

NARRATIVE  DECLARATION

ROTCRIND

A WORLD
IN DECAY

LORE

OUTSET GUILDS

PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE

COMPATIBLE WITH PATHFINDER 2E



@ToTellStories

OUTSET GUILDS

As the City of a Million Faces, Outset is home to hundreds of thousands of workers of varying skills and disciplines. For many, this is a dogged slog through life, a desperate attempt to lift one's self up by their own worn bootstraps. However, there is one means by which individuals can seek to attain a better life: organization in one of the city's many guilds.

Membership in a guild is a sign of status sought after by thousands of Outset's working class. Taxation is low for those who aren't members of guilds or those who own property, but a person who lacks clout—like membership in a guild, noble blood, or ownership of a building—holds very little power to affect change, and is often fleeced by wealthier individuals who would take advantage of their precarious situation.

Some guilds have open applications for membership, but some restrict their members only to those who have received a reference from a pre-existing member. This results in cronyism, nepotism, and in some cases, familial dynasties.

The ability to work with magic only affects one's status in a guild if it's beneficial to that guild's work: they are neither forbidden nor prioritized in all but a few specialized groups.



HISTORY

Outset has had many guild-like organizations over the course of its long existence, whether formal or not. Artisans and those who practiced similar crafts would band together for mutual benefit (and protection). In some cases, this birthed extremely wealthy individuals who rose to Outset's upper echelons both figuratively and literally.

As the city continued to build atop itself, ownership of its highest reaches quickly became a means of stratifying classes. Those who could afford to repair and build higher gained a level of aristocracy that would eventually come to establish its noble houses and its ruling council, the Assembly. It was around this time that the first guilds started to form throughout the city, to the mutual benefit of its citizens.

THE GENERAL REVOLT

As the nascent guilds expanded and established themselves in the city following the Prince's conquest, troubles emerged among Outset's populace. Owning buildings (and renting them to less fortunate citizens) had become nearly the only way to establish any real financial stability, leaving an underclass that held little to no control over the city's development and planning. Wealth inequality continued to grow for many, many years until the intentional destruction of one of Outset's oldest public markets caused the underclass to finally rally for permanent change.

In 1186 FH, a citywide work stoppage took place. This event resulted in nobles and guilds alike losing their menial works, which led to the gutting of many aristocratic houses in the city. Many historians consider this strike to have veered into aggressive territory at its height, with people targeting not just nobles and corrupted clergy, but academics, business owners, and even artists and musicians of minor renown. To be a 'have' was an egregious crime in the eyes of any 'have-not,' regardless of how little one actually had—even the presence of jewelry on one's person was considered to be dangerous for years afterward.

As the people of the city locked Outset in a standstill, some of the city's notable guilds and nobles emerged, proposing peace at the end of the spears of their personal guard or hired mercenaries. In exchange for a return to work, democratically elected seats were proposed, allowing for the ascension of citizens without guild affiliation. This worked in tandem with guild leaders who sat on the Assembly, as the heads of guilds were voted on by their own guild membership.

GUILDS TODAY

Guilds are a driving force behind Outset, determining its health and trajectory far more than the decadent nobles of the highest reaches, actually interacting with the city's common populace on a regular basis. They are a vast web of contacts and business partners. Your local baker, merchant, and priest are either already members of a guild or are likely seeking membership. Membership in a guild is a sign of status sought after by thousands of Outset's working class, and it loans a certain level of credibility and respect due to the presence of guild bylaws and standards.

Some guilds have open applications for membership, but some restrict their members only to those who have received a reference from a current member. This results in cronyism, nepotism, and in some cases, familial dynasties. Thankfully, a desire to avoid another general revolt ensures that most guilds attempt to keep the other ones in check.

Much as a guild is a formalized institution, their inner workings are as diverse and varied as their disciplines. Guilds pay toward and construct public services such as basic provisions, health care, and city maintenance. This payment isn't solely philanthropical, of course: unlike nobles, guilds recognize that a populace that has its basic needs met is less likely to pressure for change that might upset the balance of the city.

POWER IN OUTSET

Outset's noble families come from a host of different sources: foreign delegates, descendants of heroes in Outset's past, storied innovators, and other such dignified individuals. As Outset has not had a formalized single leader since the time of the Prince, nobles by blood are now somewhat rare. Still, they are generally born wealthy and disconnected from the reality of living in a world in decline, and few engage in labors other than those tied to privilege and property maintenance. Many have established relationships with the Tyrants' Guild as a means of protecting their status quo.

Guilds, in contrast, have no such born advantage and ignorance. While the number of dynastied families amongst guild members is increasing, most are simply business owners, tradespeople, and hardworking individuals who choose to join under a unified banner. By doing so, they gain shared knowledge, negotiating power, and safety against those who might mean them harm.

It's important to note that not all artisans and skilled workers are guild members. Some choose to work independently (and avoid paying guild fees). Likewise, being removed from a guild (however rare these cases may be, especially in the case of wealthy members) isn't an end to an artisan's career. It just becomes harder. Much harder.

