

Tofen Sarish

Through long hard work, you have risen to become the head of the merchants' guild. This highly prestigious position carries with it a highly valuable spot on the council, which allows you to shape city policy in the way that works best for you.

You were born into a family of cloth merchants. Your family never starved, but the business was not doing terribly well. When you were 17 you went on a purchasing trip with your elder brother and encountered a material that you had never seen before. You brought it back, and it became the rage among the noble families. Due to connections, your family had the only source on it. You used this opportunity to gain power within your family and get as many connections to other sources as you could. By the time you were 22, you had acquired most of the cloth business in Hound's Teeth for your family.

Although your grandmother technically ran the family business, more and more of it began finding its way into your hands. You have a natural talent for making money, and put it to good use. After your family had acquired the textile market, you began looking for other ways to expand. With the help of some mages, you set up a factory for ready-made clothing. It was expensive getting everything set up, but well worth it in the long run. The changing models allow the workers to size their dresses for the customer without having to measure them. You employ many city elves and halflings, who have small dextrous hands that can sew nearly identical clothing for your customers. Even with these innovations, ready-made clothing is still far out of the price range of most people, but even the middle class may have a nice outfit or two made by your company.

You began exporting the clothing to other cities around the empire through distant branches of your family or other contacts, and your family became well known as the place to buy the best garments. Even the lesser nobles of the emperor's court come to you. Since then, your family has expanded into making pre-made draperies and curtains and everything else cloth.

As your power within your family grew, and your family's wealth and power grew, so too did your standing within the merchants' guild. You rose up through the levels, and began taking positions within the guild. You dictated everything that happened in your family's business, but had long since delegated most of the day-to-day workings. You used the guild to gain more prestige for yourself and more business for your family.

Your talent for administration served you well in the guild, and four years ago you became head of the guild. While the guildhead on the city council technically can be from any guild, generally it is the head of the merchants guild, and you were no exception. The other guilds don't really trust the merchant guild, but they all have to work with it in one form or another, so it is to their advantage to keep the merchants happy.

You do try to accommodate the requests of the other guild leaders. Once a week, all the guild leaders meet over lunch to discuss issues. You know that if you make the builders guild unhappy you're going to get overcharged on the next expansion to your factory, and so on. It's a give and take system that winds up working pretty well for everyone. You also do your best to sponsor goodwill initiatives in the city. While you have the largest share of the market in your business, you have competitors, and good publicity always helps.

Speaking of publicity, today is an open meeting of the council. These are highly valuable, because they give you the opportunity to interact personally with many potential customers and employees. It is important to you to make as many people happy as possible, especially if the rest of the council seems to dissent: then they will view you as their advocate, even if they are turned down.

The council was brought by the empire, supplanting the previous monarchy. You are very grateful that the coming of the empire occurred before your time. As a woman, you never could have held the power you hold in the old days, and the king was much more restrictive of the doings of merchants.

People You Know:

The Council:

Lerin Lopel: The mayor of Hound's Teeth, and a blithering idiot. He got elected mayor because no two council members could agree on any other candidate. No one particularly thought he was worth worrying about, so he was accepted. However, over the past few months, you have seen a few things that make you wonder. At this point, you're not sure whether he really is that stupid, or whether he's actually something far more dangerous.

Koric Maltin: The guildmage. The mages guild is the only guild in the city to officially have a permanent position on council. This is very sensible, because the head of the mages guild is going to be one of the most powerful people in the city, and you want him on the side of the government. Unfortunately, being an old powerful mage, he's also more than a little stuck in his ways. He would like to see the Empire out of the city, something you hope never to see. However, you have very good business relations with the local wizards college, so you have even more reason than most not to piss off the wizards.

Serian Winters: Serian is the heir of the line of kings that used to run Hound's Teeth. When they gave up the city, they retained a seat on the council. His father died young, and so Serian was forced into politics unexpectedly. You have heard rumors that his younger sister was the one who took out their father. If this is true, he needs to watch his step in a few years when she comes of age. He is unprepared, and uncontrolled, but he is learning. He is no genius, but he is not stupid.

Stani Bowin: The high priest of Porel, the high god of the empire. He is insufferably arrogant and wants to impose his morality on everyone. Someday perhaps he will learn that what really runs the world is simple stubbornness and greed. However, it is generally to your advantage to support his proposals: it makes you look good in the eyes of the people.

Mortak Vonis: Mortak is the head of the guards. He does a good job, and has reduced the problematic crime (theft, murder, fraud) in the town in his time of office. He has been known to take bribes on minor crimes, but you would be surprised to hear of a guard who didn't. He has the love of his men, and is a good leader. As long as he keeps important crime down, you're happy to support him.

Special Notes:

Money: You have unlimited funds. You would much rather not use them for anything, but if something seems like the use of money would help you gain more money or power in the long run, you will happily front the investment. 1000 gold in a children's school now can mean 3000 gold when they are adults and need to buy cloth.