

# STEELWEAVER'S REBELLION



**AN UNOFFICIAL BLADES IN THE DARK MODULE**

**BY MABEL HARPER**



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**James Stuart**, for hiring me to work on the Blades project that this module was originally part of, and providing the initial concept that eventually led to this project.

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**DC**, for being such a fierce force of change in games for people of color, and for the Babble On Equity project that brought so many people of color to Big Bad Con 2019.

**Corinne Perham**, because it is literally your fault that I'm a communist.

# NOTES, DISCLAIMERS, ETC.

This module is a free and unofficial fan work of *Blades in the Dark*, a game by John Harper and published by Evil Hat. It is in no way associated with either party. They own the actual rights to *Blades in the Dark*, Duskwall, Coalridge, and a whole lot of other shit that this module uses and refers to. I make no claim to any of that stuff. It is legally theirs.

All that being said, I *did* originally make this for a cancelled official module called *Broken Crown* by James Stuart, and I firmly believe that *Blades in the Dark* needs this — a module about working class heroes fighting back for and with their community — way more than it needs an official module where you play cops (fuck all cops, including fantasy cops).

Alas, this module is not meant to be anything but a fun exercise in a fantasy world that needs some serious shaking up and a fresh perspective. It's not all-inclusive, all-perfect, all-knowing. As with anything, this work has its biases, its limitations, its problems. So please modify it as you see fit. Add to it. Delete the bullshit. Make it breathe and live. At the end of the day, as with all art, it belongs to you.

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## NO MORE DREAM

The color has been stripped from the miner's skin. His cough is getting much worse, and his blood is starting to run black. He is tired all the time, and, in the little naps he steals away among dark galleries of coal, he dreams a pastoral dream. He wants to see fields of flowers. He wants a horse. He wants his family to be fed always. A future he knows he cannot have. He is ten years old.

The lever-puller has lost her sense of smell, and she is delirious. She has been breathing in fumes for far too long. The sinews of her creaky arms are stretched out like taffy. She can barely lift the lever, but she must or she will starve. She is tired all the time, and, during those peaceful six hours of night when she is asleep, she dreams a kind dream. She wants to see all little children taken care of. She wants to put them in a big house with warm beds and hot suppers. A future she knows she cannot have. Her own young son was sold to a workhouse, and she misses him every day.

Neither of these workers, nor the thousands more like them, will have their dreams. But **Lucretius Dream** the industrialist who single-handedly developed Coalridge into its labyrinthian mess of mines, factories, and slums will have his. All thanks to the broken dreamers.

But there is another dream, which all of these broken dreamers touch. It is of a place where they and their families may breathe clean air; a storehouse filled to the brim with wheat, milk, honey, and butter; a town square where people are laughing and dancing in gleaming moonlight; a place where the workhouses have been leveled to stone and ash; a place without cruel foremen and shadowy masters; a place without Dream.

Your crew will give the broken dreamers this good dream, or they will die trying.

# NEW CREW TYPE: REVOLUTIONARIES

## FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Because sometimes history needs a push.

When you play Revolutionaries, you earn xp when you liberate the oppressed, overthrow tyrants, and unite communities for the common good.

Instead of hunting grounds, you have a **community** that you serve.

*How are you going to take down the prevailing social order? What kind of society are you trying to build in its place?*

## STARTING UPGRADES

- ♦ **TRAINING:** Resolve
- ♦ **COHORT:** Gang, type SKULKS

## COMMUNITY

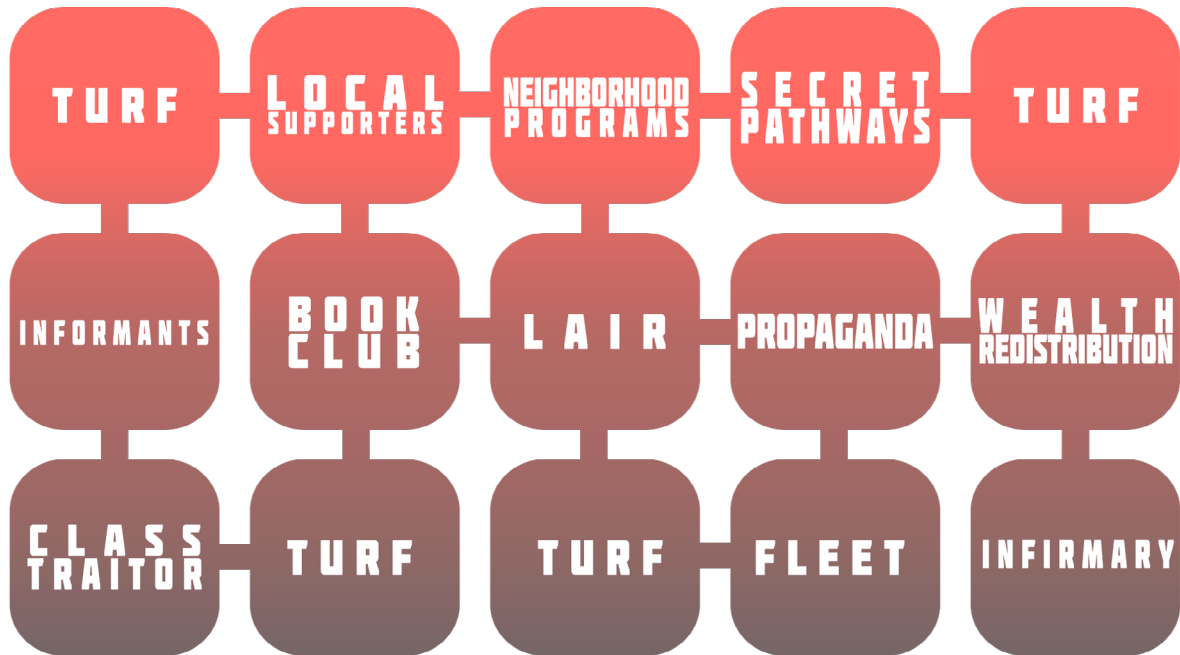
Choose a favored operation type:

- ♦ **AGITATION:** Arouse the anger of the oppressed.
- ♦ **LIBERATION:** Release people from their bonds.
- ♦ **TERROR:** Make an example out of an oppressor.
- ♦ **SABOTAGE:** Hurt the system by destroying something.

