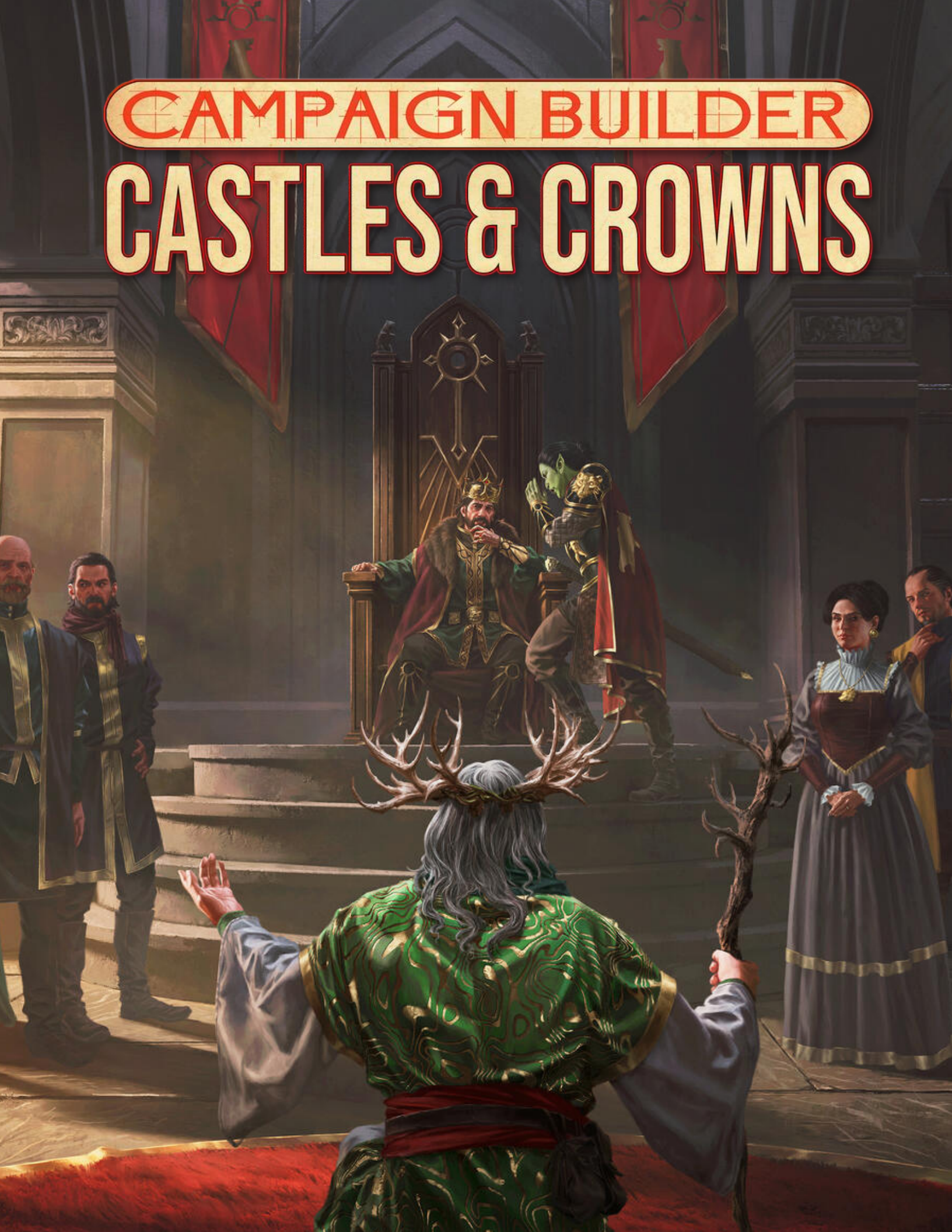
CAMPAIGN BUILDER

CASTLES & CROWNS



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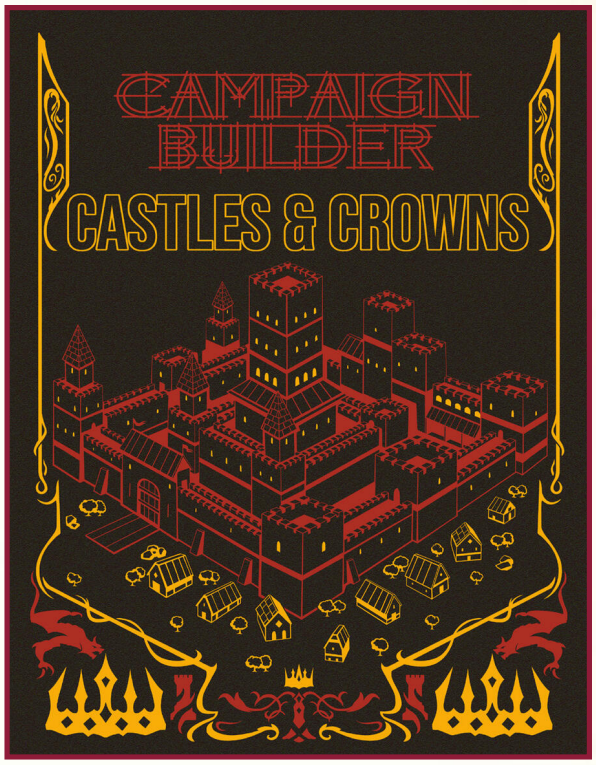
ON THE COVER

A mysterious figure addresses the royal court, bringing dire news, as an advisor whispers into the king's ear in this art by Lie Setiawan.



ON THE LIMITED EDITION COVER

A castle and its busy grounds stand majestic in this art by Addison Rankin.

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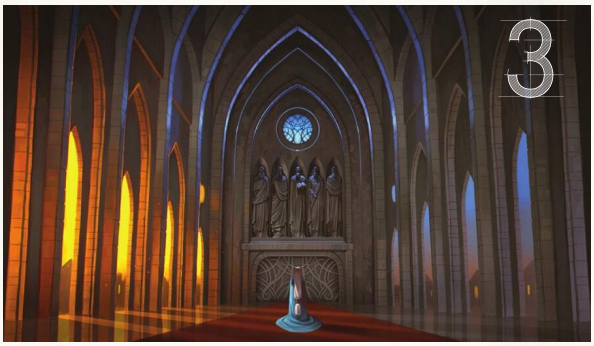

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COURTS OF WONDER

Envision a fantasy world. Noble kings and queens sit upon grand thrones within mighty stone castles with soaring battlements and heraldic banners that flutter from high towers. Powerful warlords train elite warriors in the courtyards of fortified strongholds. Colorful fey parade in a swirling dance of manners, intrigue, and backstabbing. Adventure abounds in these courtly halls—hobnobbing alongside the ambitious nobles, dancing just ahead of the flames of war, and plunging headfirst among the monsters that hide just beneath all the glittering finery. For where the powerful gather, riches and magic await. Yet so do secrets and danger.

Campaign Builder: Castles & Crowns provides the tools to build soaring castles and noble courts to fit any setting. Construct fortresses and fill them with dynamic, engaging NPCs and locales, with magic items and monsters, with whatever a campaign needs. Build adventures that feel real and lived-in, that bring the game world to life and give players something to remember:

- **Chapter 1: Noble Heroes** provides new character options, including heritages and subclasses, a lineage, and an optional rule for character threads.
