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# The Weavercraft

by Maggie Traylor, with Holly Hutchison

**Craft Contact:** *adoptable craftmastership* (email [morgav@kadanzer.org](mailto:morgav@kadanzer.org) for more information)

**Current Craftmaster:** Masterweaver Valorian

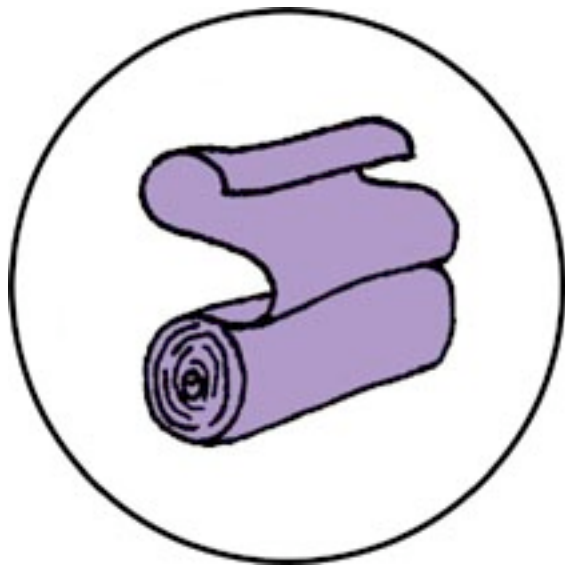
**Main Crafthall:** Windsong Hold

**Badge and Colors:** violet, a bolt of cloth

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(craft badge by Holly Hutchison)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Southern Weavercraft Hall is located at Windsong Hold. The Weavercraft includes branches specializing in thread and cloth manufacture, creation of fine clothing, clothcleaning, weaving of decorative tapestries, and repair of both clothing and tapestries. The Tailorcraft, which deals with sewing and repairing clothing, is a sub-craft of the Weavercraft, and looks to the same Master.

The Weavercraft is one of the "hold" crafts, that is, one that is practiced by most of the populace, with or without craft training. Every cotholder's wife knows how to

spin thread and weave it into cloth, though hers may be coarse and rough in comparison to the fine fabrics woven by a craft-trained weaver.

Junior and senior journeymen are routinely posted outside the Hall, as well as apprentices who may be assigned to assist journeymen at satellite Halls, or at a Hold. Apprentices who never walk the tables but choose not to remain as labor for the Hall may return to their home, where their skills might still assist them in pursuing a livelihood. The Hall, however, discourages this as it has invested time and tutelage into such apprentices, and they have many uses.

Every woman on Pern has at least some knowledge of sewing clothing, though a highly ranked Lady would have little to do with the creation of her own wardrobe (with the exception of embroidery as a favored pastime). A ranked member of the Weavercraft is unlikely to be involved with making ordinary clothing, though he could accept commissions for particularly fine-occasion garments for high ranking persons. Journeymen assigned to a Hold may have making garments for the Blood or other ranking people included in their contract, and take commissions for what exceeds his commitment. Sewing clothing is the profession of the Tailors (see below for more information on the Tailorcraft). One of the most frequent occupations of ranking women in the Weaverhall is embroidery and the creation of the tapestries which form a very large part of the interior design of Pernese homes. However, the creation of the great mural tapestries, like that which Lessa used to guide her on her historical jump back in time, would be the work of highly skilled professional weavers, senior journeymen at least, if not master class. As the Hall is the only place large enough to house the equipment required for such endeavors, as well as the home to the largest population of senior journeymen and masters, most of these large tapestries and Hold banners are made on site at the Hall.

Another very important branch of the Weavercraft is the practice of cloth cleaning. For a more detailed discussion of this branch, see "Drycleaning on Pern".



## THE CRAFTHALL

Constructed around the time that Windsong Hold became a major Hold, the actual Weaverhall is constructed of similar materials to the Hold proper. Since Thread was no longer considered a threat, the buildings were originally constructed of wood, as they are today, and gradually expanded to the compound the Weaverhall sports today.