## CONTACTS

- ♦ **TEETH**, a coal miner. *Perhaps they can smuggle you dynamite?*
- ♦ **LADY BRAITHWAITE**, a noble. *Perhaps a sympathizer for the working class?*
- ♦ **OURINDA**, a union organizer. *Perhaps a frequent target of the Bluecoats?*
- ♦ **SHAW**, a fortune teller. *Perhaps he senses great change on the horizon?*
- ♦ **JOONGI**, a sex worker. *Perhaps he'll sell you the secrets of his powerful clientele?*
- ♦ **PRIORIA**, a crime boss. *Perhaps she is greatly invested in her community?*

# CLAIMS



**BOOK CLUB:** You get +1d to **STUDY** or **SURVEY** rolls on-site. *Some local students have been reading incendiary material and want to assist you.*

**CLASS TRAITOR:** You get +1d to acquire asset rolls. *A local warehouse owner believes in your cause. How did you convert them?*

**FLEET:** : Your cohorts have their own vehicles. *Each cohort has a common vehicle, with quality equal to your tier.*

**INFIRMARY:** You get +1d to healing treatment rolls. *A local doctor does what they can to keep you fighting.*

**INFORMANTS:** You get +1d to gather information for a score. *You've got a set of willing eyes and ears.*

**LOCAL SUPPORTERS:** You get +2 **COIN** in payoff for scores that involve liberation or agitation. *The locals believe in your cause and make donations to help with your efforts.*

**NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS:** During downtime, you may spend any amount of **COIN** and in return receive additional **REP** equal to the amount spent times two. *You've set up some local programs to help take care of citizens in need.*

**PROPAGANDA:** You get +1d to **COMMAND**, **FINESSE**, or **SWAY** in your community. *What kind of art and aesthetics do you use to spread revolutionary ideas around your community?*

**SECRET PATHWAYS:** You get +1d to the engagement roll for stealth plans. *You might have access to long-forgotten underground canals, rooftop walkways, or some other route of your choosing.*

**WEALTH REDISTRIBUTION:** When you use the reduce **HEAT** downtime activity after a score that involves stealing, you may spend 2 **COIN** and get +1d to the roll, or 4 **COIN** to get +2d. *A local lawyer will quietly launder the stolen wealth by giving it to those in need.*

# SPECIAL ABILITIES

## COMRADES

Two times per score you can assist a teammate without paying stress. Describe why you put yourself out for them.

*You can narrate an event in the past that displays your bond, or you might explain how this situation moved you to act for them.*

## DIALECTICS

Each PC may add +1 action rating to **COMMAND**, **FINESSE**, or **SWAY** (up to a max rating of 3).

*Each player may choose the action they prefer (you don't all have to choose the same one). If you take this ability during initial character and crew creation, it supersedes the normal starting limit for action ratings.*

## FOR THE CAUSE

Your **COHORTS** have dedicated themselves entirely to the cause. They will undertake any service, no matter how dangerous. They gain +1 to rolls when they act against the authorities.

*How did your cohorts come to follow you? What made them believe in your cause?*

## FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE

During downtime, one of your contacts or experts may take a downtime action to acquire an asset, reduce **HEAT**, or recover harm for you.

## INVISIBLE WAR

When you're at war (-3 faction status), your crew does not suffer -1 hold and PCs still get two downtime activities, instead of just one.

## MAKING WAVES

You may take +1 additional **HEAT** after a score and in return gain +2 **REP**.

## PATRON

When you advance your Tier, it costs half the **COIN** it normally would.

*Who is your patron? Why do they help you?*



# CHARACTER CREATION QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS YOUR HURT?

- ◇ My daughter, **Ilana**, is in dire need of expensive medicine.
- ◇ My son, **Juni**, was killed in an accident at work. I had no bones to bury.
- ◇ I have an unrelenting addiction to dreamsmoke. A man named **Vass** sells it to me.
- ◇ My landlord, **Jero**, has raised rent and is threatening to kick me out any day now.
- ◇ Someone marked an X on my door, and the next day my mother, **Len**, disappeared.

## WHO MAKES YOUR LIFE HELL AT WORK?

- ◇ My father, **Andras**, the senior smelter, who thinks I'll never live up to our family name.
- ◇ My shift manager **Nyx**. We went out once ... it didn't go well.
- ◇ The foreman **Lawler**. He won't give me a day off for my mother's funeral.
- ◇ This guy who calls himself **The Heff**. He always picks on me because I'm a Skovlander.
- ◇ This Bluecoat guard, **Brick**, who likes to hustle me out of my pay from time to time.

## WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

- ◇ To spend my days writing dashing tales!
- ◇ To wander endlessly and with no destination!
- ◇ To fill my pockets, and to fill my stomach even more!
- ◇ To taste butter, and to wear a pretty dress!
- ◇ To sit and debate among great minds!

## WHAT HAS SHOW YOU THAT THERE IS ANOTHER OPTION?

- ◇ A dream ... no ... a vision!
- ◇ A little red pamphlet I found, soaked in blood.
- ◇ A Skovlan rabble-rouser named **Saya**, right before her hanging. I loved her.
- ◇ A black goat in the corner of my room late at night.
- ◇ Nothing. I just can't keep going like this.

## WHAT DO YOU HAVE FAITH IN?

- ◇ My friends. (Once per score, you may make a resistance roll for another character and take the stress for yourself.)
- ◇ Justice. (Once per score, you may clear 1 **STRESS** when you give an oppressor what's coming to them.)
- ◇ The fundamental goodness of human beings. (Once per score, if you show mercy to an enemy, you may later subtract 1 **HEAT** after the score.)
- ◇ A higher power. (Once per score, you may treat a single **resistance** roll as an automatic success.)
- ◇ Myself. (Once per score, you may treat a single **action** roll as an automatic success.)

## WILL THERE BE BLOODSHED?

- ◇ There is no other way.
- ◇ I hope not ... but there may not be any other way.



# PART I: THE STEEL TRAP

It begins with a factory full of workers, pushed to their breaking point. The factory, unlovingly named *the Steel Trap* by its workers, produces munitions for the Imperial Army. Its workers labor among a dangerous matrix of twisted, screeching machinery; breathe in foulness that leaves them dizzy for days; and must withstand horrible abuses from their higher-ups. Towering above the workforce is **Lawler**, their fearsome foreman, and the Bluecoats and hired thugs he's got watching the place.

**Sten**, an eight-year-old steel scraper, was recently killed by one of the machines. His older sister **Quill**, also a worker at the factory, could recover no more than his severed head after the accident. In compensation for the death of her brother, Lawler has given her a single day off for the burial.

There is quiet, simmering outrage among the workers, that will explode into a fireball during the next union meeting. This isn't the first time something this horrible has happened—but many hope it is the last.

Thankfully, there are individuals brave enough to step up and finally challenge these grim circumstances. With the laborers worked into a frenzy, this may well be their one and only chance to finally turn the tables against Lawler.

These challengers are your crew. If you succeed in exploiting this opportunity, you may just spark the tinder that sets all of Coalridge aflame. However, if you fail, the consequences that will follow such an insurrection will no doubt be severe, for you and your fellow workers alike.