Though many in Outset's most disadvantaged areas paint guild members as being no different than nobility, the two often come into conflict on matters of the citizenry's wellbeing, with most guilds opting for greater community support. There has been a push for close to two decades to change seats in the Assembly to accommodate more guild representatives, but they have yet to pass the motion through, outnumbered by those noble seats they wish to oust.

There are two Chamberlains in the Assembly, both elected to speak on behalf of the citizens of Outset. Though they have no votes themselves, their advice can result in major changes to public opinion. As such, these roles are highly coveted and protected. While most Assembly members have personal guards, chamberlains tend to have a whole team of them.



GUILD GUARDS

One of the few professions that may not hold membership in a guild is that of a personal guard to a guild member. Because of their presence in highly confidential meetings and daily affairs, a guard is considered to be privy to many secrets.

Recently immigrated soldiers, disgraced knights, and failed aspirants of the Tyrants' Guild often find themselves working in the profession, and they must remain unemployed as a guard for at least two years before applying to join a guild. Few who become personal guards leave the job, and those who do leave it rarely leave it alive.

Still, the pay and benefits are good for those who can navigate the subtleties of the work and handle the possible costs.

TANTHA,

I DON'T CARE IF YOU NEED TO SAVE FOR YOUR GUILD APPLICATION, I'M NOT FRONTING YOU THE MONEY FOR YOUR EQUIPMENT. LAST TIME I DID THAT WAS FOR HORACE, AND THAT'S TWENTY GOLD I'LL NEVER GET BACK. HEAD DOWN TO THE MARKET AND PICK YOURSELF UP A SPEARDRILL, A PICK, AND A PACK FROM THE FLY MERCHANT. TELL 'EM I SENT YOU. THEY'LL GIVE YOU THE RIGHT STUFF. OH, AND GET SOME SMOKEBALLS. LOVE THOSE THINGS.

WE'RE LEAVING EITHER AT SUNSET OR AFTER JELLEMANN GETS BACK FROM THE QUEEN'S. IF YOU'RE NOT AT THE ALLEY, I'LL ASSUME YOU CHICKENED OUT.

AGAIN.

B.



MAJOR GUILDS

The Major Guilds—the Architects, Farmers, Makers, Medics, Merchants, Tyrants, Seamstresses and Aquebairns—hold a significant amount of power inside Outset due to their occupation of seats at the Assembly. Their masters and chairs are well-respected, and they spend vast amounts of money and resources to keep it that way.

THE AQUEBAIRNS' GUILD

The Aquebairns' Guild—informally known as the Sanitation Guild—ensures that every citizen of Outset has access to water. Deep aquifers, aqueducts, wells, fountains, and even rain collection fall under their purview. While water is a right of all citizens, truly clean water is another matter entirely. Water deemed fit for livestock is often considered of higher quality than water deemed fit for the Pawn's Pilaster.

Aquebairns have a grand foe in the hulking First City: gravity itself. Many of them have magical talents that allow them to redirect the flow of water wherever they need it to go, even if that direction defies logic. Though water sources may be fetid, Outset does not have many droughts due to the nearby presence of the ever-swampy Solitude and the ever-pouring rain overhead.

The Sanitation Guild doesn't just control the input of water: they are also responsible for the output via the city's sewage systems. Careful watch is kept to ensure that their two focuses remain separate, and most guild members have a reputation for being extremely cleanly.

The guild is heavily reliant on the Architects' Guild to create a means of transporting water to all of Outset's citizens, no matter what pilaster or depth they reside in. They also have a close relationship to the Farmers' Guild, ensuring that all crops and livestock are kept adequately watered (and fertilized).

THE ARCHITECTS' GUILD

There is no group more dedicated to the future of Outset than the Architects' Guild. Members spend their days planning, building, demolishing, and condemning the buildings that make up the grand city. Theirs is a role of keeping track of whose deed stacks upon someone else's, and whose home must be expropriated and shored up in order to prevent the collapse of twenty others. They offer bounty on the first report of structural damage, so long as an individual can prove they are not the cause.

Members of this guild often worship at the altar of the Rook, and they show great diligence and care in what they do. Still, many poorer citizens would refer to the city's builders as madmen: their penchant for explosives, 'theft' of individuals' buildings and property, and their ability to tumble massive structures means they hold a significant amount of power. As such, there is also a very careful vetting process for every new member that determines their access to everything from drafting tools to explosives.

The Architect's Guild holds a close relationship with the Sanitation Guild and the Medics' Guild. Without them, public health would be under great duress. Their reliance on manual labor only cements that fact. Since the Rot has begun to encroach on spaces all around the city, some guild members have taken to 'Rot-proofing' buildings for those who can afford it. Whether or not this is simply a placebo is unknown, but business is definitely booming.

THE FARMERS' GUILD

The dismal Solitude around Outset is not a place that's suitable for farming. As such, the Farmers' Guild spends much of its time feeding the populace within the walls of the city itself. Heavily packed fields, lush gardens in cavernous old halls, and vast cisterns of livestock manure are all within their wheelhouse. Members of the Guild recognize the importance of the Pawn and the Squire, and that nature must work together with the Old Powers to grow anything in this dim, dismal world.

