Artist Note; Kair Toren & Battle Maps

Hello! My name is Becka; also known as Becka Designs!

I've never written one of these, so I appreciate the lovely Horde's (and anyone else who is reading this) patience. So, to get us started! Here's a little info about me. I started making art in general when I was just finishing high school in 2019, and then Covid happened. My friends and I all started playing Dungeons and Dragons online of course, and before too long, I started making maps! After that, around 2022, I read ACOTAR (I was a bit late to the game, but hey! All the books were out!) and started getting more involved in books.

Which all led up to 2023 - I came across Ilona Andrews' post in the Cartographer's Guild and reached out to her. You have no idea how shocked I was when I realized THE Ilona Andrews wanted to hire me. It was honestly my first big gig. I was so excited while making all the maps and doing my absolute best to make it the best map I'd ever made up to that point. That leads us to now! Making this Map Merch Pack has been a testament to all of what I've learned up until now, and I hope you all love and enjoy this pack!

I had my friend help me write up a few questions to answer as a fun little addition for you guys!

(Appreciative moment for Seph, and Ian for helping with questions and edits!)



-What was your favorite part to make in Kair Toren?

The Ribs Bazar. Hands down. That was so fun to design and make, and if you zoom in, you can see a lot of small tents and stalls! However, when I did the map remake for the Vellum pack, I fell in love with the Red Basilica.

-Which battle map was your favorite to make?

Garden. 100% - It's so pretty, and I loved getting to be creative and add to the world by adding additional rooms that weren't shown in the book! Can you guess what each room is?

-What was your process in making Kair Toren?

It was actually pretty similar to my current system now, even though it was 3 years ago: Sketch, add in terrain, begin adding in exterior city walls, add in each section district by district, texture everything, add finishing touches, and export!

-What scenes, if any, did you read before creating a map (be it a battlemap, scene, city map, etc)

So I'm stubborn, don't mind spoilers, and I like reading physical books, so even though I had access, I did my resolute best to only read the sections related to the map! I will say when I was working on the battle maps this year it was so difficult; especially at the garden. I found myself 2 chapters away before I knew it!

-What was your favorite map to make for this setting? What was your least favorite map to make for this setting? Why?

Kair Toren (Which was originally Kair Torren, which is why that was in the Vellum pack! Ilona Andrews and I agreed it would be a fun little tidbit for you all!) and the Garden will always be two of my favorites, but a new battle map for a certain book 2 coming up might take the 3rd favorite slot....

I don't actually have a least favorite.... I genuinely adored making all of them! I know that's a boring answer, but it's true! However, I did have a least favorite merch item I made! The bookmarks! Those were so hard to fit to print, and I'm still not certain I did it right, which is why I included the .png files incase you want to try to fix them or take them somewhere to get printed!

-How did you go about starting a map (e.g., did you use music, did you watch something, did you read a scene, did you ask for details)?

A little bit of everything, honestly! I listened to a lot of girl boss, and "Eye of the tiger" and "I will survive" type of music!

-Did you have to get creative with map assets? If so, what did you do for some special imagery that Inkarnate doesn't have by default?

Yes! I use a mix of Inkarnate and Clip Studio Paint to make my maps! I had to draw in the ribs and several other buildings to make it just right, for Kair Toren and of course, the chandelier in the garden. I also went over everything in CSP just to make sure it had the right lighting/touch to it!

-Do you use any special tools outside of Inkarnate (hardware or software) to create these?

Yes! Clip Studio Paint is my art program of choice! It's ease of access is great. Even when I don't know how to do something, it's very easy to look up tutorials!

-How much time does an average map take you? How long did these take you to create?

Heh....Heh.... 6+ hours usually for battlemaps - Kair Toren took 15+.

-How often do you do large projects like these, and do you enjoy one-off map projects or large-scale long-term map projects more?

Here lately, more often - but more for the D&D perspective (I'd love to get more into making maps for books though!)! I enjoy both for different reasons. One-Off maps I get to make something beautiful, and then it's done. Large-scale/long-term projects like this, with a city map, and developing areas in the map; I love getting to follow along and see it grow!

-What drives you to continue making maps? How often do you make maps?

Right now, this is the best form of work for me to pursue, and honestly, it's become a genuine passion. I've done enough maps that I've grown and been able to learn what to look for, like what imports and exports to keep in mind for a city, how large rooms should be for each purpose etc! I make maps every day, other than when I get a day off!

I hope you enjoyed this note, and enjoy the rest of the pack!