



# HEROQUEST



## Hero's Book *The Intrepid Company*

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**The Intrepid Company by Mark Galeotti.**

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***The old world is bankrupt—come profit from the new.***

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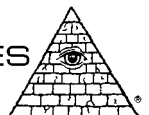
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# The Intrepid Company

*The old world is bankrupt—come profit from the new.*

The Intrepid Company unites a number of active and retired entrepreneurs, the former taking the risks, the latter providing the investment capital and the benefits of their experience. Members share information, pool resources, and engage in good-natured competition. They see themselves as adventurers and explorers: entrepreneurs rather than merchants as such. They seek to combine profit and excitement, and are prepared to face danger and risk all in the hope of securing some legendary gain. As such, they are vulnerable to con merchants or simply wild rumor, but their own skills, their buccaneering enthusiasm and a suitable amount of judicious luck often means that somehow they come out ahead, even if just with enough money to bankroll the next wild scheme. After all, *this one is the real thing*, the one that will make their fortunes, honest!

As a player hero band, this allows a free-wheeling life chasing one opportunity after another. The players need not all, or even mostly, be merchants: they can be guards, servants, friends, or scouts. Indeed, none of them need be merchants—the narrator could play the part of a merchant who is their patron, sending them off on trading and reconnaissance missions.

**Real Name:** The Intrepid Company of Merchant-Adventurers.

**Form:** Mercantile association.

**Cultural Context:** Loose society of traders, who seek to find new markets and opportunities, generally outside the Empire's borders.

**Ideology:** "Trade is good, as it binds people together, just as Ruzelza's teachings do. If we make a profit, that is also good: it is fate's way of encouraging and allowing us to continue our work."

**Look and Feel:** Swashbuckling merchant-adventurers.

**Purpose:** Companionship while seeking profit and adventure.

**Reactions:** Members of the Company often encounter anti-Lunar prejudice outside the Empire, but this is usually mitigated by their essentially apolitical stance.

## Resources

**Leader:** Holanilla Blue-Bluer, the elderly matriarch of a mercantile house in Yuthuppa. She made her fortune by securing trading rights with the secretive Koreu Clan of Thrice Blessed and by bringing the fabled Blue-Bluer Diamonds to the gem smiths of Glamour. Despite her prestige, her role is largely formal and administrative.