Indeed, growing space might be found anywhere: between buildings, in window boxes, and on bare rooftops. Property owners must eke a careful balance between building ever higher and overtaking their sun-soaked, arable spaces. Due to the shift of their business from the Pawn's Pilaster to the Squire's Pilaster, many Farmers are also scholars, well-educated and well-respected amongst the populace. Spellcasters have also found good business in focusing their abilities on creating sunlight through magical means, turning catacombs into teeming, vibrant spaces.

Few farmers would be capable of growing what they do without clean water, so most Farmers partner with a member of the Sanitation Guild to ensure that their needs are met. The Merchants' Guild has ensured that they usually get their cut out of every good sold, so very few Farmers actually hold any real wealth within the city other than what they are capable of growing.

THE MAKERS' GUILD

The Maker's Guild (also known as the Fabricators' Guild) consists of smiths, bakers, crafters, and weavers, among other talented and skilled craftspeople. They are people who work with their hands to turn something into something greater than the sum of its parts.

Those in the guild are held to a unique rule: its members must always participate in the manufacturing process of their goods in some way. In some cases, unscrupulous makers have deemed a maker's mark their "involvement" in production, leaving the actual craftwork to their subordinates. These subordinates work as apprentices just long enough to gain the skills and money needed to join the guild themselves, and as they expand and hire their own workers, the cycle begins anew.

The Makers' Guild has a strained relationship with the Merchants' Guild, as they believe that merchants often unfairly profit from their labor. Members of the Seamstresses' Guild rarely hold joint membership with the Makers' Guild, oddly enough.

THE MEDICS' GUILD

Without the members of the Medics' Guild, many of Outset's citizens might never have been born. The Medics' Guild consists of midwives, doctors, surgeons, nurses, and clerics of all kinds. Members almost always follow the Bishop. Some also pray at the altar of the Pawn, though many have not abandoned their relationship with the Old Powers or even the Beneficence.

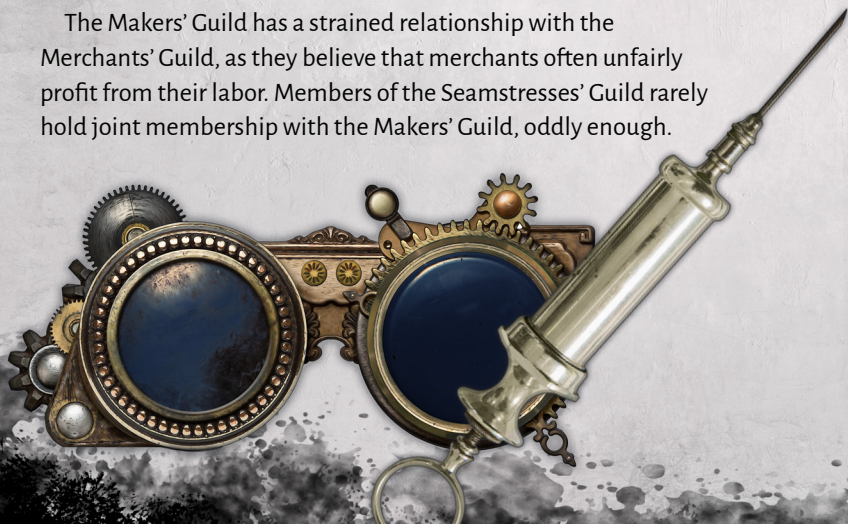
The guild is focused on public health—at all costs. In cases of plague or of rapidly spreading disease, they have been known to employ tactics that have left their reputation with the people of Outset as merciless. Their members all understand that the lives of the few should never be favored over the survival of the oldest city in the world. What's one life out of a million, after all?

The Medics' Guild is reliant on access to clean water and waste removal that the Aquebairns' Guild provides, and the two hold a tight alliance with one another. As well, most people in positions of power have at least one personal guild Medic amongst their staff.

Surprisingly, the guild takes great care in funding and conducting research at Outset's universities. They divert many of the corpses intended for the Animators' Guild for dissection and study. New medical knowledge and tools were once more frequently discovered, but since the onset of the Rot, most are now dedicated to treating and combating it instead.

HOLINESS IS CLEANLINESS

The Medics' Guild and the Sanitation Guild—in collaboration with worshippers and clergy dedicated to the Bishop—have established standards of hygiene far beyond that of most other cities in Tyne. That being said, cleanliness comes with a cost, and many destitute people in the Commons can scarcely afford maintaining the same level of standards found within the more well-off classes: good soap, (painful) dental care, and perfumes. Still, certain things are taught to most of Outset's citizens at a young age by the faithful of the First House: washing hands, cleaning clothing, and bathing on a regular basis, as well as building public latrines (colloquially known as "Bishop's rests") to prevent 'mess' in the tight streets and alleys of the city.



THE MERCHANTS' GUILD

The Merchant's Guild is an anathema compared to other guilds of Outset: they produce nothing except for profit. By wheeling and dealing services and goods within the city, Guild members develop a relationship with artisans and other guilds, ensuring that nary a single coin passes hands without their cut.