The main feature of the Weaverhall complex is the primary workshop, which is a mammoth building made of local timber with the same warm, red slate shingles as Windsong Hold. Roughly cubical in proportions, the walls are very tall, and the roof is somewhat shallow, with enough slant for good rain runoff to help prevent woodrot. The roof's central apex supports a long skylight, running north-south, made from small panes of glass welded together in a metal frame. Two identical skylights run along the far eastern and western sides of the roof, allowing for maximum access to light and to cut down on the use of glows.

Attached below the skylights are slatted wooden blinds that can be manipulated from the wide catwalks that form the second level of the workshop in order to regulate the light on particularly bright days.

These catwalks run the perimeter of the main workshop about half-way up its tall walls, with another two crossing the space in an east-west direction. Despite the ventilation rimming the roof and at other strategic spots, especially on the eastern and western sides in order to take advantage of the prevailing winds, these spaces are often hotter than the workshop below, and usually relegated to storage or as overflow workspace. This and their seemingly precarious position make them an undesirable spot often assigned, though not always, to apprentices or, potentially, journeymen in disfavor.

Below, on the workshop floor, looms are arranged in stations according to type, with the stations arranged to best suit the flow of common Weaverhall projects. Tucked against the west wall there is a raised platform with a large, long table, chairs, common texts, and a sand table, used for any instruction or meeting that needs immediate access to the workshop. On the opposite eastern wall, right beside the main entrance, is a bank of numbered slots. Upon their permanent or semi-permanent assignment to the Hall, journeymen are assigned a number corresponding to one of the slots, and each day they can find project assignments or other instructions there, as organized by the headwoman or man. Rather than having to constantly rescrape hide for these purposes, the Hall utilizes wooden tablets filled with a soft but durable wax that can be etched into with a stylus and easily erased by heating the tablets. Stations and looms are also numbered, and this information is included in the journeyman's assignment in order to direct them to a prearranged work area that helps maximize efficiency.

In the center of the workshop is a break station which the headwoman or man keeps stocked with water, klah and eatables, which the working journeymen can graze on throughout the workday rather than having to stop for a midday meal. With the constant clack of looms the workshop is usually noisy on a normal day, and deafening on a busy one.

Around the main workshop are attached private offices, classrooms, smaller workshops for projects that require less space or more quiet (such as for knotwork, beadwork, embroidery, or special projects such as high-class tapestry), and storage. The mural tapestries and Hold banners are largely constructed in their own separate workshop, which has the space to hold the equipment. Butted up against the outer north wall of the workshop is an open area with a generous awning supported by pylons, where messier and/or smellier jobs, such as dyeing, can be accomplished and take advantage of the westerly winds.

Surrounding the main workshop are various outbuildings including but not limited to: an auxiliary workshop, used for overflow projects when the Hall is busy or has a particularly large project, for large apprentice classes, or for retraining returning journeymen; Masterweaver Valorian's private housing complex with private office and workshop; private masters' quarters, offices, and workshops; journeymen's quarters, both for unmarried and married journeymen; apprentice dormitories; other staff and

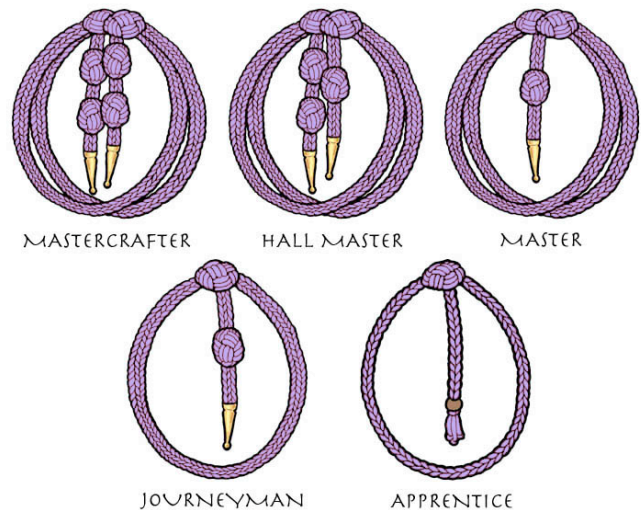
craftworker quarters; the main dining hall; laundries; small subcraft complexes such as tailoring and cloth-cleaning; storage; communal bathing facilities and privies, usually for apprentice use (weavers of more rank have private facilities or share them only with a few others).