## THE OPENING SCENE

The crew is seated in a tightly-packed parlor of a destitute manor—one of many makeshift union halls for the laborers of Coalridge. The Steel Trap's workers are meeting to discuss the way forward after Sten's death, and, though everybody knows something must be done, nobody can agree on exactly what.

## SETTING UP A SCORE

There are a few different people to speak to, all of whom have very different ideas of how to proceed. Each will present a different score, each of which has suggested complications, secrets, and consequences.



## SCORE OPTION 1: WHISPERS IN THE NIGHT

A group of silent workers sit closely together in a corner of the room. Each holds a dripping, crimson candle. Quill (*grieved, vengeful, single-minded*) kneels among them, her head pressed to the ground; she's wearing a black veil. A whisper, Sera (*calm, mirthless, inscrutable*), stands above the group and murmurs a prayer. Quill softly, solemnly repeats after her. Only the words “steel,” “flame,” and “dusk” are audible.

### ◆ IF APPROACHED:

Quill will request the crew bring Lawler to her alive. If asked why, Sera will simply elaborate that they intend on putting Sten's unquiet spirit to rest.

### ◆ COMPLICATIONS:

Kidnapping Lawler won't be easy, especially at the factory with all of his guards, and outside of the factory he always travels with at least one of his personal bodyguards.

### ◆ WHAT THEY AREN'T TELLING THE PCs:

Quill, using Sera's knowledge of dark rituals, intends to vacate Lawler's soul from his body so Sten can then occupy it.

### ◆ IF THE PLAN SUCCEEDS:

Sten, occupying Lawler's body, will promote one of the crew members to the role of foreman before disappearing with Quill. The promotion won't last for long—Dream will undoubtedly try to get one of his own men to replace the new foreman—but, for a small window of time, the crew will be able to use the factory's assets to the rebellion's advantage. However, Lawler's ghost is likely to try and exact bitter vengeance against the crew.

- ◆ Sera will become a reliable contact for the crew.

- ◆ The Doom and Revolution clocks in the next part remain starting off at 0.

- ◆ For the duration of at least two scores, the crew will possess the Steel Trap as an asset. For the duration that it is held, it counts as 2 TURF.

## SCORE OPTION 2: REPRISAL IN BLOOM

A pair of dingy youths are whispering to each other over a corner table and matching glasses of whisky, neat. The first of them, **Primm** (*foul-mouthed, visionary, reckless*), is playing a careless but flawless game of five-finger fillet and occasionally breaking out in raucous laughter. Her companion, **Shawnie** (*loyal, patient, insightful*), is scribbling diligently on a scrap of paper.

### ♦ IF APPROACHED:

Primm will ask the crew to free a group of child workers Lawler is keeping locked up for “bad behavior.” The Knives will provide the crew with weapons they can supply to these children with the goal of fomenting an insurrection.

### ♦ COMPLICATIONS:

Gaining access to the facility, especially with a bunch of weapons in tow, is sure to be a challenge.

### ♦ WHAT THEY AREN'T TELLING THE PCs:

The Knives have little reason to be deceitful, though this plan does have the added benefit of bolstering their own ranks from the freed children.

### ♦ IF THE PLAN SUCCEEDS:

This leads to a bloody, but ultimately successful, rebellion in the factory, as the workers join the armed children in the battle against Lawler and his guards. Once word gets around the district, another factory goes on strike, thereby inviting a swift and immediate crackdown from Dream.

- ♦ A friendship with the Knives develops (+1 STATUS), and the Knives goes up a tier.

- ♦ In the next part, the Revolution clock will start off at 3 segments filled, and the Doom clock will start at 1 segments filled.

## SCORE OPTION 3: BLOOD FOR BLOOD

A spirited debate is underway at the bar. **Mal** (*poetic, spirited, resolute*) is fervently defending violence as a vehicle for social change. **Kev** (*educated, witty, humanistic*) contends that violence is a grim necessity with unpredictable consequences, and should be undertaken without relish and avoided when possible.

### ♦ IF APPROACHED:

Mal, after testing the crew's sympathies, will reveal to them a plan to assassinate Lawler and his supporters within the Steel Trap, and enlist them to carry out this bloody work.

### ♦ COMPLICATIONS:

To put it bluntly, getting away with murder is tough—especially if even just one aspect of the plot goes awry. Furthermore, striking at multiple targets in quick enough succession to avoid raising alarms and inviting counteraction will be a challenge.

### ♦ WHAT THEY AREN'T TELLING THE PCs:

The Many will assign one or more of their own agents to secretly keep tabs on the crew, ensuring they do not betray the cause and that they carry out their mission effectively.

### ♦ IF THE PLAN SUCCEEDS:

Rebellion will spread through the Steel Trap like wildfire. The Many will seize the factory and its assets for the workers. But Lucretius Dream's retribution will be ruthless, and disagreements regarding the path forward will plague the newly empowered workers including such ideological differences as those between Kev and Mal.

♦ A friendship with the Many develops (+1 STATUS), though the crew will find themselves caught between Kev and Mal's disagreements.

♦ In the next part, the Revolution clock will start off at 5 segments filled, and the Doom clock will start at 3 segments filled. If the disagreement between the workers isn't resolved soon, the Revolution clock will lose its progress and drop back to 0 as the workers' revolt is violently crushed by Dream.



## SCORE OPTION 4: CRASH! BANG! BOOM!

The crew are approached by a pair of charming and flamboyantly dressed women offering entertainment: **Miss Adley** (*charming, caring, brave*) and **Nyryx** (*clever, colorful, winsome*).

### ♦ IF THE CREW ENGAGE WITH MISS ADLEY AND NYRYX,

the pair will briefly vet them before offering to hire them for a job – train robbery: stealing the munitions from an Imperial supply train that runs to and from the Steel Trap.

### ♦ COMPLICATIONS:

Besides the obvious difficulties of staging a train heist, Nyryx is secretly a Bluecoat informant, and if she isn't found out and stopped in time, the authorities will lay a trap for the crew.

