelties of the slave trade have resulted in near total embargos on entire Aurumel guilds or prohibitions upon many generations of the great Houses. Yet slavery persists upon Veile.

But all Aurumel are not fallen to this dubious enterprise. In fact, a hidden community opposes this barbaric endeavor. Composed of slaves, ex-slaves and a few, compassionate Aurumel aristocrats, they are called Kraetol's Wail, or simply The Wail, named for the first slave to give his life to the organization's cause. This group is comprised of about two dozen members. As a result, they work in near anonymity. They withstand occasional violent raids and mercenary assaults from a tyrannical Noble who is poised to arrest them.

The Wail is based in the city of Polem, the very heart of Aurumel culture and custom. It is here that one will find one of the largest slave populations upon Veile, here to service the agricultural lynchpin that fields of Polem provide. These slaves have become **part of** a massive distribution hub for the main revolutionary tool of Kraetol's Wail. The newspaper "Kraetol Speaks" is now the key medium of an uprising.

The Wail's actual membership may grow in fits and starts, but a developing membership is less a concern than the spreading of news about aristocratic scandals, opportunities for revolts, and slave refuges on other shards. The juiciest issues expose the secrets and cruelty that even on Veile could destroy the reputations of the great guilds and Houses. Some forward thinking exists among the Aurumel nobility who mention Kraetol's Wail in hushed or not-so-hushed tones, seeking to agitate the social comfort of the slave trade.

As might be expected, several Aurumel Houses would happily give towers of gold or great



sheaves of property deeds in efforts to destroy the Wail. Bounties for proven members of the organization-- named or unnamed -- continue to grow in number and value. Some Houses, with no slave trade of their own still seek to capture the Wail's ringleaders and bring a certain stability and predictability back to the economy. And of course, there are plenty of politicians with no real stake in merchant trade who will often use the Wail and the newspaper as scapegoats for preposterous political actions. Members of Kraetol's Wail are naively viewed as general bogeymen by the wealthy.

It is known that the Wail has a Skyborn benefactor who is revered and lionized. In some cities, this benefactor is thought to be mere legend, an imaginary symbol crafted by the radicals. Nonetheless, the warrants that exist for this elusive individual are among the highest ever posted on Veile.

It would be the scandal of the ages if it were to ever be known that the young heiress Laenessa Urjax - of the powerful House Urjax - is this very hero.