**Renowned Members:** Erkolo of Bindle, whose ship (the *Welcome Purveyor of Quality Goods*) plies the Sweet Sea.

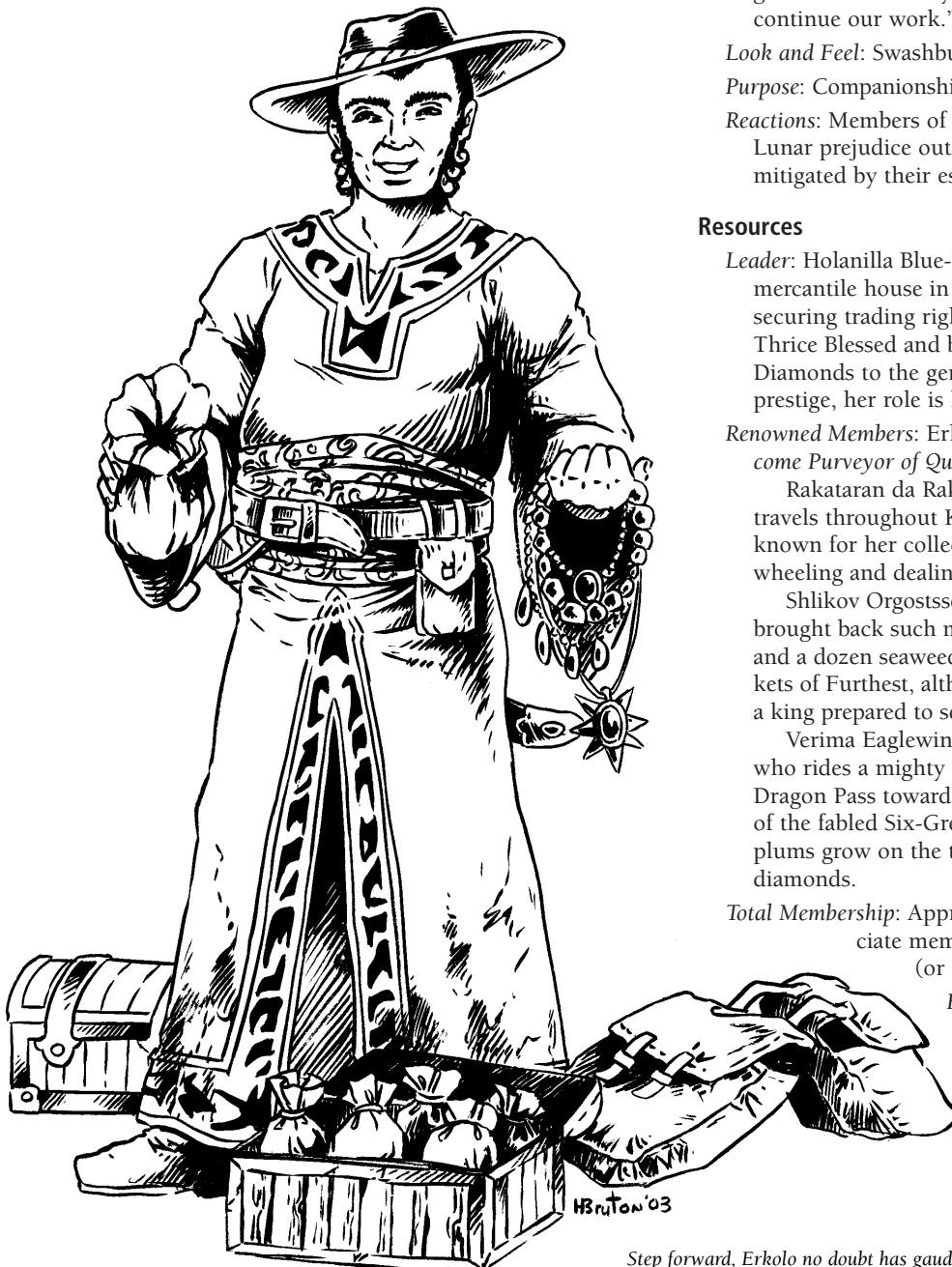
Rakataran da Rakatarana, the Profitable Poet, whose travels throughout Kethaela have made her as well-known for her collections of native folk epics as for her wheeling and dealing.

Shlikov Orgostsson, the Tarshite slave-trader, who has brought back such marvels as the black-tongued ponyuk and a dozen seaweed-elves for lucrative sale in the markets of Furthest, although he still hopes some day to find a king prepared to sell his entire population as slaves.

Verima Eaglewing, the prospector from First Blessed, who rides a mighty flightless bird. He is traveling across Dragon Pass towards the savage plains of Prax in search of the fabled Six-Green Garden Oasis, where golden plums grow on the trees and the water sparkles with diamonds.

**Total Membership:** Approximately 400 active and 200 associate members, mostly in Filichet and along (or outside of) the Empire's borders.

**Headquarters:** The Company's head office is in Filichet, but this is no more than a few rooms in the Temple of Etyries Audacious, rented for a modest fee. It houses the small editorial staff of the *Well Street Journal*, the Company's



*Step forward, Erkolo no doubt has gaudy trinkets to satisfy even your barbarian tastes!*

house journal (named after the street on which their offices in Filichet face).

*Other Contacts:* The Company has close ties to the Lunar trading cult of Etyries, and good relations with the IbeX Moon Society. The Lunar government, through its agents and the provision of generous loans notionally provided by the Temple of Etyries Audacious, encourages the Intrepid Company to penetrate foreign regions of interest, and occasionally uses it as deniable cover for its operations.