### ♦ WHAT THEY AREN'T TELLING THE PCs:

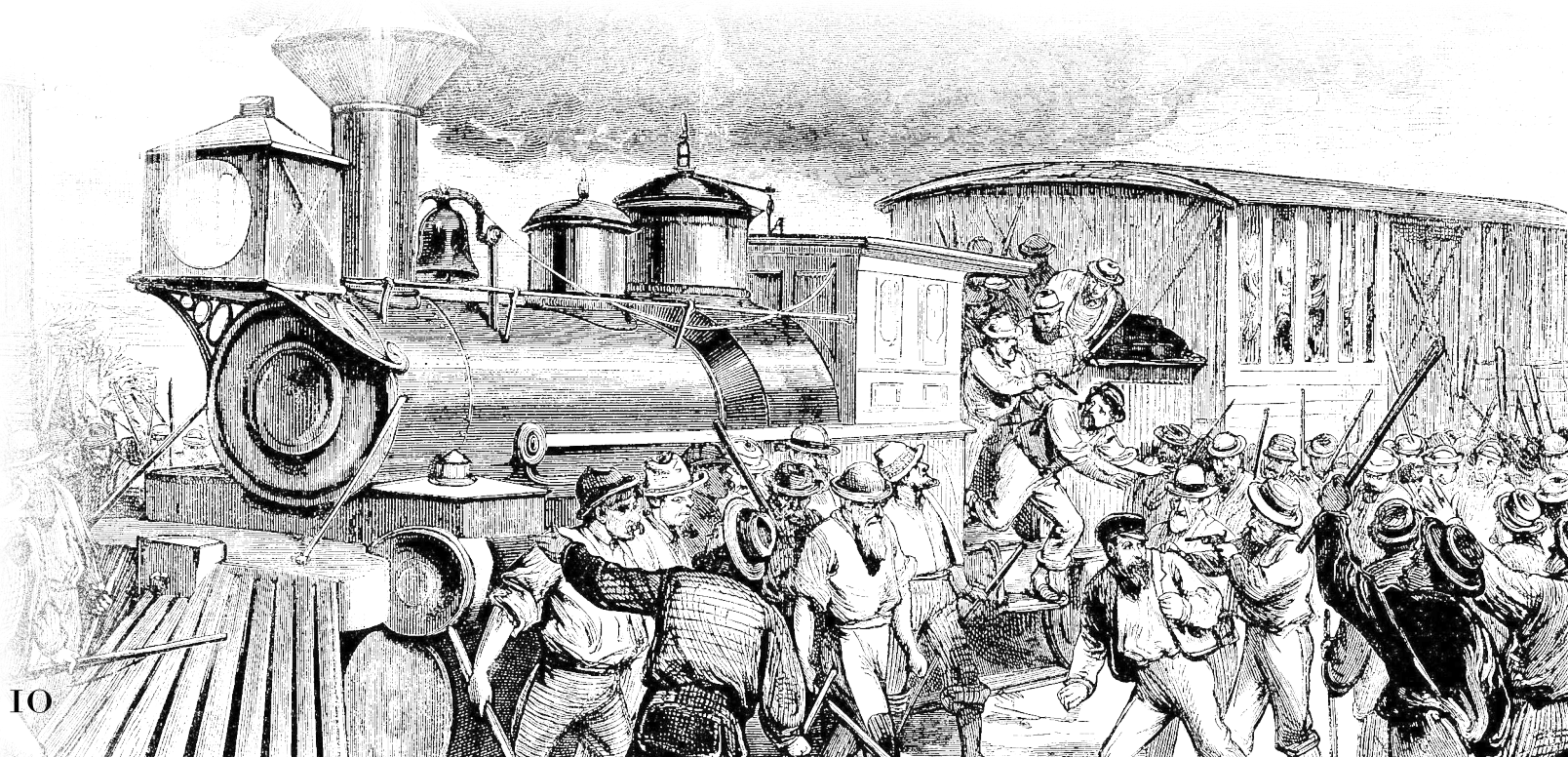
See above.

### ♦ IF THE PLAN SUCCEEDS:

The plan drives a wedge between Lucretius Dream and the Imperial Military, one of his biggest contractors as well as an ally that has been known to provide him with firepower when needed. Without military backing, Dream loses some of his ability to break up strikes. However, successfully carrying out this score doesn't do much to stop Lawler himself, who will undoubtedly crack down even more on the already-oppressed workers.

- ♦ A friendship with the Pink Roses develops (+1 STATUS).

- ♦ Lucretius Dream loses allyship with the Imperial Military.



## SCORE OPTION 5: A QUIET PLACE

If the crew are not otherwise engaged, a lone, well-dressed **man** (*soft-spoken, mild-mannered, never blinks*) approaches and asks if they're looking for work. He adds that he'll pay well if they're willing to get their hands dirty and keep their mouths shut.

### ♦ IF THE CREW ANSWERS YES:

The man will allude mysteriously to his boss, a personage of some importance who wants Lawler out of the picture but doesn't want him killed for fear of drawing attention from the Spirit Wardens.

### ♦ COMPLICATIONS:

In addition to the difficulties involved in abducting Lawler, the crew must figure out how to dispose of him without killing him.

### ♦ WHAT THEY AREN'T TELLING THE PCs:

The important personage in question is Olivia Dream, who, in an attempt at reform, intends to replace Lawler with someone more humane.

### ♦ IF THE PLAN SUCCEEDS:

Olivia Dream will reveal herself as the architect of the scheme and offer one of the crew members Lawler's former position. Should the crew member in question accept, Lucretius Dream will object to the appointment, placing the crew member at the center of a conflict between Lucretius and his adopted daughter.

- ♦ A friendship with Olivia Dream develops (+1 STATUS).

- ♦ The **Doom clock** in the next part starts at 2 segments filled instead of 0.

- ♦ The crew will possess the Steel Trap as an asset. For the duration that it is held, it counts as 2 TURF.

## THE BAD OPTION

The crew always has the option to turn in the union members and stop the coming rebellion at the very onset. Surely there'd be some material rewards from Lawler, and maybe even recognition from someone higher up in the chain. But then your table would be playing another game and not this one.

At any rate, if that's what the crew decides to do, faction status with the Knives, the Pink Roses, The Many, The Skovlan Underground, and the Coalridge Laborers' Union all drop to -3, while status with Lucretius Dream increases by +1.

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# PART 2: A FIRE INSIDE

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Regardless of what score the crew goes with, the Steel Trap represents only their very first foray into the burning heart of Coalridge's rebellion.

## DOOM & REVOLUTION

After the Steel Trap score, the GM should begin tracking two clocks.

The **Doom** clock represents a worsening of the current state of affairs. As the Doom clock advances, there is more outright and unreservedly violent repression by the entrenched powers. There is no way to reduce the Doom clock, though the crew may take actions that may temporarily delay the clock. Once the clock strikes midnight, however, the rebellion is successfully subdued as the revolutionary spirit of Coalridge is crushed, and the game is over.

The **Revolution** clock represents the destabilization of society and the rise of rebellion. As the Revolution clock advances, the people of Coalridge collectively become more class conscious and become more willing to overthrow Lucretius Dream and anyone else who stands in the way of a free Coalridge. Once the clock strikes midnight, revolution occurs, Lucretius Dream and his allies lose their stranglehold on Coalridge, and the game progresses to the epilogue.

The progression of the Doom clock inherently furthers the Revolution clock. As Coalridge sinks further into fascism, the people are more likely to realize their grim state of affairs. However, without help from the crew, the Revolution clock will never reach midnight before the Doom clock does.

