



OATHBOUND SEVEN

Includes new material, plus compiled and revised material from the following classic Oathbound products originally published by Bastion Press: *Domains of the Forge*, *Plains of Penance*, *Wrack and Ruin*, *Arena*, *Mysteries of Arena*, *Wildwood*, *Oathbound Player's Guide*.

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OATHBOUND: Also available for the Oathbound game setting is "Oathbound Eclipse", published August 2010. Additional products, modules, extras, and game aids are available from Epidemic Books via our website.



See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

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INTRODUCTION

We are now the hunted, those of us who knew the old ways. It is seven years since the Bloodwars began, and the great city of Penance now lies in ruins. Our beloved queen is gone, and the insane monster Belus lords over the domain with the glee of a madman. He shapes the future into the world of his own imagination, and the past... our past... is now forbidden.

This is my last Tempass. To hide the truth away from the present and into the unknown hands of the future. To you who finds it, this book is a document of our age, the sad remains of a golden age of peace and wealth and majesty. It is the work of many hands, not the least my own, culled from the remains of the great archive, now lost to flame and terror. Whatever happens, your world will be different than ours; I only pray that you may once again live in freedom and pleasure, and someday know the joy of a loving sovereign.

I hie me now to the east, to the far side of this small world, where it is told an army gathers in support of the Stranger. My harp is no longer of use here, but my sword shall not go rusty. Onward.

-Odyar Khan

INVOCATION

*Seven bound in chains of gold
Seven bought and seven sold
Seven parceled, seven tamed
Seven souls to hide our shame*

*Seven more the future holds
When long for gotten we fall cold
Seven mortal tales untold
Seven seal the vows of old*

*Man in time will make his toy
What a thousand gods could not destroy*

FOREWARD

I am not of this world. In my youth I was a soldier. Not by choice, but by fate. Music was forbidden then. To set us apart from the animals I was told... but what animals make music on the harp, or of words. What

we are told is always a lie, a lie designed to control us. I lived a lie for twenty years, and then I was forged anew. We did not believe in other worlds, other places... we were told they did not exist.

For seven days we marched into the desert, in pursuit of the great betrayer, escaped with the ragged remains of his army. We found them one by one, their bodies drained of life to sustain the one. The great desert had never been crossed, not by doves at least... and it would not be this time. On the seventh night we heard the snorts of the kine, and in the morning they were gone—our officers and our water along with them. A hundred men pressed onward, leaving their lives in the hands of fate. Four hundred more would not go on, and laid down to die, still believing their masters would come back for them.

We had no gods to pray to. The concept had never crossed our minds. Our king was our master, and our souls were to serve him eternally, to die and come back again in a new form. Yet it was not our king we called out to as we staggered across the endless sands, but something else, something eternal that all living things instinctively understand, but that we had never been allowed to name. On the eighth night it found us.

It was music that we heard across the dark plains. The voice of a bird, and as we followed it, it turned into a symphony. They seemed to beckon to us, to turn and watch as we staggered along its path. I suppose we would have followed anyone, anything, but something in my soul knew that it was the music that drew us in. In music there is hidden power, a force as strong as life and stronger than the pull of the gods. For music is the language of creation, eldest of all things. The songs of the crows transfixed me, and I knew then what I must become. Without words, all the secrets that had been hidden from me by our scoundrel liege were laid bare. All we are told is a lie, whether intended or not, as the truth is too complex yet too simple to be put into words.

Hakaya was waiting for us at the oasis. A ring of oaks stood around a pool, a place that had never been marked on any map. Whatever had taken her men did not want her. She had no need for water, but could not cross the desert without drink. The serenade of the crows seemed to mock her, and I do feel I could hear the strings of a harp amongst their calls. A few still loyal to their master came against her with sword

and teeth, but she was far too fast. They fell swiftly, their arms snapped like twigs and their knees shattered in the blink of an eye. As she crouched to drain the first one I could see her brittle skin soften and her dusty hair regain its shine. The rest of our troop, trained to serve, fell into line, and bore their new master off to safety, or civilization, or to where it matters not. I could not leave the crows. I knew that with Hakaya around this would mean my death, but I would not serve her kind. When she saw I was remaining behind, she sent my own men after me, and they came. I opened my mouth, and I do not know why, but what came out was not the words of a dove, but the language of the birds. I had learned their song, and now I called to them. They came. I do now know from whence, but they came in force, and as my fellows approached, they were buffeted back by a cloud of black feathers and talons, roaring out from behind me like the spray of a great waterfall.