- **Chapter 2: Courtly Campaigns** sets parameters for courtly adventures, including wartime events, and provides details and motivations for NPCs.
- **Chapter 3: Sites and Settings** details the anatomy and adventure opportunities of castles, manor houses, military strongholds, and monasteries.
- **Chapter 4: Royal Magic** brings new spells, grand ritual options, and fabulous magic items.
- **Chapter 5: Rulers and Kingdoms** discusses how to build the rulers and kingdoms needed for any adventure and provides several detailed examples.
- And the **Appendix** provides stat blocks for NPCs and monsters to fill those adventures, along with tables for social interactions and name generation and more.

For those who wish to bring the glittering heights of courtly adventure and intrigue to the campaign world, welcome to *Campaign Builder: Castles & Crowns*!

RULERS AND THE RULED

In the real world, castles were originally built to protect strategic locations from attack, to safeguard those sheltering within them, and to project the might and authority a monarch has over a troubled land. Over time, as these structures grew more elaborate, they became important political centers where nobles gathered and where the monarch administered the land and dispensed justice.

In tabletop roleplaying games, castles and noble courts serve many purposes in a campaign. They can be the starting place for adventures, locations where player characters (PCs) meet potential patrons and interact with the powerful—and they can even be the focal point for campaigns. PCs might enter a court to move among the nobility and expose a traitor, or they might join up with an intrepid army, laying siege to a well-defended stronghold.