There are **25** segments of the Doom clock, and, during each downtime, the Doom clock advances by one segment. If a backwards faction finishes one of their long-term projects, the Doom clock advances by an additional segment as well. The crew may take actions to halt the progress of the Doom clock, though only by preventing the advancement of one segment at a time. Likewise, any allies the crew brings into the coalition can devote themselves to halting the Doom clock, provided they aren't otherwise engaged.

There are 50 segments of the Revolution clock. As the Doom clock advances, the Revolution clock advances as well. Actions that can help advance the Revolution clock beyond the Doom clock include building a coalition with the advanced and intermediate factions of Coalridge, defeating backwards factions, and by finishing certain long-term projects at the table's discretion. Increasing the crew's Tier also furthers the Revolution clock.

## **BUILDING A COALITION**

The crew cannot achieve their revolutionary aims on their own. In order to challenge the entrenched powers of Coalridge, it's necessary that the crew look beyond themselves and form a powerful **coalition** with other factions in the district. To build a vanguard strong enough to challenge Lucretius Dream, the crew will have to unite the most politically advanced elements of Coalridge, win over most of everyone else, and finally eliminate those who firmly stand in the way of a free Coalridge.

## **THE ADVANCED, THE INTERMEDIATE, AND THE BACKWARDS**

Each faction listed under the **Factions** section is listed with one of the following tags: *advanced*, *intermediate* (*sympathetic or unconscious*), and *backwards*. A tag represents the revolutionary potential of a given faction, and each involves a slightly different approach when it comes to winning that particular faction over.

Once an *advanced* or *intermediate* faction is won over, the **Revolution** clock should advance by a number of segments equal to the faction's tier. Likewise, once a *backwards* faction is taken down, the Revolution clock should advance by a number of segments equal to the disempowered faction's tier.

Whenever a faction that is aligned with the crew's coalition finishes a long-term project, advance the Revolution clock by one segment.

### **THE ADVANCED**

Factions listed with the *advanced* tag consist of those who are already engaging in revolutionary activity within Coalridge. Unlike the others, these factions are already committed to systemic change and are actively working for it. To add them to the coalition, the crew must prove their own capabilities, as well as their own commitment to the cause.

## THE INTERMEDIATE

Factions listed with the *intermediate* tag possess a variety of sentiments and often behave in contradictory ways. To add an intermediate faction to the coalition, the crew must develop and then prove an understanding of their needs, and a willingness to meet those needs.

Those who bear the *sympathetic* qualifier desire liberation but may not believe it is possible and/or may not know how to achieve it.

Those who bear the *unconscious* qualifier are not actively aware of their own oppression, or at least never entertain the idea that a different world is possible. Before their needs can be met, thereby winning them over to the coalition, the crew must also take the extra step of arousing the anger of unconscious factions. By exposing the depth of a given unconscious faction's discontent, the crew can then begin to fulfill their realized needs.

Most of the apolitical criminal organizations within Doskvol are likely to be considered *intermediate, unconscious*.

## THE BACKWARDS

Factions listed with the *backwards* tag are impossible, or at least very nearly impossible, to ever win over to the coalition. This may be because they are in outright support of the status quo, or because the alternative they uphold is equally as odious. For the most part, dealing with these factions is not about winning them over, but getting them out of the way. How the crew decides to eliminate a backwards faction—whether by actual elimination, or simply disempowerment—is up to them, though keep in mind that the backwards factions fight back, and will fight back hard.

Most of the Doskvol's government-associated organizations, such as City Council or the Bluecoats, would be considered backwards.

## APPROACHING DOOM

As the Doom clock ticks toward midnight, Lucretius Dream and his enforcers become even more violent, rights become increasingly restricted, and laws become more outright draconian. For every 5 segments of the Doom clock that are filled, the crew automatically goes up in **WANTED LEVEL** by 1, with no way to reduce it.

If the Doom clock strikes midnight, deliver a somber montage of how Coalridge's fomenting rebellion is finally and violently crushed once and for all. Work with the players to detail how each one of their PCs meets their end. The game is effectively over.

## THE REVOLUTION

As the Revolution clock ticks toward midnight, increasingly larger crowds take to the streets, more and more workers go on strike, and, eventually, when the clock's all filled up, Coalridge undergoes a revolution.

Make no mistake that revolution is a bloody affair. People *will* die. However, depending on the crew's actions during this part of the game and the kind of coalition they build, the revolution may be more or less gruesome.

If revolution is achieved, deliver it as a montage to the players, with their input. Whatever happens to Lucretius Dream himself is also up to you and the players. Some might choose to imprison him; the kindhearted may desire rehabilitation; and others yet might demand a public execution. Some guidance for what revolution may look like can be found under the **Revolution** section of the **Epilogue** chapter.

## OLIVIA DREAM & THE CORRUPTION CLOCK

Olivia Dream bears a unique tag: *reformist*. If she is brought into the coalition at all, the Revolution clock does not advance. Rather, a new (secret) clock will begin counting down – the Corruption clock.

The Corruption clock has 13 segments, and after each score it will tick up by one. She may also offer jobs to the crew, which, if carried out successfully, will advance the clock by an additional one segment. As the Corruption clock advances, the radical attitudes of the coalition are tamed, and a culture of reforming Coalridge takes hold instead. As a result, the Revolution clock will drop by one segment every time the Corruption clock advances by one.

When the Corruption clock hits midnight, if the crew has been trusting of her, Olivia will offer the crew one last job: the assassination of her father. (See **Score: Et Tu Olivia?** on the next page for more details.)

If the crew hasn't been trusting of her, Olivia will try and find someone else to do the job. This is a long-term project with six segments, which may potentially provide the crew with a chance at casting out her influence from the coalition. However, if the project is allowed to finish, then the game advances right to the **Reform** section in the **Epilogue** chapter.

## SCORE: ET TU, OLIVIA?

From the top suite of her tower in Coalridge, **Olivia Dream** overlooks a throng of passing marchers in the street demanding better working conditions and higher wages, while singing songs of liberation. She's invited the crew in to tell them that it's time to end this, and that her tyrannical father must die, and that she knows a way how.

### ♦ IF THE CREW ACCEPTS THE SCORE:

she provides a map detailing a secret entrance into Lucretius Dream's heavily-fortified estate, and tells them that Dream is afraid of water.

### ♦ COMPLICATIONS:

Though the map provides an easy way into the estate, the crew still has to reckon with Lucretius Dream's extremely tight security detail. Even more than that, Lucretius Dream is an immortal that's made a pact with a powerful devil, and he can only die by drowning.

### ♦ WHAT SHE ISN'T TELLING THE PCs:

Olivia Dream is earnest when she says she wants to bring reforms to Coalridge, though she doesn't elaborate very much on the fact that, once Lucretius is gone, she'll shoot right to the top. And that she'll get rid of the real radicals for good.

