

The Leopard

ALSO BY K. V. JOHANSEN

Blackdog

The Leopard

MARAKAND, VOLUME ONE

K. V. JOHANSEN



an imprint of Prometheus Books
Amherst, NY

Published 2014 by Pyr®, an imprint of Prometheus Books

The Leopard: Marakand, Volume One. Copyright © 2014 by K.V. Johansen. All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in
any form or by any means, digital, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
or conveyed via the Internet or a website without prior written permission of the publisher,
except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Cover image © Raymond Swanland

Cover design by Grace M. Conti-Zilsberger

Inquiries should be addressed to

Pyr

59 John Glenn Drive

Amherst, New York 14228

VOICE: 716-691-0133

FAX: 716-691-0137

WWW.PYRSE.com

18 17 16 15 14 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Johansen, K. V. (Krista V.), 1968—

The leopard / K. V. Johansen.

p. cm.—(Marakand; volume one)

ISBN 978-1-61614-903-1 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-1-61614-904-8 (ebook)

I. Title.

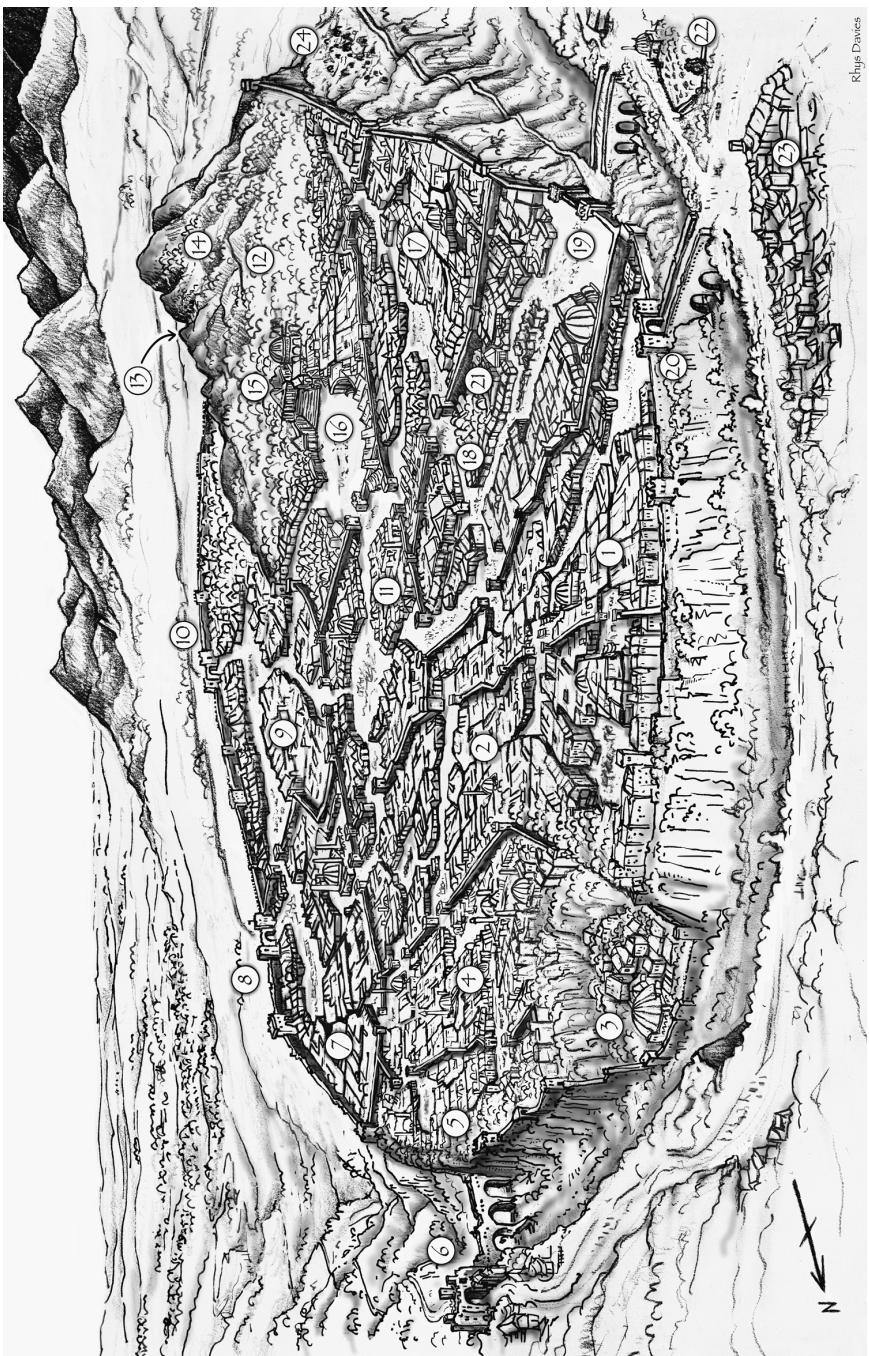
PR9199.3.J555L48 2014

813'.54—dc23

2013047645

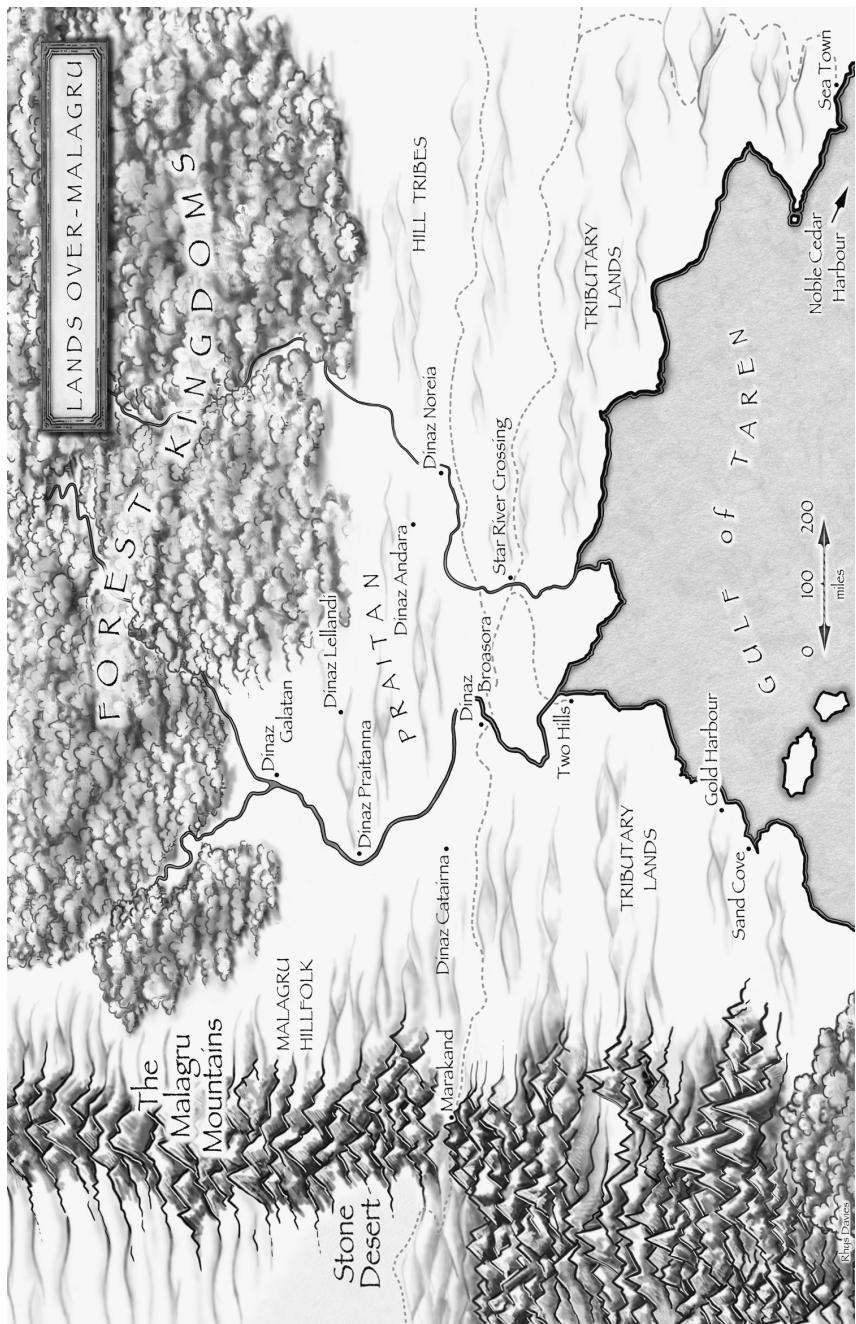
Printed in the United States of America

For Chris



Rhys Davies

- The City of
Marakand
1. Riverbend Ward
 2. Greenmarket Ward
 3. Temple of the Lady of the Deep Well
 4. Templefoot Ward
 5. East Ward
 6. Eastern Wall & Gate
 7. Fleshmarket Ward
 8. Fleshmarket Gate
 9. Silvergate Ward
 10. Silvergate Tower
 11. Spicemarket Ward
 12. Palace Ward
 13. Gurhan's Cave and Tomb
 14. Palace Hill
 15. Senate Palace & Library
 16. Palace Plaza
 17. Clothmarket Ward
 18. Sunset Gate Ward
 19. Sunset Gate Fort
 20. Riverbend Gate Tower
 21. Tomb of Ibialla
 22. The Gore
 23. The Suburb
 24. Tombs of the Twenty Families



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Ahjvar—Surnamed the Leopard, a Five Cities assassin suffering under more than his fair share of curses; originally from Praitan, living in Sand Cove in the Tributary Lands.