Some members of the Merchant's Guild follow the Prince, but many follow the Squire or the King or some combination of all three. A known saying about the guild is that "to be a successful member, one must always plan for the future, must always have an eye out for opportunities, and must know when to run." However, being a successful member in practice is often determined by who is willing to scheme and scam the most people.

Merchants often have specializations, but generally they are middlemen through and through. Those in other guilds who try to operate outside of a guild merchant by selling to their customers directly are scorned, and a very uneasy relationship between Merchants and Makers is always just on the edge of boiling over into all-out war.

Merchants will follow as many laws as they deem necessary, but they tend to buy influence. Paying their local martinet (see *Rotgrind: Tyrants' Guild*) or gang leader to protect their establishment or look the other way is just a part of doing business. One of the biggest benefits of being a guild member is simply finding out who in the community is most likely to take a bribe.

THE SEAMSTRESSES' GUILD

The Seamstresses' Guild supplies the clothing and finery of the people of Outset. This guild includes diverse members and not just seamstresses and tailors themselves: barbers, tattoo artists, jewelers, cobblers—anyone who might be kept abreast of the city's latest gossip by their customers. The Seamstress's Guild is known for keeping an ear to the buzz of the city; in fact, many imply that they deal in more than just aesthetics. And why wouldn't they? After all, there is much to be heard during the fitting of a shirt, or the planning of a wedding dress: good fortunes befalling someone, for example, or alliances that might be made (or destroyed) with a few careful, whispered discussions.

Most members of the Seamstresses' Guild are disciples of the Queen. Despite their love of creating showy, vibrant garments for their wealthy patrons, many of them dress relatively simply, favouring staying in the shadows rather than drawing attention to themselves. That being said, they do seem to know everyone, from the poorest residents of the Sinkhole to the wealthiest elite of the highest reaches.

The Seamstress's Guild has a close relationship with the Farmers' Guild, having most of their fabrics and furs supplied by them; and with the Merchants' Guild, having their goods bought and sold by their members. They hold a tenuous peace with the Makers' Guild, often poaching their most wealthy artisans as their fortunes grow.



THE TYRANTS' GUILD

The Tyrants' Guild is the city's self-designated police force. See *Rotgrind: The Tyrants' Guild* for a full overview.

LEFT IN STITCHES

Though known to be avid conversationalists, few people would dare offend, threaten or cross a member of the Seamstresses' Guild. Those who do have a tendency to have misfortune befall them, ranging from beatings and muggings all the way up to 'disappearances' or—in one egregious slight involving a particularly hideous pair of shoes—the collapse of an entire noble house.

OTHER GUILDS

There are hundreds of guilds throughout the city: adventurers' guilds, scroungers' guilds, even guilds based around those living in a single building. Individuals are not limited to one membership, either: in most cases, they can join any number of guilds so long as they can pay the appropriate tithes and dues. Many of Outset's most elite individuals will have membership in almost every guild they can afford in order to maintain influence in their inner workings, regardless of their own expertise.

ANIMATORS' GUILD

Once a citizen has passed on, that doesn't necessarily mean their service to the First City has ended. That's when the Animators' Guild begins their macabre work. The Animators' Guild turns bodies into laborers: undead minions that do menial servant work considered too harsh or dangerous for the living. Undead are used to haul heavy loads, stack bricks, guard warehouses, and do other backbreaking labor until their bodies wear down past the point of use.

Animators hold a close relationship with the Tyrants' Guild, and many of them hold membership in both. Almost all members follow the Prince, owing their livelihoods to the revolution he brought to Outset.

The Animators' Guild has inherited responsibility for the city's long-used Candlebacked (see *Rotgrind Bestiary: Candlebacked*), and as such, most of them have a fairly good understanding of the streets, bridges, and alleys that make up the city.

Truly destitute citizens may even consider selling the bodies of their dear departed loved ones to be used by the guild. However, as a body is rarely stronger in death than it was in life, preferential pricing is given to those who might have died at the peak of health.

ARCHIVISTS' GUILD

The Archivists' Guild finds no greater joy than well-indexed information. These studious individuals devote themselves to recording the history of Outset, the surrounding regions, and the greater world of Tyne. Most guild members are academics in one of Outset's universities or libraries, but some are just amateur enthusiasts, documenting the world for posterity's sake.

Though no guild member would ever speak of it—and many seem genuinely clueless about the idea—there are rumors spoken of a vast hidden library made to preserve civilization's knowledge from the encroaching threat of the Rot, but a member of the general public would rarely be aware of its existence.

BENEFACTORS' GUILD

If there is such a thing as a 'good' person in Outset, it would certainly be members of the Benefactors' Guild. This guild exists solely to tithe their pooled funds to worthy causes, be it erecting a new clerical clinic, repairing a structural wall for a broke noble house, caring for those who became mad after delving too deeply in the undercity, or simply distributing food to the city's poorest citizens.

Of course, charity and money are inexorably linked, often in ways that fail to benefit the greatest good. A member's voting power is directly correlational to their contribution, and so the vast majority of the guild's funds go toward causes deemed worthy by Outset's wealthiest. A broke noble house or a prestigious university researcher is far more likely to be a recipient of their charity than any truly needy person.