### ♦ IF THE PLAN SUCCEEDS:

Head right for the Reform section in the Epilogue chapter.

# EPILOGUE: REFORM OR REVOLUTION

Depending on how things proceeded during **Part 2: A Fire Inside**, a table's given Coalridge will look quite different from another's. Here are a couple of suggestions for what things might look like in broad strokes. While each is written to be an ending, they also include suggestions as to how a group may proceed from there. Obviously GMs should exclude, include, or swap our details as needed if the pieces don't perfectly align—in fact, if the GM is doing a good job of reacting to what the players have been doing all along, they probably won't.

## REFORM

Lucretius Dream is dead. Long live Olivia Dream. Lucretius ostensibly went out with a bang ... but, for most of Coalridge's workers, life goes on as always.

Things *did* get a little better. With Olivia in charge, the industries see some light reforms. Wages are higher. Work hours are restricted to eight hours a day. Children under twelve are no longer permitted to work, and until a child is sixteen they may only work for ten hours a week. Union organizers are now legally allowed to meet, provided it occurs on work property. Life is a little better for Coalridge's workers.

And yet, behind the scenes, the bloodshed was unfathomable. Shortly after reforms were implemented, the still-radical members of the once-revolutionary coalition were either imprisoned, exiled, or, as was the case for most of them, killed. They were dangerous to this society, Dream argued. They were power-hungry individuals. Terrorists. A threat to the security of the district, much less the Imperium.

This path makes the most sense for crews who, intentionally or not, let Olivia Dream dictate the goals of the coalition. Discuss with your players about how this society is reformed, and then let them know that their crew is probably dead and explain why.

It might make sense at this point to stop playing, but, if you want to keep going, your players could always start a new revolutionary crew to fight against Olivia Dream. Due to her more outwardly-pleasant demeanor, and the execution of the previous generation of revolutionaries, no doubt that the road ahead of them will be tough. But such a game could be an interesting exploration of how to engender change within a dissatisfied but ultimately placated society.

Likewise, if you and the players think it's a good idea, perhaps the members of the crew were in fact imprisoned and have just gotten out, whether because they broke out sooner or were released decades later. While in many regards they'd still be starting over again, it could be interesting to see how the once-hopeful/youthful revolutionaries face the new, bitter reality of post-reforms Coalridge.

## **REVOLUTION**

Months pass after the revolution arrived in Coalridge. Already that historical month has a name among the locals: the Steelweaver's Rebellion. Whatever happened to him — whether execution, exile, or perhaps even extensive rehabilitation — the Dream that once ruled over this district is effectively gone. Whatever the revolution looked like, it succeeded.

The months between then and now were bloody, grueling work. The revolutionary coalition set to work securing the district against outside influences and invaders. The bridges between were blown up. All transports stopped. Guns were handed to every able-bodied person. They formed neighborhood militias and drove out every single enemy or uncooperative faction. Some were imprisoned, others were killed, and others still were allowed to leave, provided they never show their faces again. Dream's former industries were taken back, and the workers were put in charge. Life after revolution is tough work. But at long last the people of Coalridge are in charge of their own destinies for the first time in Dосkvol's long, dark history.

This path makes the most sense for most crews' revolutions. Talk to your players about how this society is organized and how the crew falls into it. Ask questions such as whether or not the crew helps lead it, where are they if not, are they even still alive, what do they think about this society, etc. While it may be tempting to take this ending into cynical territory, try playing it straight and being optimistic (if cautious) about Coalridge's fate.

It might make sense at this point to stop playing, but, if you want to keep going, new challenges that the crew could face include protecting the newly-restructured society against the encroaching Imperium, rooting out counter-revolutionary threats to the society, and building mutually-cooperative relationships with other political entities in the world.

# FACTIONS

## THE BANG CLAN

### TIER III

#### *Backwards*

An insurrectionary traditionalist movement claiming descent from the rail workers of ancient Coalridge, with a love of big explosions and ancient gods.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Go up a tier [4], blow up a factory [6; repeating], uncover the Skovlan Underground leader's identity [12]
- ◇ **Turf:** A massive decommissioned Imperial railcar originally built to transport the Immortal Emperor himself (HQ). Fighting pits, gambling dens, sex trafficking, and protection rackets.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Calleigh** (*leader, well-dressed, erudite, passionate*), **Lorn** (*second-in-command, Calleigh's lover, sorcerer, genius, nihilistic, lacks empathy*), **The Heff** (*street fighter, cruel, ruffian, bully*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** A gang of experienced thugs, killers, and street fighters. A loyal cabal of blood sorcerers. Dynamite of yore.
- ◇ **Quirks:** The Bang Clan worship the lost gods of the ancient rail workers.
- ◇ **Allies:** The Grinders, The Lampblacks, Lucretius Dream (secret)
- ◇ **Enemies:** The Lost, The Bluecoats, Skovlander Refugees, Skovlan Consulate
- ◇ **Situation:** Calleigh is, in fact, working for Lucretius Dream, who's using the Bang Clan to drive wedges between the workers of Coalridge.



## **BLUECOATS** (*TIER III, Backwards*)

The City Watch of Duskwall. Known as the meanest gang in the city. Corrupt, violent, and cruel.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Procure bigger budget, military arms, & equipment [8]
- ◇ **Turf:** The Bluecoats claim the whole city as their turf. Within Coalridge specifically, they're pretty free to do what they want, granted they don't step on Lucretius Dream's toes.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Commander Clelland** (*chief commissioner of the City Watch, corrupt, cruel, arrogant*), **Captain White** (*captain of Coalridge's Bluecoat company, conservative, self-righteous, family man*), **Officer Brick** (*helps keep the peace at the Steel Trap, insecure, immature, bully*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** Many large gangs of vicious thugs in uniform. Armored coaches and canal patrol boats. Public punishment sites (pillories, stocks, hanging cages).
- ◇ **Allies:** The City Council, Ironhook Prison, Lucretius Dream
- ◇ **Enemies:** Imperial Military, The Bang Clan, The Coalridge Laborers' Union, The Knives, The Many, The Pink Roses, many criminal organizations
- ◇ **Situation:** Due to Lucretius Dream's generous donations, the Bluecoats actively provide protection for Dream's properties in Coalridge.