The center of any castle or court is the ruler, be it king, queen, sheikh, sovereign, or any other term for the political leader of a kingdom, community, or land. These individuals might rule because of their place in a familial line of succession or because of the prevailing belief that their right descends from a magical or divine mandate—or they might rule merely by force of arms. In a feudal system, such as those in the medieval era, the higher the title or rank, the more power an individual has, and those below them in the social order are expected to respect and honor their higher position. While most PCs will never reach such a dizzying level of status as king or queen, other noble ranks can be earned as rewards throughout the course of a campaign.

GAINING TITLES AS REWARDS

Nobles with sufficient political power can bestow lesser titles as rewards for good service. Often (but not always), gaining a noble title comes along with a parcel of property, such as a manor or fort, or other land grant. While this is certainly a public acknowledgment of the deeds the PCs accomplished for the throne, granting a title to adventurers also gives a monarch a powerful group of allies in an area that might be troublesome (such as a disputed border or stretch of wilderness). If they are granted land closer to the capital, the monarch can quickly call upon them in times of threat. Implicit in accepting title and land are oaths of loyalty or fealty. Should the PCs abuse their position or betray their liege, the monarch can strip away their titles and move to reclaim their lands.

In general, titles given as rewards begin at the lowest level (the "ennobled," or nobles), and as further services are rendered to the throne, PCs can gain ranks of higher status. A monarch must maintain a careful balance though, between the debt they owe to the PCs and the loyalty of their high-ranking nobles. Somewhat predictably, the older, more established nobles don't often appreciate a monarch raising up a bunch of battle-loving adventurers to equal political rank.

Unless a PC manages to seize lands and hold them by force of arms, titles are traditionally only gained by performing extraordinary services for a monarch. For minor services, most rulers might reward an adventuring party with a tavern or other property seized by the crown rather than add to the nobility. For actual title, the service performed by the PCs must truly be above and beyond the norm. A few suggested methods of gaining noble titles are saving the life of a member of the royal family, rooting out a traitorous conspiracy close to the monarch, stopping an invasion, marrying a member of the royal family, or a similar extraordinary deed.

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE: TITLE AND RANK

This section outlines various noble titles and explains what role they traditionally serve in society. The titles are ranked into three loose tiers, and each has their own authority, rewards, and responsibilities. Gaining noble titles puts PCs on a path of wealth, prestige, and authority as they climb the social rungs, but they come with a corresponding number of responsibilities.

The names on this list are not meant to be a definitive list of real-world noble ranks, as the names of titles shift and change over time and by culture. Instead, they are suggestions to inspire. Each entry also includes variant titles of the same political level drawn from cultures both from the real world and from fantasy sources. GMs and players can of course select ranks that best fit a given campaign.

A WORD ABOUT WEALTH

The wealth benefit listed in the rank descriptions reflects the amount of ready coin the individual can access. Most of the funds generated by the estates, properties, and resources through taxes are used to pay for upkeep, wages, and development projects—as well as any tithes owed to higher-ranking nobles.

EMPEROR OR EMPRESS

The emperor and empress are the absolute ruler of an empire—which is a political unit often consisting of several kingdoms or nations. Where a king/queen might owe tribute to another monarch of equal rank or have their political power restrained by law or by a council of nobles, an emperor/empress has no such limitations. Often the title is hereditary, though not always, and the death of an emperor/empress often leads to dynastic struggles.

Responsibilities. As emperor or empress, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Approve treaties and agreements between kingdoms.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the realm.
- Put the needs of the empire above your own.
- See to the defense and management of the empire.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your nobles.
- Spend at least 11 months out of the year actively ruling.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 1,000 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of twelve knights, five wizards, three clerics, and two rogues. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow an artifact or a magic item with a rarity of up to legendary from the imperial treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 9th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

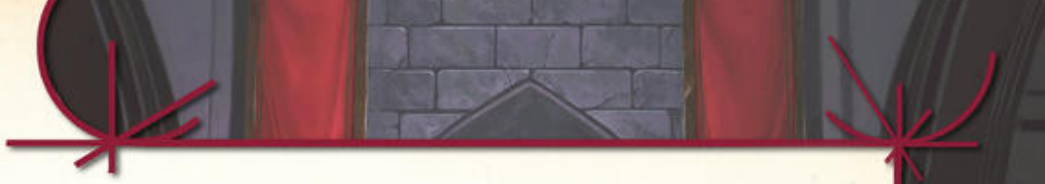
Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: bey, high king/high queen, huang di, imperator, kaiser, khagan/khatun, king of kings, maharaja, padishah/shahbanu, pharaoh (higher rank than king due to divinity), rana, shengshang, supreme religious leader (hierophant or patriarch), taewang, tianzi, tsar/tsarina.