Still, the guild does do some good for the city and is well-respected, and anyone wishing to improve their social status seeks membership at their earliest opportunity. (*Hint hint.*)



FIREFIGHTERS' GUILD

For a city as densely built and as vertical as Outset, arson is considered one of the most heinous crimes one can commit. The Firefighters' Guild is committed to putting out fires as quickly as possible, minimizing damage to the wood and stone that makes up Outset's precarious construction. They generally prioritize responding to a fire at a location associated with a guild before a public one, however.

The guild maintains outposts in all pilasters, and many of its people have membership in other guilds. As such, response times to less dangerous fires can be lacking, and there are independent groups who have sprung up to fill the gap. Unaffiliated firefighters have a reputation for unscrupulously charging extra for their services, however, leaving buildings to burn until the guild arrives if suitable payment is not offered. Since building owners are responsible for damage to other buildings caused by the collapse of their own, they're extremely likely to pay up.

Lately, the Firefighters' Guild has also been tasked with assisting in the removal of large Rot infestations in some of the more destitute areas of the city. Fire is a fast tool to clear out Rot, and the Firefighters are the most familiar with how to control a burning structure without damaging the ones around it.

DELVERS' GUILD

As the world continues to decline, unskilled individuals are far more likely to turn to dangerous jobs in order to eke out a meager living. Few jobs are more dangerous—or potentially rewarding—than that of a delver: an individual who heads into the sunken depths of the city to seek riches, glory, and forgotten secrets.

Delvers are adventurers who choose not to roam. Most are able-bodied and young, seeking to find fortunes to fund their membership in greater guilds. However, the harsh realities of traipsing through the undercity means that the average age seldom rises. It's rare to find someone who once delved who still has all their digits, limbs, and organs in good working order. Very few delvers work alone, and so a membership in a guild provides a higher likelihood of finding a team member with the skills needed for an arduous expedition.

Membership in the Delvers' Guild comes with perks like access to shared maps, a guild store stocked with equipment and niche products (and a discount!), and "recovery services" so a guild member knows their body won't end up in the possession of the Animators' Guild.

Still, many delvers don't consider a membership in the guild to be beneficial. It's a cutthroat business, and secrecy about the best routes and possible dangers means a higher payout without the guild's deductions.

TRAVELING DEEP

Because of the steadily shifting nature of the undercity, mapping it out is effectively impossible. The Delvers' Guild has one of the most up-to-date maps, though many guild members choose to keep their most choice routes to themselves.

Most delvers won't pass a certain depth. When asked why, they will give no reason, but will insist that others respect the same limit. Those who do not listen rarely return.

Running a campaign devoted strictly to exploring the depths of Outset is definitely possible. The *Rotgrind Character Guide* contains an archetype specific to delving. Pack good shoes!



@ILaLouLou

NOTABLE NPCs

Outset has thousands of guild members. Some guilds have their own ruling councils, while others have singular heads, and yet others have a steadily shifting leaderboard based around the size of their coffers. Some guild members are prominent social figures, and others remain reclusive, preferring to focus on their business rather than the intricate politics of the city.

MORHEL PAM

Head of the Farmers' Guild, **Morhel Pam** (male dwarf merchant) is known for his boisterous laugh and hands that can crush a steer's skull. He is particularly tall for a dwarf, and idle gossip insists that he is actually a descendant of giants. He owns and operates several animal farms and slaughterhouses, serving both the general public and the wealthier elite. A sausage with his distinct stamp is a trusted food: he would never sell poor quality meat to the public. He will, however, quietly sell poor quality meat to butchers who can't source meat from his guild. Waste not, want not.

Unlike many other guild heads, he holds no familial sway in the city: originally from the Inheritor Lands, he spent his youth dealing in fur and leathers between city-states. He then leveraged the contacts from armorers and furriers he met into a network of wealthy benefactors and mercenaries, and used those connections to shift his fortune into holding a majority ownership of Outset's meat production. In particular, many of the goods with a long shelf life—salted and smoked sausages, canned meats, and other such staples of Outset life—bear his maker's mark.

He is a strong believer in avoiding waste, and most of his slaughterhouses have a good relationship with the Animators' Guild. Slaughterhouses are dangerous work, after all!



YCORÁ NADAAM BODH

Ycora Nadaam Bodh (female half-elf animator) is a half-elf expatriate from the Mournwracked Expanse. Her childhood and youth was spent serving the undead nobles of Tsarash as a necromancer-in-training, so the idea of working with corpses is as innate to her as breathing. After hearing of Outset's use of the undead as a labor force, she took delight in the idea of having power over them for once, and fled to the city. Her life with death has made her a fixture in the Animators' Guild, able to coax the best work from the corpses they harvest. She sees very little difference between the living and dead when it comes to Outset's populace, and simply aims to manipulate flesh toward the best possible outcomes.

LERYL CASSHICK

Leryl Casshick (female gnome engineer) is considered to be one of Outset's most revered protectors, even moreso than some of its renowned knights.

