

Mortak Vonis

You have been the head of the guards in Hound's Teeth for the past five years, since your father retired. Before that, you worked under him in various guard positions around the town. You generally like to think that you do a good job in your position. You like your work and your guards, and the guards mostly like you. You have stopped some fighting that was going on in your father's time, and brought the guards together into a much more coherent whole. Even your father seems pleased with your work.

However, three years ago, Tolipat Winters, the head of the royal line at the time, and Serian's father died of a mysterious ailment that the priests could not cure. While it is certainly not the job of the guards to prevent illness, it is part of their job to prevent magical attack, and this could only have been a magical disease. Your family has been serving the royal family of Hound's Teeth since long before the time of the empire, and Tolipat was the first in the kingly line to die under the watch of your family when not in battle or in old age.

This failure struck deeper than anything else that had happened to you. You never succeeded in tracking down whoever did this horrible deed, and you feel personally responsible for the death of this good ruler. Worse yet, it forced his young son Serian into power before he was trained and prepared. He should have had many more years to prepare and to enjoy life, but now he must shoulder both the bureaucracy of the council and the threat of whoever killed his father. You guarded him in your first guard duty at the palace when he was a child, and still cannot see him as a man ready to be on the council. His decisions are generally good, but he lacks the wisdom that will come with age. Perhaps in twenty years he will have something of the wisdom and power of his father.

You've always had one weakness, and that's gambling. You can't resist the urge to lay a bet on something. When you were a child, you would start card games with the other children, and when you were a teenager you started to bet on races and games. You've always loved gambling, but you were always careful about how much you spent, and rarely came out too much worse than even. However, in the past few years, since the death of Tolipat, you've been gambling more and more. About ten months ago, you suddenly realized you were so deeply in a whole that you didn't see a way out. At that point you began drinking a bit more, which only made things worse. You never drink on the job, but when you're drunk you're overconfident and can't resist one more wager.

Eight months ago, when you were at the depths of your depression and your debt, one of the bookies came to you with a deal. He offered to forgive you some of your debt if you would overlook certain illegal books he kept. You didn't see anyway that it was hurting anyone, and you were desperate, so you took it. Since then, it's been a spiral. You would never overlook something important, but the crimes that don't have a direct victim are much easier to rationalize. You've started taking true bribes, as much as you hate to admit it. You won't ignore violent crime or theft, but it's easy to overlook illegal prostitution, smuggling, or guild evasion.

Surrendering your family's honor in this way has hurt your pride, of course, but you've already sunk so low by allowing Tolipat to be killed under your nose that it hardly seems to matter. You just hope that your young son, Norris, doesn't know what depths his father has sunk to. He'll be entering the guards in a few years and you would hate for him to see you like this. He idolizes you the same way you did your father, and you just wish you could be half as deserving.

You've tried to stop taking the bribes, but there are so many opportunities out there. You're always sure that the next bet will pay off, and, maybe, if the pay-off is big enough, you won't need to do this anymore. You're sure that at least one of the local bookies will come in today with a proposition. They know that you will push the council to vote their way, because you know they will help you out afterwards. Sometimes you almost wish that the rest of the council would discover it, to force you to stop.

People You Know:**The Council:**

Lerin Lopel: Lerin is the mayor. He's not all that bright, but he has been known to have moments of useful insight. He only got in because everyone hated the other people's candidates more, and everyone thought he would be easy to manipulate. He mostly seems to enjoy being mayor because it lets him drink and lech and the towns expense. Not a bad deal, to tell the truth, although you think your wife wouldn't be too happy with the leching part.

Koric Maltin: Koric is the head of the mages guild. He is a brilliant and powerful wizard, however, he hasn't changed his mind on anything in 90 years. He wants to see the empire leave Hound's Teeth. Even though your family has always worked for the kings of Hound's Teeth, you wouldn't want to see this. As far as you can tell, the empire has mostly brought peace and stability.

Serian Winter: Tolipat's son, unfairly thrust too young into the council. After a bit of a rough start, he seems to be holding his own, but still lacks the drive and wisdom that his father showed. You are absolutely determined to protect him at all costs, and not to repeat your humiliation with his father.

Stani Bowin: The high priest of Porel. Stani can be a bit of an arrogant bastard, but he really does seem to be a very good person. He thinks that he is more moral and more worthy than everyone else, and he pretty much is. You wish he would get off your case about the vice in town, but, then again, some of it is your fault, so you can't really complain.

Tofen Sarish: Tofen is the head of the merchants' guild, and is everything you would expect from such a person. She is smart, driven, charismatic, and cares about absolutely nothing half so much as her own purse. However, she has good sense when it comes to running things efficiently, and so is a useful head to have on the council.

Powers:

Guards: You have several guards hovering in the rooms around the council room. If there is a problem, these can come instantly, and more can be summoned in moments.