KING OR QUEEN

The king and queen are rulers of a kingdom. While typically secular, many such rulers claim a link to the divine as the basis of their power. In many lands, they represent the highest rank, and lesser nobles swear oaths of fealty to them or to the throne itself. Depending on the government, they might possess absolute power or be subject to a council of peers or similar political structures. The title is hereditary, barring any outside intervention (such as invasion or rebellion).

Responsibilities. As king or queen, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Approve treaties and agreements between kingdoms.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the realm.



- Put the needs of the kingdom above your own.
- See to the defense and management of the kingdom.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your nobles.
- Spend at least 10 months out of the year actively ruling.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 500 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of eight knights, three wizards, three clerics, and two rogues. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to legendary from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 8th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: aga, archon, basileus, dornar, elder, emir/emira, exilarch, forestlord, forgefather, jarl, khan/khatun, konungr, malik, negus, overlord, praetor, raja, sheikh, sultan/sultana.

ARCHDUKE OR ARCHDUCHESS

Archduke and archduchess, also grand duke/duchess and grand prince/princess—these titles technically rank equal to that of a king, though still below an emperor. They denote the leader of a region that plays an important economic, military, political, or spiritual role in a society while not large enough to be a kingdom itself. Occasionally, the rank might be used by the head of a noble family that rules a land otherwise controlled by a different kingdom. The title might also be used by the eldest member of a bloodline that was once the ruling family but is no longer directly related to the current monarch. These titles are hereditary.

Responsibilities. As archduke or archduchess, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Approve treaties and agreements between kingdoms.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the realm.
- Put the needs of the kingdom above your own.
- See to the defense and management of the kingdom.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your nobles.
- Spend at least 10 months out of the year actively ruling.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 500 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of seven knights, two wizards, two clerics, and two rogues. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to very rare from the treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 7th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

PRINCE OR PRINCESS

The prince or princess is a member of a royal family, typically an acknowledged child of the current or recent monarch. This high-ranking title can be hereditary in a culture where there are many noble families. The titles of crown prince and crown princess are used to denote the heir apparent to the throne of a monarchy.

Responsibilities. As prince or princess, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Aid the monarch in managing the kingdom.
- Put the needs of the kingdom above your own.
- See to various diplomatic duties given by the monarch.
- Seek out an appropriate spouse for the stability of the realm.
- Spend at least eight months out of the year attending to royal duties.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 300 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of four knights, a wizard, a cleric, and a rogue. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to very rare from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 6th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: amir/amira, daegun, dauphin, furst, huang zi (taizi), mirza, morza, pasha/hatun, qin wang, rajkumar, sehzade, shinno/naishinno, tegin, tsarevich/tsarevna.

DUKE OR DUCHESS

The duke or duchess is the eldest member of a high-ranking noble family, ruling over a duchy, which is a large geographical area within a nation. Often among the most powerful figures in the land, they wield great political and military power. They are expected to keep and maintain a levy of troops to bring to the monarch's aid when summoned. The title is hereditary.

Responsibilities. As duke or duchess, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Approve treaties and agreements between nobles.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line.
- Put the needs of your duchy above your own.
- See to the defense and management of your duchy.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your vassals.
- Spend at least six months out of the year actively ruling.
- Train soldiers and deliver them to the monarch when ordered.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 200 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of three knights, two wizards, a cleric, and a rogue. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to very rare from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 6th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: ban/banno, bhra, boyar, doge/dogaressa, erzog, hertog/hertogin, ko-shaku/ko-shaku-fujin, kung chueh/nu kung, mushir/mushira, rao.

MARQUESS OR MARCHIONESS

The highest of the middle-ranking noble titles, a marquess or marchioness (or marquis/marquise) ranks higher than an earl/countess but lower than a duke/duchess. They traditionally act as military commanders and provincial leaders, maintaining the defense of the kingdom's borders. Their lands are often called marches, margravates, or marks. This rank is hereditary.