As president of the Elevator Maintenance Guild, this isn't far from the truth. Without stringent safety measures and careful oversight, the city would be nearly untraversable, particularly in the taller areas of pilasters. She is a brilliant engineer and is responsible for several of the most common elevator designs in the city.

Leryl has earned many enemies in the Architects' Guild because of her insistence on butting into every new construction. Despite multiple death threats annually, she stands firm. A gnome knows just how miserable ladders and big stairs can be!

BLOATUS THE FLY MERCHANT

Though he makes his humble home in the Pawn's Pilaster, **Bloatus** (male halfling merchant) is an infamous *non*-member of the Merchants' Guild. Bloatus—despite his name—is a gaunt, sickly-looking halfling who specializes in flies, keeping a small cage of them close at hand, whispering secrets to them. He does, in fact, make far more coin from his less 'unique' wares: magical weapons and armor, adventuring supplies, and elegant rugs. He has developed a reputation for being "the person for what you need" in his district, but his resistance to signing on with the Merchants' Guild causes them both consternation and concern. No amount of pressure (or threats) has ever convinced him otherwise.

Bloatus has been known to engage in business in other cities, regions, and even countries, often simultaneously as when he is present in Outset. How he does it is unknown. No one really wants to ask, because any answer is likely to devolve into a tangent about his beloved multi-legged friends.



CORDONN DAUBARDE

Cordonn Daubarde (male human arborist) is a well-known specialist within the Farmers' Guild, known for one particular thing: supplying the city with fine hardwood. The Solitude directly around Outset was nearly clear-cut of old-growth trees after the collapse of the Pawn's Pilaster. It triggered a need for building materials that couldn't be sated by imports and arboriculture alone. He boasts that he simply has a 'way with plants,' but the savvy and well-informed know he uses a unique form of magic to accelerate the growth of trees for harvest, which involves arcane secrets he has never revealed.

He appears to be much older than he is thanks to his study in the manipulation of time, and few apprentices last more than a couple of years under his supervision before leaving hundreds of coins richer and decades poorer. This may also be due to the fact that Cordonn is angrily vocal about his preference of plants for company rather than people, but his business is continuously growing.

DANN SIWART

The bastard son of the head of the Makers' Guild, **Dann** (male half-catfolk noble) is a known scoundrel in Outset's highest circles. He loves nothing more than to play pranks on those around him, and though he should have had his nose broken dozens of times for egregious social faux-pas, no one has the guts to do so. He holds few talents other than an appreciation for art and music, though he is a renowned connoisseur of fine foods. Most people begrudgingly endure his presence on behalf of his family. Dann has no interest in taking up the family business, but due to the disappearance of his older brother, the expectation of continuing the work—and the family line—has fallen solely to him.

Dann is well-known in the Benefactors' Guild for throwing large sums of money to vote for what he personally deems 'the funniest' option, and his familial sway amongst other Makers often causes them to follow suit. There are several urinating statues in fountains around the Pawn's Pilaster that have been placed solely thanks to his influence.



CAMPAIGN ROLE

Guilds are a ubiquitous force throughout Outset. They can be a source of quests, conflicts, and intrigue. Players will likely encounter at least one guild member in their interactions in any pilaster, and the more powerful the NPC, the stronger their guild connections are likely to be. However, save for a few token groups and individuals, guilds hold minimal influence elsewhere in Tyne. Unless someone is a member of a major guild, it's likely that all but the most learned and connected citizens of other nations won't even know what an Outset guild is or what function they serve. Still, the skills one gains in their guild have practical applications that can be used in many places.

JOINING A GUILD

To join one of the eight major guilds, a GM should require an arduous challenge or test beforehand, e.g., earning a set amount of gold, wooing a guild official through Diplomacy or Deception, or completing a task for them.

Joining a minor guild is much simpler. All guilds require a portion of player gold to maintain membership in, to be deducted at a schedule determined by the GM.

There are competing guilds for the same specialty, as well: bigger and older names tend to be larger, but this isn't always the case. There are several guilds dedicated to Outset's agricultural community, for example. Feel free to make your own!

CREATING A GUILD

Many hands make light work. Any group with more than four members can apply to form a new guild within the city. GMs can frame their entire adventure around a player-run guild if they so choose, or they can create a guild from any specialty group within the city. However, keep in mind that guild members must pay guild dues, and guilds must pay taxes, so adjust monetary rewards for your party as needed.

There is an additional background in the *Rotgrind Character Guide* for guild members. Those wanting to play in a particularly guild-focused campaign may want to tailor their characters accordingly.

GUILD LEADERSHIP

Leadership in a guild isn't necessarily prestigious or well-paying, nor is it particularly consistent. Some guilds have elections among all members, some have councils of members with powerful reputations, and others are in a deadlocked state within their own bylaws. It's up to you as the GM to determine criteria for a coup.

GUILD POLITICS

Remember: guilds aren't the sole source of political weight in Outset. Noble houses from bygone eras still hold clout, as do individuals who have gained status through their actions, wealth, or connections. Other groups choose not to establish themselves as a formal guild, instead opting to create religious or knightly orders, or simply operating as collaborators. Unaffiliated individuals are common.