## **THE COALRIDGE LABORERS' UNION** (*TIER IV, Advanced*)

A loose and unauthorized coalition of Coalridge's workers, seeking the betterment of conditions in Coalridge.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Go up a tier [6], inspire a strike [4]
- ◇ **Turf:** Several secret union halls across Coalridge.
- ◇ **NPCs:** Each union hall has a leader: **Ranvol** (*supportive, burly, recovering alcoholic*), **Nell** (*quiet, thoughtful, analytical*), **Belle Brogan** (*charming, confident, bold*), **Ras** (*weird, spiritual, short-tempered*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** A lot of disgruntled laborers from across all the industries of Coalridge.
- ◇ **Allies:** The Many
- ◇ **Enemies:** Bluecoats, Imperial Military, City Council, Lucretius Dream
- ◇ **Situation:** **Ranvol** is on **Lucretius Dream's** payroll so that the industrialist may keep tabs on the union's activity.

## **LUCRETIUS DREAM** (*TIER V, Backwards*)

An extremely wealthy and powerful industrialist who owns most of the factories, mines, and mills in Coalridge.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Crush a strike [4], infiltrate The Many [8], expand into Dunslough [12]
- ◇ **Turf:** Innumerable industrial properties in Coalridge, including mines, mills, factories, and docks. Dream himself stays in a heavily fortified estate in Whitecrown.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Lucretius Dream** (*ruthless, relentless, driven to dominate*), **Olivia Dream** (*Dream's adopted daughter and former workhouse orphan, ambitious, shrewd, disloyal*), **Lawler** (*factory foreman, cruel, brute*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** Economic power beyond measure. A treasury of coin and valuables rivaling that of the City Council's. Connections and deals with some of the most powerful political entities in the city.
- ◇ **Quirks:** Lucretius Dream hasn't aged a day past forty.
- ◇ **Allies:** Bluecoats, Imperial Military, City Council, Ministry of Preservation
- ◇ **Enemies:** The Bang Clan, The Lost, The Knives, The Many, The Pink Roses, Lord Scurlock
- ◇ **Situation:** Lucretius Dream is secretly an immortal who fears water. His daughter Olivia is plotting against him and is planning to use this fact to her advantage.

## **OLIVIA DREAM** (*TIER IV, Reformist*)

The ambitious adopted daughter of Lucretius Dream who is privately scheming against her father, in hopes of re-establishing herself as the head of his industries.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Replace an abusive foreman [6; repeating], ally with the Coalridge Laborers' Union [12]
- ◇ **Turf:** Innumerable industrial properties in Coalridge, including mines, mills, factories, and docks. Dream herself stays in a heavily-guarded tower in Coalridge, built on the ruins of an old workhouse.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Olivia Dream** (*Dream's adopted daughter and former workhouse orphan, ambitious, shrewd, disloyal*), **Mysterious Assistant** (*soft-spoken, mild-mannered, never blinks*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** See Lucretius Dream's assets.
- ◇ **Allies:** Bluecoats, Imperial Military, City Council, Ministry of Preservation, Ironhook Prison
- ◇ **Enemies:** The Bang Clan, The Lost, The Knives, The Many, The Pink Roses, Lord Scurlock
- ◇ **Situation:** Olivia is secretly plotting against Lucretius and is planning to capitalize on Coalridge's discontent in order to seize power for herself by building a secret base of support based on reforms. She has been targeting union meetings in particular.

## **THE KNIVES** (*TIER II, Intermediate, Sympathetic*)

A gang of streetwise orphans, specializing in thievery, smuggling, and assassination. They really like knives.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Go up a tier [4], destroy cruel workhouses [4; repeating]
- ◇ **Turf:** The Veins, a labyrinthian series of old, stony sewers beneath Coalridge [HQ]. Protection rackets. An underground gambling den.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Primm** (*leader, 15 years old, foul-mouthed, visionary, reckless*), **Shawnie** (*Primm's retainer, 18 years old, loyal, patient, insightful*), **Maxine** (*newest recruit, 11 years old, quiet, naive, observant*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** A gang of talented pickpockets, burglars, and thieves. A few dinky boats. Absurdly good knives, thanks to a pirate connection.
- ◇ **Quirks:** The Knives are obsessed with blood pacts, and any time an agreement is made, whether within the gang or without, they're quick to draw blood to seal the deal.
- ◇ **Allies:** The Fog Hounds, The Pink Roses, the children of Coalridge
- ◇ **Enemies:** Bluecoats, Lucretius Dream
- ◇ **Situation:** The Wraiths have a spy in the gang to quietly direct their actions, as well as scout out the ranks for potential recruitment. **Maxine**, in particular, is of interest to the spy.

## **IMPERIAL MILITARY** (*TIER VI, Backwards*)

The armed forces of the Imperium stationed in Doskvol. A bunch of underpaid murderers with shaky loyalty.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:**
- ◇ **Turf:** The Imperial Military is stationed in plenty of forts and barracks around the city. In Coalridge, the military maintains a significant garrison.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Commander Ross** (*inexperienced, in over her head*), **Lieutenant Gray** (*snarky; apathetic*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** Armed squads of vicious murderers and killers. Armored coaches, canal patrol boats, and combat hulls. Fear generated through violent repression and public executions.
- ◇ **Allies:** Lucretius Dream, Ministry of Preservation
- ◇ **Enemies:** City Council, Bluecoats, The Grinders, Ulf Stormborn, The Many, The Coalridge Laborers' Union
- ◇ **Situation:** Most strikes are swiftly put down by the Imperial Military, thanks to Lucretius Dream's contacts and current business dealings with them.

## **THE MANY** (*TIER II, Advanced*)

A democratically-minded commune of militant workers seeking to seize the means of production in Coalridge and take them back for the people.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Go up a tier [4], inspire a strike [6; repeating], steal a shipment of weapons from the Imperial Military [8]
- ◇ **Turf:** An old, cleaned-up workhouse (HQ). The surrounding community.
- ◇ **NPCs:** There are no leaders per se, but these individuals tend to guide and inspire much of the Many's actions: **Hahn** (*analytical, charismatic, bookworm*), **Mal** (*poetic, spirited, resolute*), **Kev** (*educated, witty, humanistic*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** A multi-talented group with such deep familial bonds that its members would easily die for each other. Artful propaganda.
- ◇ **Allies:** The Lost, The Grinders, The Coalridge Laborers' Union
- ◇ **Enemies:** Bluecoats, Imperial Military, Lucretius Dream
- ◇ **Situation:** An ideological split between **Mal** and **Kev** threatens to divide the otherwise tight-knit group.