The sound at first was a great cacophony, but I continued to sing, feeling the magic of the ages flowing through my veins. Slowly but surely, the screams and calls of my brethren in arms began to fade, as if drifting slowly away upon a ship, and the ravens circling around me made it harder and harder to make out their forms. The flapping and the screeching and the whipping of wind then seemed to fade into one, and my song, the song of the birds, rang out clear and loud, the blackness surrounding and leaving nothing for the senses but the rush of winds and the deafening pulse of music.

I feel I must have slept, for I do not remember touching the ground again, but I awoke in the sunlight... the red light of another place entirely. My weapons were gone, and in my hands was clutched the slender frame of a mandolin. In my pockets rang the sound of coins. All around was green and warm. The soft chatter of a river flowed nearby, and not far off came the thunder of a great falls, the like of which I had never seen. As I rubbed my eyes, the stone of the mountains before me sharpened, and what I had taken as cliffs now sprouted windows, and bridges, and doorways... and people. A city stretched before me, wider than the eye could see, and its scents came to me on the breeze, exotic, varied, and beautiful.

Though I had traveled far and suffered much, I felt no pain. And even the ache in my shoulder that had plagued me since a pup was gone. The water of the river was like nothing I had ever tasted—pure and

odorless, but crisp and bright and full of life. The scents of dried fish and roasted meats drifted to me from the foothills of the city, and I followed in pursuit.

The lives lived here are the cream of a thousand worlds. All the stories are here, all the songs, and a people so varied and interwoven that you couldn't catalog them all, let alone learn to understand them. There is always more to learn here, to do, and to discover. I swear there are more colors here—perhaps the light of the two suns are to answer for that one. If you ask me about my life before, I remember little, my own story having merged with so many others, no better and no worse. My youth was as if a dream, much fraught with strain and emotion, but which, upon awakening, is quickly shrugged off and forgotten as a mere thought, interesting, yet ultimately false. True, there are those who once here cannot forget those they once knew and fight their whole lives to return to them—but those who manage to leave this place, or who do not lose the desire to leave this place, are rare indeed. And even those handful who do manage to find their way out—nearly all seem to return here again. Once the truth is glimpsed, it is unbearable indeed to return to the darkness.

- O.K., 946 e2





WHY

Welcome, dear reader, to the world of Oathbound! We imagine that there are likely a few questions on your mind right now. Namely, what is this book you are holding, what the heck are you supposed to do with it, and why did we write a new version of Oathbound? Well, to start things off, Oathbound is a campaign setting that documents the people, places, and events of a world called “The Forge”. We started documenting the Forge about seven years ago at a company called Bastion Press. Well, Bastion Press eventually went away as is the way of all things, but Oathbound did not, even if we only ever finished detailing about half the planet. Over the years, the fans have stayed, the loyalties have remained, and though we have been off doing other things for quite a while, we decided it was time to return to the Forge and finish what we started. A new company was born, and here we are again, launching another flagship product.

It’s pretty much impossible to start up again right where we left off. D20 is a distant memory, and the game has evolved in many different directions. For better or worse, Pathfinder is the closest system to the game we knew, and the best way to continue our story. True, only a small percentage of any given campaign book is rules content, and we could have gone through the old products and just updated them to the new system, and while that would work just fine for new recruits, we didn’t want our old fans to feel like they were buying the same thing again that they had already bought seven years ago. So we decided to start by documenting the domain of Eclipse, a land never before seen, even by Oathbound aficionados. As for the old products, the only thing no longer usable is the rules, so we have carefully extracted all the best rule content from the first six books, cleaned it up, expanded and updated it, and now present it here for your pleasure.

ABOUT OATHBOUND

Oathbound is a bit different from most campaign worlds in that characters can be taken directly from other games and dropped into the setting without pause. This is a world without gods, a place set aside as a divine prison long ago in an age beyond time. The creator of all things lies locked in its center, ever sleeping and ever waiting, locked away long ago by his children. Though it touches upon thousands of other planes of existence, all gates are one-way affairs, meaning it is easy enough to get into the Forge, but an epic

challenge to get out.

As a reality created by a committee of a thousand gods, it has some strange rules, not the least of which is that all gods are barred from entering the place, lest one be foolish enough to let the prisoner out. Since none of the committee wanted to volunteer to stay behind as wardens, seven of the creator's own chief servants were chosen as guardians for the prison, bound into an oath of servitude with their own blood and with half of their living souls.

Over the ages, the prison has unraveled some, and the great Oath, thousands of lines of rules and regulations, has contradicted itself enough times to allow the seven guardians some modicum of freedom. Via these loopholes, they have build a world around the prison with dirt and water stolen from a million worlds. Over time, they have populated this world with mortals, turning it into a forge for the strongest and the best, in hopes that one day a hero will arise to set them free.