## RANK AT THE WEAVER HALL

Rank at the Weaverhall follows similar lines as most crafthalls, in addition to its own social nuances. First, of course, is Masterweaver of the South, followed by the Hallmasters; then, the masters who remain in the Hall under Masterweaver Valorian; followed by the senior journeymen, male junior journeymen, female junior journeymen; apprentices, craftworkers and other miscellaneous staff, and drudges. Journeymen with hold assignments enjoy a small status boost, which may or may not help them within Hall politics if competing with an older, Hall-bound journeyman.

Those who have a solid enough foundation in their craft walk the tables and become first-knot journeymen. Monitored by their masters, journeymen who continue to advance in skill, either at the main Hall, satellite Halls, and their Hold assignment, may be tested and granted second-knot status. "Senior journeymen" wear a third knot, and above them are the masters.



Craftworkers are the skilled or semi-skilled folk who have some or great knowledge of the craft but no rank cords or formal training to prove it. Some might be apprentices who were for some reason unable to walk the tables, but who were deemed useful enough to keep on. Failing to walk the tables once, an apprentice may stay on as a "senior apprentice" for another try, but if it becomes apparent that they will never make it to journeyman, the Hall may offer them a position as a craftworker, wherein they would not be allowed to wear an apprentice's knots, but they would still wear the Weaverhall badge. This would be an incremental increase in status (over that of common holder), and is considered by many to be a worthwhile choice. Other

craftworkers might be the spouses of weavers, or the children of weavers, who thus know the craft. They are often responsible for preparing facilities for the journeymen, such as setting up looms for a day's project that drudges or apprentices would be unable to do.

The Weaverhall is one of the few crafts that allow women to attain rank, but female apprentices are accepted very sparingly. Part of the reason for their acceptance might be because of the association of women with weaving or tailoring in the role of a traditional wife, but also because the Weaverhall found female journeymen could fill a specific socio-economic niche within the politics of the Hall.

Female journeymen (or journeywomen, depending on locale and the preference or background of the speaker) are almost never assigned outside of the main Hall. Rather, they become a supply of skilled labor for the Hall, and their work can carry a journeyman's stamp and be valued accordingly. This allows the craft to have greater flexibility in male journeymen out on Hold or other assignments. For this purpose, female journeymen may be advanced in spite of a few minor failings, but nothing that would compromise the public's faith in the quality of Craft-stamped goods. They also usually walk the tables much earlier (up to three Turns earlier) than their male counterparts, at 18 rather than the usual minimum of 21. In this way they provide the Hall's need for non-fluctuating levels of skilled labor that have less clout than their male counterparts. There have rarely been senior female journeymen, and there are no female masters. Though they technically share the same rank as their male junior journeyman peers, in reality they tend to occupy an unofficial rank niche between male junior journeymen, and craftworkers and apprentices. Apprentices probably actually have a rank about equal to a craftworker, but having the knots gives them a slightly higher level of prestige.

As with all crafts, few journeymen continue on to become Masters. Those who do are always those who have done something (or promise to do something) to improve the craft, either as exceptional innovators, administrators, or instructors.



## FABRIC TYPES

Flax is used to create linen, which wears well and is used for virtually every type of clothing worn on Pern, as well as tablecloths and bed sheets.

Sisal is difficult to make smooth, requiring a significant amount of beating and pulping, but when done properly it results in a fine silky fabric light enough to wear even in the most tropical zones.

Cotton is the most flexible cloth, but is a crop that is highly susceptible to adverse weather conditions as well as Thread, and is usually very scarce by the end of a Pass. These challenges coupled with cotton's habit of leaching a field of almost all nutrients, which could take Turns of soil rebuilding, had resulted in it being considered a luxury item on Pern.

Other fabric types include hemp, processed from an industrial strain of *cannabis savitis* which creates a sturdy,

antimicrobial cloth that resists rot, mildew, and fire, as well as superior canvas and rope. (This form of hemp plant does not have the psychoactive qualities of marijuana due to its specialization as a fiber plant on 21st Century Earth).