## **THE PINK ROSES** (*TIER II, Intermediate, Sympathetic*)

A lively crew of working girls and boys, current and former, who have banded together to survive and protect the sex workers of Coalridge. They're exuberant and colorful, and to top it off they're all excellent sharpshooters.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Go up a tier [4], capture and assume control of brothels [6; repeating]
- ◇ **Turf:** Nine Tails, a rollicking tavern and former brothel. Red light neighborhoods.
- ◇ **NPCs:** **Miss Adley** (*leader, charming, caring, brave*), **Caren** (*second-in-command, loyal, brash, the muscle*), **Narys** (*the gang's ward, shrewd, moon-eyed, never talks to men*), **Nyryx** (*former actress, clever, disloyal, Bluecoat informant*)
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** A gang of gun-toting sex workers who know how to use 'em. Several brothels. A couple of witches. Plenty of sword lesbians.
- ◇ **Quirks:** Initiation into the Pink Roses grants the Hound's Sharpshooter ability.
- ◇ **Allies:** The Knives, Cabbies, all citizens of Coalridge except the adult men
- ◇ **Enemies:** Bluecoats, The Red Sashes, Ulf Ironborn
- ◇ **Situation:** The Pink Roses have been hitting **Ulf Ironborn's** properties to free sex trafficking victims.

## THE SKOVLAN UNDERGROUND (*TIER II, Advanced*)

An organization of Skovlan anti-imperialists that mask their identities. They both assist Skovlan refugees with food and housing, while also beating the living shit out of anyone who makes life hell for Skovlanders.

- ◇ **Faction Clocks:** Go up a tier [6], occupy the Imperial Military barracks in Coalridge [8], expose Calleigh as an ally to Lucretius Dream [12]
- ◇ **Turf:** Skovlan neighborhoods.
- ◇ **NPCs:** All members of the Skovlan Underground wear solid black masks that completely obscure their faces, though one of them self-identifies as a leader and calls herself **Zero** (*charismatic, mysterious, a poet*).
- ◇ **Notable Assets:** A crew of able street fighters. A smuggling connection for food and supplies. Hidden identities.
- ◇ **Allies:** The Coalridge Laborers' Union, The Grinders, Ulf Ironborn
- ◇ **Enemies:** Bluecoats, Imperial Military, The Bang Clan, Lucretius Dream
- ◇ **Situation:** The Bang Clan has put a substantial bounty on the Skovlan Underground's enigmatic leader **Zero**, and promises a great deal of coin to whoever brings her to Calleigh alive.



# THE DOWNTRODDEN

While the vast majority of Coalridge's citizens are exploited and oppressed by Lucretius Dream, these three groups are among the most injured by the status quo. Taking care of them and solving their needs will help build trust with certain factions, and may provide an avenue to winning them over to the revolutionary coalition.

## CHILDREN

Child laborers are extremely common, as many — some as young as four — children are put to work to help make a living for their poor families. To make matters worse, the vast majority of orphans essentially belong to crowded and hazardous workhouses; they provide the cheapest labor and are among the most disposable workers.

◇ **NPCs:** **Quill** (sister in mourning, *12 years old, grieved, vengeful, single-minded*), **Sten** (dead brother, lost ghost, *8 years old, terrified, going mad*), **Kylia** (escaped workhouse orphan, *10 years old, quiet*), **Ilana** (a sick child who cannot afford medicine, *6 years old, imaginative, frail*)

◇ **Allies:** The Knives, The Lost

◇ **Enemies:** The Bluecoats, Lucretius Dream

◇ **Situation:** A canned goods-producing workhouse has been overworking orphans to death, then using the bodies for its meat products. A few escapees have told the authorities, but no one believes them.

◇ **Help:** Any operation taken to benefit the children of Coalridge will grant +1 status with The Knives and The Lost. Solving the situation noted above to the workhouse orphans' benefit will gain +2 status with The Knives in particular, and prove to them that the crew understands their needs, thereby winning them to their coalition.

◇ **Harm:** Harming children will create friction with the Knives and the Lost. Unintentional harm caused by the crew's actions will net -2 status with both gangs. Intentional harming of children will instead net -3. Harm, unintentional or intentional, will remove The Knives from the crew's coalition.

## SEX WORKERS

Sex workers are among some of the most vulnerable populations in Doskvol. Despite how commonplace it is to engage in this kind of work, sex workers are largely neglected by society, with almost no laws to protect them. The criminal world hardly treats them better, and only by virtue of the **Pink Roses** do they receive any protection.

◇ **NPCs:** **Ameera** (a working mother, *generous, snarky*), **Nim** (a secret-keeper, *playful, observant, Machiavellian*), **Jenny** (a survivor, *quiet, worldly*)

◇ **Allies:** The Pink Roses

◇ **Enemies:** The City Council, The Bluecoats, Lucretius Dream, the patriarchy

◇ **Situation:** Ameera used to see **Lucretius Dream**, and has learned more than he wants her to know. Now he'll do anything to prevent her from telling his secrets, up to and including using his connections to threaten her life, the lives of the girls she works with, and even the lives of her children.

◇ **Help:** Any operation taken to benefit the sex workers of Coalridge will grant +1 status with The Pink Roses. Solving the situation noted above to Ameera's benefit will gain +2 status with The Pink Roses, and prove to them that the crew understands their needs, thereby winning them to their coalition.

◇ **Harm:** Harming sex workers will create friction with the Pink Roses. Unintentional harm caused by the crew's actions will net -2 status with the gang. Intentional harming of sex workers will instead net -3. Harm, unintentional or intentional, will remove The Pink Roses from the crew's coalition.



## SKOVLANDER REFUGEES

A number of refugees have been coming to Doskvol to build new lives ever since their home of Skovlan was violently brought under Imperial control. They are underpaid and underprivileged, yet have been the subject of extreme scapegoating by groups like the **Bang Clan** for the societal ills suffered by other workers.

◊ **NPCs:** **Hel** (an elderly shop lady, not fluent in Akorosian, *kindly, fiercely protective of her family*), **Alva** (Hel's granddaughter, fluent in Akorosian and Skovic, *outspoken, rabblouser*), **Moldvay** (Steel Trap worker, speaks Akorosian with a heavy accent, *helpful, funny, keeps head down*)

◊ **Allies:** The Skovlan Underground, Ulf Ironborn, The Grinders

◊ **Enemies:** Bang Clan, Imperial Military, The Silver Nails

◊ **Situation:** The Bang Clan has been marking Xs on the doors of Skovlan refugees with gunpowder, and Skovlans who don't promptly move out of Coalridge after having their homes so marked disappear within the next few days. **Hel** is one of the missing Skovlans.

◊ **Help:** Helping Skovlan refugees will build trust with the Skovlan Underground, Ulf Ironborn, and the Grinders, and any operation taken to benefit the refugees will grant +1 status with all three gangs. Solving the situation noted above to the refugees' benefit will gain +2 status with The Skovlan Underground in particular, and prove to them that the crew understands their cause, thereby winning them to their coalition.

◊ **Harm:** Harming any refugees will create friction with the Skovlan Underground, Ulf Ironborn, and the Grinders. Unintentional harm caused by the crew's actions will net -2 status with all three gangs. Intentional harming of Skovlan refugees will instead net -3. Harm, unintentional or intentional, will remove Skovlan Underground from the crew's coalition.