Your Oathbound story can last a night, or it can last a lifetime. Characters can be pulled in from any other game and dropped right into the action, arriving through the star gates into anywhere on the planet the land's guardian chooses. Your heroes may make it their quest to get back home by somehow eluding the great Oath (a difficult task, but not unheard of), or they may choose to stay, carving new homes for themselves in this exciting and brutal land.

Because it is possible to bring characters into Oathbound from other campaign settings, much of the Oathbound material is geared towards mid and high-level characters. Parties can be approached anywhere on their home planes by one of the Seven and pulled into the Forge in an instant. Characters cannot leave easily, but few should want to, as the potential rewards for ambitious souls here are far greater than on most worlds.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

No game product is used exactly as it was intended. Gamers are by nature a creative bunch, and every bit of source material is at best just that, a source for something unique and personal. The world of the Forge is varied and broad, and touches upon thousands, if not millions of other planes of existence. Just as we draw our inspiration from a wealth of other sources, we fully expect that you will find what you need in this book

to add something new to your own campaign. This book is not in and of itself a campaign setting, though it provides the backbone that the other Oathbound books will need to tell their stories.

The Forge is composed of seven distinctly different regions (or "Domains"), each ruled by one of seven mysterious and powerful guardians. Each domain is a campaign setting in its own right, and is the perfect candidate for its own book (or books). The original Oathbound volume (*Oathbound, Domains of the Forge*), essentially served two purposes. It gave the basics for the Forge, and then detailed the great city of Penance, the heart of the planet's culture. *Oathbound Seven* (this book) repeats the world content section of that product, brings the setting up to date, and provides a Pathfinder conversion of the most important game content from the first six books. Though it is impossible to run a Pathfinder Oathbound campaign without this product, it will be difficult to run a Forge campaign without at least one of the domain campaign books, since this book gives only the top level view. The seven domains, and where you can find their details, are as follows:

1. PENANCE

- City of Penance, civilized areas: *Oathbound – Domains of the Forge* (Bastion Press, 2002)
- City of Penance, undercity and ruins: *Oathbound – Wrack and Ruin* (Bastion Press, 2003)
- Wilds of Penance: *Oathbound – Plains of Penance* (Bastion Press, 2003)

2. ARENA

- Arena, General: *Oathbound – Arena* (Bastion Press, 2004)
- Arena, Continued: *Oathbound – Mysteries of Arena* (Bastion Press, 2004)

3. WILDWOOD

- Wildwood, General: *Oathbound – Wildwood* (Bastion Press, 2005)

4. ECLIPSE

- Eclipse, General: *Oathbound – Eclipse* (Epidemic Books, 2010)

- Eclipse, Underground: Unknown future release from Epidemic Books

5. ANVIL

- Unknown future release from Epidemic Books

6. THE VAULT

- Unknown future release from Epidemic Books

7. THE KILN

- Unknown future release from Epidemic Books

FIRST TIME READERS

Those new to Oathbound will want to start out by reading the first few chapters of this book, wherein the world of the Forge and the enumeration of the Oathbound are given. Once you have a feel for the setting, a decision can be made. If you want to play a game in the world of the Forge, you will want to purchase at least one of the above listed detailed campaign source-books. Decide where you want your game to be based and pick up the book (or books) that cover the areas you will need for your adventures. As you put your campaign together, refer back to the rules content in this book to flesh out your characters and your setting.

For those who don't want to set a game in the world of the Forge, skip right ahead to the rules content in this book and decide which bits you want to incorporate into your own game. Everything here is Pathfinder compatible, and a lot of it is geared towards giving characters an extra boost to make them more powerful than average. The world of the Forge was designed to be a place for strong forces to come together.

RETURNING READERS

If you are already familiar with Oathbound and the Forge, you'll probably want to skip past the first part of this book straight to Chapter 5 – the Bloodwars. The Bloodwars covers the short period of history that has passed on the Forge since it was first documented. It's up to you to decide how (or not) to incorporate these changes into your existing Oathbound game. These changes represent what has progressed in our version

of the world since its inception, and all future products (starting with Oathbound Eclipse) will be written with this perspective in mind. One way to deal with the changes is to reintroduce a party that had adventures in the Forge and escaped—this time summoned by crows with red-tipped wings to a surprisingly different and more desperate place.

We also highly recommend you pick up the *Oathbound Eclipse* book (if you haven't already), and find a way to get your party to the top of the world. This is our newest offering, and is (at least in our opinion), the best of the bunch, and it is where our efforts for supplements and adventures will be directed for the time being.

Enjoy!
-Greg Dent