Also, bamboo (sometimes known as 'grasstree') fibers can be processed and spun to be woven into a silky cloth grows softer as it is worn, and also has antimicrobial properties. Sisal and bamboo fibers make the closest cloth that Pern has to silk, since it lacks both silkworms and mulberries. Instead, 'silk' colloquially refers to a silk-like fabric finish, not a fabric woven of a particular fiber.

Most fibers on Pern are plant-derived (similar to circumstances on earth where 65% of fibers are plant-derived) but there are a few major animal fibers, the most prominent of which is sheep wool. Wool is an exceptionally absorbent fiber, which while very warm, is also very breathable and does not retain odors if properly aired. Wool is often used in the manufacture of cold-clime or sea garments.



## APPRENTICE TRAINING

Masterweaver Valorian is something of a perfectionist, who considers it vitally important that every apprentice understand the nature of fabric down to its basic fibres. Apprentices often find this tiresome, but in the long run, the detailed knowledge of the very basics of the craft stands them in good stead. Apprentices begin with the spinning of thread, first with drop spindles, then with wheels.

They then proceed to training with a hand loom before progressing to a standing loom, first weaving single color fabrics of progressively finer quality, and then learning how to weave in multiple colors and patterns. These studies include how to create pigments, and dye skeins of thread or yarn. The next area of study is cleaning, a very involved and detailed study (explained in greater detail in "Drycleaning on Pern"). This is followed by a section on basic repair of fabrics.

The next level of training involves repair of fine textiles and tapestries, a skill which requires minute attention to detail and excellent needlework. The final area for apprentice study is the weaving of fine tapestries similar to the one which guided Lessa's flight. This involves learning more closely guarded craft secrets in the areas of certain dyes and chemical treatments, the knowledge of which is restricted to the craft.

A journeyman weaver is eagerly sought after at any major Hold or minor Hold of significant size. Fine tapestries are a mark of status and the more skilled the weaver, the more prized he is by the Holder who contracts his services. These weavers may also be contracted to repair and maintain existing heirloom tapestries.



## SATELLITE HALLS

There are fairly large satellite Weaverhalls at a major Hold in both Eastern and Landing Weyr territories. Small Halls are sometimes built at the center of various fiber production sites (ie. a major center of flax production, shepherding, or bamboo forests). These minor Halls also serve as local training centers, from which the most promising apprentices can be sent to the main Hall for further instruction and advancement in rank. The masters of these Halls enjoy the greatest status below that of the Masterweaver, though their roles are often more political and administrative.



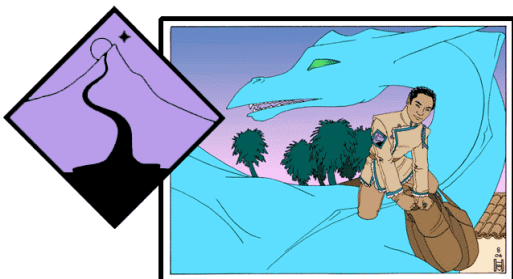
## THE TAILORCRAFT

The Tailorcraft is considered to be a subcraft of the Weavercraft, and falls under the jurisdiction of Masterweaver Valorian. Trained in the basics of the Weavercraft, some apprentices may show an aptitude for clothing design and manufacture, and will be steered toward that specialization. Tailors have less training than trained weavers, but would have a basic knowledge of how cloth is made, dyed, and cleaned.



## IMPORTANT PEOPLE

**Masterweaver Valorian** -- M, Hair=black, E=brown, HT=5'6". Valorian is a short, stocky man with black hair and brown eyes. He's a no-nonsense kind of man who takes his craft seriously. When an apprentice weaver studies under him directly you can bet that apprentice will come away with more knowledge about how a particular fabric is constructed than any other apprentice anywhere. It's not just the weaving of the fabric that is important to him, it's how the strands came about in the first place that he begins with. Married to a daughter of Lord Mendius. (Adoptable NPC persona).



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