Likewise, being a member of a guild does not automatically mean an individual is powerful. They may be a disgraced business owner, or may have just earned the funds to join, or may be a family member encouraged to join by their loved ones.

Some individuals prefer that their membership in a guild remain secret, and most guilds allow for this. In some (like the Seamstresses), membership is rarely outright stated. Sleuthing out an NPC's affiliation might be a necessary part of dealing with them. Membership in two rival guilds isn't common, but in higher-ranked members, it does happen occasionally.

WARRING WITH GUILDS

Not all guilds are like the Tyrants, and only a true anarchist would advocate to remove all of them. After all, they're responsible for much of the social aid and ongoing progress in the city and in the greater decaying world. Still, should your party choose to engage with one or more guilds, they might face a significant amount of challenge navigating the city as a result. Spies are everywhere, guards are bribed, and most citizens follow the law.

Outset's guilds are often scheming, plotting, and planning against one another. It may be easier if PCs ally with some guilds in order to usurp control from others. Chairs and leaders in the Assembly likely won't shift based on the actions of players, but that doesn't mean that a few well-placed threats can't influence major change. Don't expect to overthrow the city overnight!

FEATS

This section presents several new general feats, including many new skill feats. These feats are intended for Rotgrind campaigns, and include some additional setting tie-ins. These feats can easily be adapted to any campaign.

GUILD CLOUT

FEAT 4

Uncommon

General

Skill

Prerequisites expert in Intimidation

When you take this feat, select one of Outset's guilds. You are a member of, or have strong enough association with, that guild. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Intimidation checks made to Coerce when doing so against a creature belonging to your chosen guild. In addition, when using Intimidation to coerce a target who belongs to one of Outset's guilds any critical failures count as failures instead.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different guild each time. Any selections beyond the first allow you to instead choose two guilds, representing your growing influence.

TYING THINGS TOGETHER

FEAT 2

Uncommon

General

Skill

Prerequisites trained in Society

Your knowledge of how Outset's guilds operate have allowed you to make connections—both social and business—with the intricate web of the society you inhabit. When you use Society to Recall Knowledge about a guild in Outset, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to the check. If you instead have a Lore related to a specific guild and make a check to Recall Knowledge about that guild, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the check.

SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

FEAT 7

Uncommon

General

Skill

Prerequisites Charisma 14, Assurance in Crafting, Lore, or Performance

Your work with a guild has left you knowledgeable about a skill when it comes to earning money. When you Earn Income, if the level of the task is lower than your level, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your check to Earn Income. In addition, when you use Assurance on a skill to Earn Income you can add half your total bonuses (rounding down) to the check instead of no bonuses.



ITEMS

The following is a collection of items appropriate for low to mid-level campaigns. They are all tools that might be found in the possession of one of Outset's respected guild members. One of the most innovative is the Delvers' Guild, creating tools to help their people survive as they dig through the undercity for hidden treasures.

RARE ADVANCED WEAPON

Weapon	Price	Damage	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Speardrill	25gp	1d8 P	2	2	Spear	Fatal 1d10, Forceful, Reach

SPEARDRILL

ITEM 2

Uncommon

This common delver tool is just as good at breaking through stone as it is digging through the insides of whatever things are crawling in the dark.

Price 1 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

A speardrill is an ingenious design that incorporates the head of a drill in the place of a regular spear tip. Using these weapons requires specific training and skill. The weapons allow for rudimentary digging in enclosed environments, and can be used over the course of 10 minute periods to ignore the hardness on stone surfaces to create fist-sized holes in stone up to a length of 10 feet.

AQUEBAIRN'S BREATH

ITEM 1

Uncommon

Abjuration

Consumable

Magical

Potion

This slimy blue potion is distributed to Aquebairns to use to inspect the insides of pipes and cisterns throughout the City of Outset. It doesn't do anything about the smell, though.

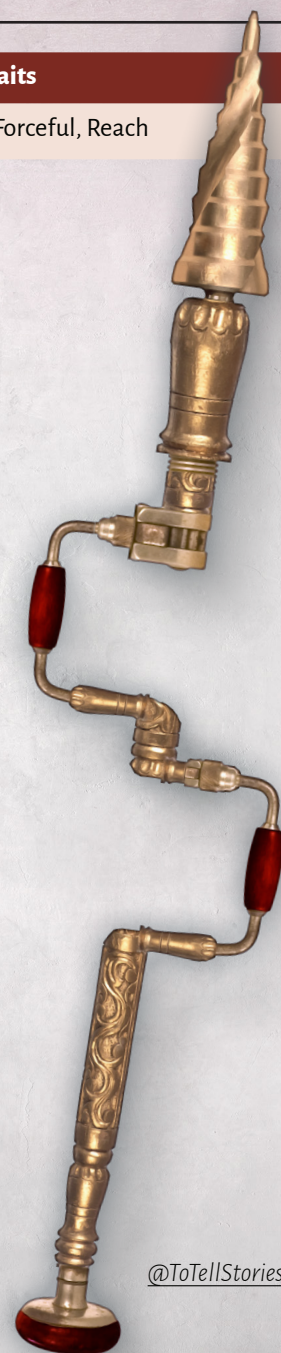
Price 1 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate  Interact

After drinking this potion a transparent bubble forms around your head via your nostril, encasing you in breathable air and allowing you to see through dense fluids without a need for goggles.