Akay—A fisherman's widow of Sand Cove in the Tributary Lands.

Andara—Deyandara's god; god of the Duina Andara in Praitan.

Anganurth—A wizard of unknown origins who became the devil Jasberek.

Angress—Champion of Queen Cattiga.

Arhu—A devout priest of the Lady, sent to speak for her in the Duina Catairna.

Arrac-Nourril—One of the Twenty Families alleged to have founded Marakand.

Ashir—A priest, the Right Hand of the Lady, husband of Rahel.

Attalissa—Goddess of the lake Lissavakail in the mountains called the Pillars of the Sky; foster-daughter of Holla-Sayan, formerly protected by the Blackdog.

Auntie—Midwife living with Talfan the apothecary; former nurse of Jugurthos Barraya.

Badger—A mastiff belonging to Deyandara.

Barraya—A Family or clan name in Marakand; one of the Twenty Families, supposed founders of the city.

Bashra—A Black Desert god, god of Gaguush's folk.

Beccan—Sister of Nour, late wife of Hadidu; she died in childbirth some years before this story began.

Bikkim—Serakallashi former member of Gaguush's gang; mortal husband of the goddess Attalissa.

10 The Leopard

The Blackdog—Thought to be a guardian spirit who bonded with a chosen warrior of Lissavakail to protect the goddess Attalissa; now the Westgrasslander caravaner Holla-Sayan, free of Attalissa and said by Moth to be the damaged soul of a devil wounded and lost in the world in a forgotten devils' war.

Cairngorm—A king of the Duina Catairna in Praitan; some songs say he was murdered by his elder son, some by his young wife, on the Day of the Three Kings, about ninety years before this story takes place. The songs are still popular among the bards in Praitan, though they are not often sung in the royal hall of the Duina Catairna. It is believed the land and the folk have been under a curse of ill fortune since that day.

Catairanach—Goddess of a spring and patron of the Duina Catairna.

Catairlau—Son of Cairngorm's first wife, his heir, champion, and wizard. Alleged by some to have murdered his father; died not long after him on the Day of the Three Kings.

Cattiga—Queen of the Duina Catairna shortly before this story begins.

Choa, high lord of. Ghu's former master, ruler of a province of northern Nabban.

Clentara—Alias used by Ahjvar in Marakand.

Cricket—Deyandara's pony.

Dann—A Praitanec brigand.

Deyandara—Youngest sibling and only sister of Durandau, king of the Duina Andara and high king of Praitan. Niece and heir of Catigga of the Duina Catairna. Sometimes called Deya.

Django—A member of Gaguush's gang, originally from the Stone Desert, brother of Kapuzeh.

Dotemon—One of the seven devils, otherwise the wizard Yeh-Lin the Beautiful.

Dur—Priestess of the Lady, caretaker of the Voice.

Durandau—King of the Duina Andara and elected high king of Praitan; eldest brother of Deyandara.

Elias Barraya—A senator of Marakand; wife of her cousin Petrimos Barraya; mother of Jugurthos. She was executed in the cages shortly after the earthquake.

Ermina—Second daughter of Varro and Talfan.

Esau—Son of the priestess of Ilbiaalla and only person from that family to survive the earthquake and the subsequent slaughter of all priests but the Lady's. His name was changed to Hadidu and he was raised by the family of the Doves coffeehouse.

Fairu—A lord in the eastern part of the Duina Catairna.

Farnos—A baker in Sunset Ward.

Feizi—One of the Twenty Families of Marakand.

Gaguush—A Black Desert caravan-mistress and gang-boss, recently married to Holla-Sayan.

Gelyn—A bard of the Duina Catairna, daughter of Queen Cattiga's chief bard.

Geir, Red Geir—One of the first three kings in the north, nephew of the wizard Heuslar.

Ghatai—One of the seven devils, otherwise the wizard Tamghiz, also known as Tamghat, the Lake-Lord of Lissavakail. Father of Ivah.