### Organization

The Intrepid Company has no real leader. Every two years, full members elect directors to manage the Company's business, and elect one of their own as Chair. They also supervise the publication, every season, of the *Well Street Journal*, a digest of trading-related news culled from members' letters, official reports, and the Church of Etyries, leavened with generous portions of gossip and rumor.

### Membership

*Full membership* in the Intrepid Company is open to Lunar citizen sponsored by an existing member, willing to pay annual dues, which includes a subscription to the *Well Street Journal*, delivered by flying moonboat to a city of the member's choice. (If this city is outside the Empire, other means of delivery will be used and a supplement will be charged.) Members agree to share information with the *Journal*, and to assist fellow members (for reasonable recompense). Like any Lunar citizen, they are also expected not to act against the interests of the Empire.

Any member no longer in active trading may transfer to *associate membership* (paying lesser dues). There is also *affiliate membership*, extended to the immediate supporters, servants, and allies of a full member for a small, one-time fee. They gain the same magical advantages as full members so long as he or she employs them.

### Sumbar's Blessing (Guardian)

The Company's guardian is the spirit called Sumbar's Blessing. So long as each full member receives and diligently reads each issue of the *Well Street Journal*, he and affiliate members working for him receive magical support until the next season's issue is delivered. Sumbar's Blessing provides members a bonus to any attempts to spot a business opportunity or resist others' attempts to bamboozle them, as well as the ability to *Sense Bandits*.

*Type:* Manifestation

*Form:* Large accounting book.

*Membership Requirements:* Read each issue of the *Journal* before the next one comes out.

*Awareness:* Spot Business Opportunity 6W.

*Blessing:* Sense Bandits 3W.

*Defense:* Resist Being Cheated 5W.

## Fitting the Pre-Generated Heroes into the Intrepid Company

While ostensibly involved in trade, the Company is as much about adventure, exploration, and travel. Either of the scholars (see *Hero's Book*, page 41) could be the leader of the group. Of course, any such undertaking is dangerous, and no sensible group would travel without warriors as protection (page 38). The hunter (page 44) would be an ideal scout, finding the group the best routes, spotting ambushes, and bringing local game to feed them each evening. The missionary (page 44), on the other hand, might be traveling in the group to spread the Lunar word but would be welcome company for her healing magics.

### Adventure Ideas

- Members of the Intrepid Company are always on the lookout for new opportunities. Perhaps a grizzled old-timer offers the the player heroes a map his ol' pappy gave him, claiming to mark some lost gold mine or the place where Bad King Urgrain buried his silver, hoping it would grow into a silver forest. Of course, things are never what they seem. Perhaps the 'gold mine' is really the lair of some brooding vampire or Chaos creature, or the ground they have to excavate to find Urgrain's silver is at the heart of a sacred elven clearing.
- Another member of the Company, with whom the heroes are engaged in increasingly bad-tempered competition, has been arrested by a corrupt official. Do they use his absence to steal a march on him (good for business, but risking expulsion from the Company) or see what they can do to help him. What does the corrupt official want with him? Or is the whole thing a plot by their rival to discredit the heroes no matter what they do?
- A fellow member hires the heroes to get him safely into the lands of the bloodthirsty Tarsh Exiles, a rebel society who propitiate their vengeful Earthshaker goddess with human sacrifice. He claims to be eager to negotiate an exclusive trade deal with the temple priestesses.  
The member and his plan certainly seem plausible. It is only after he absconds with a sacred dinosaur tooth that they realize he was actually a Lunar agent, using the player heroes as cover to get into (and out of) Exile lands. The Exiles are not known for their sophisticated grasp of the subtleties of Lunar politics, nor their casual or tolerant treatment of thieves. Do the heroes simply try to escape, risking the eternal enmity of the Exiles? Do they try and get the tooth back? If so, can they do so without also looking like traitors to the Empire?
- Durulz (ducks) are currently outlawed in Dragon Pass, as the Empire chose to blame them for a past rebellion. Although the universal bounty on ducks has been lifted, individual ducks may still have a price on their heads. The heroes are contacted by a group of ducks offering extremely generous trade concessions if they can get the price on their people's heads lifted.