The bubble lasts for 5 rounds and once the effect wears off, the bubble pops. The bubble repels only non-damaging liquids or substances and pops if you are damaged by any outside force.



@ToTellStories

SPELLS & CANTRIPS

Outset is home to more people than any other city in Tyne. Life in the city is unique, and people living there have developed a number of ways to survive in a city that steadily sinks into the ground. There are institutions dedicated strictly to the study of structural engineering and the Rot, and they spend years perfecting spells.

SUPPORT BEAM

SPELL 2

Uncommon

Transmutation

Traditions divine, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range touch; **Target** one walkway no more than 10 feet wide and 60 feet across

Duration 1 hour



You reinforce the structure of the target walkway, increasing the weight it can support beyond its normal limit. If the walkway could not support weight, such as a rickety wooden bridge that collapses the second anything walks on it, then that walkway can now support up to 10 bulk of weight at one time.

EXAMINE STRUCTURE

SPELL 3

Uncommon

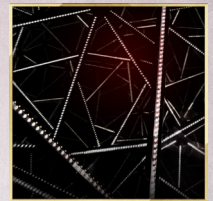
Divination

Earth

Traditions arcane, primal

Cast ♦♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range touch; **Target** one structure



By touching a structure, you send tendrils of magic through it to gauge its structural integrity. This spell immediately lets you know if the structure you've touched has any major structural flaws to it, letting you know if those flaws are: critical or needs attention. Critical flaws mean that the structure has something unsafe that could cause it to entirely collapse. Needs attention flaws means that there might be hazards inside or unattended issues that could eventually become critical. This spell does not inform you the location of these flaws on or within the structure.

SENSE ROT

SPELL 5

Uncommon

Detection

Divination

Rot

Traditions arcane, occult, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet **Target** 1 object or creature

Saving Throw Will



You detect the presence of Rot within a creature or an object. If the target is an unattended object, you know whether or not the Rot infects it or if it has the Rot trait. If the target is a creature or an object held by a creature, then it must attempt a Will save.

Critical Success You detect the presence of Rot on a creature and its exact Rotten condition value (if it has one).

Success You detect the presence of Rot on a creature but not its Rotten condition value.

Critical Failure If the creature is afflicted by the Rot you do not detect it. If the creature is not afflicted by the Rot, then you misread it as being afflicted with a random Rotten value (roll 1d3).

DETECT BREATHABLE AIR

CANTRIP 1

Uncommon

Cantrip

Detection

Divination

Traditions arcane, divine

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Area 60-foot emanation



You send out a pulse to detect breathable air within the area.

If there is a source of unbreathable air or toxic gases within the area, then you are alerted to its presence and relative location from you. This bypasses most solid barriers, with the exception of lead and some magical shielding.

SUPPORT US

Our goal is to build out a fully realized world that you can invest yourself in, as well as run your own tabletop RPG games with.

Over the coming months, we'll be releasing a bevy of custom rules content for Pathfinder 2nd Edition, though the rules can easily be adapted for other game systems as necessary. We're looking at releasing bespoke new rules and mechanics, as well as expansions to existing rules like: new monsters, new spells, unique items, backgrounds, ancestries, and so much more!

As the Rogrind campaign continues and we release more and more content, the focus will be on the city of Outset and the macro-level elements of the setting (continents, nations, pantheons, cosmology, etc.). Our plan is to gauge the reaction and adjust the type of content being released as time goes on, and based on feedback from our audience. All of this bespoke content, as well as regular releases for content used on the show, is going to be provided for you to use in your own games!

Supporting the show and our Patreon is the best way to get this content and see it in action!

Thank you for your support. It really matters more than you could ever realize. Keep checking back for more!



 **PATREON**

[PATREON.COM/NARRATIVEDECLARATION](https://patreon.com/narrativedeclaration)



[TWITCH.TV/NARRATIVEDECLARATION](https://twitch.tv/narrativedeclaration)



[NARRATIVEDECLARATION.COM](https://narrativedeclaration.com)

CREDITS

Publisher Payton Smith (@ZoranTheBear)

Lead Creative Producer Thurston Hillman (@OnCallGM)

Art Director Laura Pendl (@laura_pendl)

Layout Jamie Isfeld (@ToTellStories)

Author Jamie Isfeld

Artwork Jamie Isfeld, @LaLouLou, Laura Pendl

Image Editing Jamie Isfeld

©2023 Payton Smith, Narrative Declaration. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden. Narrative Declaration and the Narrative Declaration logo is a trademark of Payton Smith. All rights reserved. All characters, names, places, items, art and text herein are copyrighted by Payton Smith. The mention of or reference to any company or product in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.

Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and are used under the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Compatibility License. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility> for more information on the compatibility license.

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts, creatures, characters, stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors: Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition) © 2019, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter.

Rotgrind: Outset Guilds © 2023, Payton Smith, Author: Jamie Isfeld.