Ghu—A young Nabbani man, a runaway slave, Ahjvar's servant and companion.

Gilru—Young son of Queen Cattiga, her heir after the deaths of his older brother and sister.

Gisel—A sea-raider and mistress of Red Geir in the stories of the north.

Gurhan—Hill-god of Marakand, formerly served by a clan of hereditary priests.

Guthrun—A Northron caravaneer, camel-leech in Kharduin's gang.

The hag—Ahjvar's name for the ghost which possesses him.

Hassin—Street-guard captain of the Riverbend Gate in Marakand.

Heuslar—Northron wizard who became the devil Ogada, uncle of Red Geir.

Holla-Sayan—A Westgrasslander caravan-guard who unwillingly became the host for the Blackdog of Lissavakail and foster-father to the goddess Atalissa; now one with the Blackdog and a free agent. Husband of Gaguush.

Hravnmod the Wise—One of the first three kings in the north, brother of Ulfhild, said to have been slain by her.

Hyllanim—Son of Hyllau, successor of Cairangorm and Catairlau as king of the Duina Catairna on the Day of the Three Kings.

12 The Leopard

Hyllau—Second (and much younger) wife of Cairangorm, King of the Duina Catairna. She is said in many songs to have murdered her husband; died on the day of the Three Kings.

Ilbialla—Goddess of a well in Sunset Ward in Marakand, patron of Sunset and Riverbend Wards, formerly served by a single hereditary priest or priestess.

Iris—Third of Varro's and Talfan's four daughters.

Ivah—A wizard, whose father Tamghat was, unbeknownst to her, the devil Tamghiz Ghatai.

Jasberek—One of the seven devils, merged with the wizard Anganurth.

Jasmel—Eldest daughter of Varro and Talfan.

Jecca—A Praitannecc brigand.

Jochiz—One of the seven devils, called Jochiz Fireborn; bonded with the wizard Sien-Shava.

Judeh—A Marakander-born caravaneer of Gaguush's gang.

Jugurthos Barraya—Captain of the Sunset Gate fort of the Marakander street guard; son of two executed senators and dispossessed heir of the main branch of the Family Barraya.

Kapuzeh—A member of Gaguush's gang, originally from the Stone Desert, brother of Django.

Keeper—Moth's sword, forged by the demon wolf-smith, inherited from her grandmother. “Keeper” is the meaning of its proper name, Kepra.

Kepra—Moth's Northron sword. For the inscriptions on it, see “The Storyteller.”

Ketsim—A Grasslander warleader, formerly among the chief of Tamghat the Lake-Lord's *noekar*, or vassals, and the governor of conquered Serakallah, now a mercenary hired with his followers to take the Duina Catairna for Marakand.

Kharduin—A caravan-master from the eastern deserts, Nour's partner in business and otherwise.

The Lady of the Deep Well, Lady of Marakand—the foremost of the original three gods of Marakand, served by a large number of priests and priestesses. Though the most-worshipped of the three gods, she never appeared to any

but her priests. The Voice of the Lady was her intermediary in dealings with the city.

The Lake-Lord—Title taken by Tamghat as ruler of Lissavakail.

Lakkariss—A black sword, which at least looks to be made of obsidian, belonging to Moth.

The Leopard—see Ahjvar.

Lilace—The Voice of the Lady, a priestess chosen to be the shy underground goddess's intermediary with the city, also a prophetess.

Lin—A wandering Nabbani wizard, tutor to Deyandara.

Lug—A Grasslander warrior, one of the mercenary Ketsim's *noekar* and tent-guard. Husband of Chieh.

Lu—A Five Cities caravaneer and horse-dealer involved with Nour and Hadidu in smuggling the wizard-talented out of Marakand.

Mansour—Member of the family of priests of the Marakander hill-god Gurhan; father of Zora. Used the alias Mankul and lived as a street-singer after the massacre of his family and the proscribing of his god.

Marnoch—Queen Cattiga's chief huntsman, son of Lord Seneschal Yvarr, warleader of the Duina Catairna after Cattiga's murder.

Miara—A wizard and friend of Ahjvar's, who died long ago.

Mikki—Moth's demon lover, a *verrbjarn*, or werebear, bear by day and man by night; his father was a Northron sea-raider turned homesteader, his mother a bear demon of the Hardenwald and the guardian of the grave of the devil Vartu.

Mina—A priestess of the Lady.

Moth—A Northern wanderer, wizard, warrior, storyteller; the devil Ulfhild Vartu.

Mother Nabban, Father Nabban—River and mountain, the only gods of the Nabbani empire.

Nasutani—A young Grasslander caravaneer in Kharduin's gang.

Nour—Marakander wizard and caravaneer of the eastern road, brother-in-law of Hadidu, business partner and lover of Kharduin.

Ogada—one of the seven devils, bonded with the Northron wizard Heuslar.

Otokas—A Lissavakaili man, host to the Blackdog before it took Holla-Sayan.

14 The Leopard

Pakdhala—Name used by the goddess Attalissa as Holla-Sayan's supposed daughter.

Palin—A bard and prince of the Duina Catairna, alleged true father of Deyandara, brother of Queen Cattiga.

Petrimos Barraya—Senator of Marakand, husband of his cousin Elias Barraya, father of Jugurthos; executed in the cages shortly after the earthquake.

Praitanna—Goddess of the River Praitanna and the Duina Praitanna, one of the seven tribes of Praitan; regarded as the greatest of the seven patron deities of the *duinas*.

Ragnar—A Northron caravan-master, cousin to Guthrun of Kharduin's gang.

Ragnvor—A queen of the Hravningas in the north, long ago, descendant of Hravnmod.

Rahel—A Marakander priestess of the Lady, Beholder of the Face of the Lady, wife of Ashir.

Rasta—The elderly master of a caravanserai in Marakand's suburb, where Gaguush's gang usually puts up.

Sa-Sura—A Nabbani merchant lodged at Master Shenar's caravanserai.

Samra—A Marakander wineshop keeper's daughter, wife of Mansour and mother of Zora.

Sayan—A god of the Sayanbarkash in the Western Grass, Holla-Sayan's god.

Sayyid—A servant in Hadidu's coffeehouse.

Senara—Older lady of a northern region of the Duina Catairna.

Sera—Goddess of Serakallah, a town in the Red Desert on the western caravan road.

Seoyin—A Nabbani man in Kharduin's gang.

Shemal—Young son of Hadidu, nephew of Nour.

Shenar—Master of a caravanserai in Marakand's suburb where Kharduin's gang is lodged.

Shija—A priestess of the Lady, Mistress of the Dance.

Sien-Mor—A wizard from the southern ocean who became the devil Tu'usha; younger sister of Sien-Shava.

Sien-Shava—A wizard from the southern ocean who became the devil Jochiz; older brother of Sien-Mor.

Storm—A bone-horse, a necromantic creation anchored to a horse's skull;

 Storm appears to have ideas of his own, which a bone-horse should not.

Styrma—Storm's name in Northron.

Syallan—Catairnan shield-bearer to Lord Angress, intended to be champion
 to Prince Gilru; his illegitimate half-sister on their father's side.

Talfan—A Marakander apothecary, wife of Varro, mother of Jasmel, Ermina,
 Iris, and an infant daughter.

Tamghat—Name used by the devil Tamghiz Ghatai when he conquered
 Lissavakail.

Tamghiz—Grasslander chieftain and wizard bonded with the devil Ghatai;
 onetime husband of Ulfhild; father of Ivah.

Thekla—A Westron woman in Gaguush's gang.

Tihmrose—A Marakander woman in Gaguush's gang.

Tulip—Adjutant (and mistress) of Captain Jugurthos Barraya of the Sunset
 Gate garrison in Marakand.

Tu'usha—One of the seven devils, called Tu'usha the Restless by the Northron
 skalds; bonded with the wizard Sien-Mor.

Ulfhild of Hravnsfjall—King's Sword of Hravnmod the Wise and his younger
 sister; wizard who became the devil Vartu Kingsbane. She, however, maintains
 she did not murder her brother. Once married to Tamghiz; their children
 were Maerhild and Oern; see Moth.

Vardar—A man of the Malagru hillfolk in Kharduin's gang.

Varro—A Northron man in Gaguush's gang, married to the apothecary Talfan.

Vartu—One of the seven devils, bonded with the wizard Ulfhild; see Moth.

Viga Forkbeard—One of the first three kings in the north.

Watcher—The apothecary Talfan's watchdog.

Xua—One of the Twenty Families of Marakand.

Yeh-Lin the Beautiful—A Nabbani wizard, courtesan, general, and regent,
 or possibly empress, depending upon which history you prefer to believe;
 became the devil Dotemon.

Ysell—A Praitanec bard with whom Deyandara travelled as an unofficial
 apprentice.

Yvarr—Seneschal of Queen Cattiga of the Duina Catairna, father of Marnoch.

16 The Leopard

Zavel—A Serakallashi-raised Grasslander in Gaguush's gang.

Zora—A dancer and musician in the temple of Lady, daughter of Mansour, the only survivor of the massacre of the priests of Gurhan.