Responsibilities. As marquess or marchioness, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Approve treaties and agreements.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line.
- Put the needs of your land above your own.
- See to the defense and management of your lands and the kingdom's border.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your vassals.
- Spend at least five months out of the year actively ruling.

- Train soldiers and deliver them to the monarch when ordered.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 100 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of three knights, a wizard, a cleric, and a rogue. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to rare from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 5th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: count palatine (palsgrave), hou, hyeonhu, landsgrave/landsgravine, marcher lord, margrave (markgraf), mir, pfalzgraf, strategos, voivode.

EARL OR COUNTESS

A middle-ranking title, the earl (or count) or countess is a noble who rules over a province of a kingdom, usually not located on the border. While they exercise great power within their lands, they are bound by oaths of feudal service to higher-ranking nobles and ultimately the monarch. The title is hereditary.

Responsibilities. As earl or countess, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Approve treaties and agreements.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line.
- Put the needs of your land above your own.
- See to the defense and management of your lands.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your vassals.
- Spend at least four months out of the year actively ruling.
- Train soldiers and deliver them to the monarch when ordered.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 90 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of two knights, a wizard or a cleric, and a rogue. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to rare from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost,

destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.

- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 4th-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: atabey, azat, bo, boyar, comte, datu sadja, ealdorman, graf, greve, hakushaku, jarl, mankari, serdar, sheikh.

VISCOUNT OR VISCOUNTESS

A middle-ranking title that is higher than baron/baroness but lower than an earl/countess, the viscount or viscountess administers to provinces and other smaller regions within a kingdom. They sometimes possess lands of their own, called a viscountcy. It can be a non-hereditary position, often judicial in nature, or hereditary.

Responsibilities. As viscount or viscountess, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Approve treaties and agreements.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line, if the title is hereditary.
- Put the needs of your land above your own.
- See to the defense and management of your lands.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your vassals.
- Spend at least three months out of the year actively ruling.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 80 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of three knights and a wizard or a cleric or a rogue. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to uncommon from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 3rd-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: bey, burggraf, burgrave/burgravine, isiarll/isiarlles, starosta, tzu-chueh, vicomte/vicomtesse, visconte/vicontesse, zamindar, zi.

BARON OR BARONESS

The lowest of the middle-ranking titles of nobility, the baron or baroness rules over a fief or barony and is responsible for training a levy of soldiers. Barons are appointed by the monarch and usually swear fealty directly to the throne, as opposed to a higher-ranking noble. The title is hereditary.

Responsibilities. As baron or baroness, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Approve treaties and agreements.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line.
- Put the needs of your land above your own.
- See to the defense and management of your lands.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your vassals.
- Spend at least two months out of the year actively ruling.
- Train soldiers and deliver them to the monarch when ordered.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 70 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad of two knights and a cleric. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magical item with a rarity of up to uncommon from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.

- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 3rd-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: agha, danshaku, freiherr, hersir/hersirkona, khun, lendmann, namjak, nan, primor, rais, shaykh/shaykha, thane, thegn/hlaefdige.

BARONET OR BARONETESS

The highest of the low-ranking noble titles, the baronet or baronetess is a hereditary ruler of a baronetcy, which is a smaller territory than a barony. Though they are land holders and noble, their familial line began as commoners and are usually not considered by higher-ranking nobles to be true members of the peerage.

Responsibilities. As baronet or baronetess, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Approve treaties and agreements.
- Keep the peace among your vassals for the stability of the land.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line.
- Put the needs of your land above your own.
- See to the defense and management of your lands.
- Sit in judgment over issues brought to you by your vassals.
- Spend at least one month out of the year actively ruling.

Benefits. Estates and properties generate 20 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you gain the services of a squad that consists of a knight and three fighters. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can borrow a magic item with a rarity of up to uncommon from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.

- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 2nd-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: banneret or knight banneret (higher-ranking knight), edler herr, reichsritter.

KNIGHT OR DAME

One of the lower-ranked titles of nobility, knighthood is an honorary title granted by a noble of at least middle rank, usually for martial accomplishments or prowess. The title itself is not usually hereditary. Occasionally, a monarch raising someone to the rank of knight or dame also awards them lands, but this is not typical. They often form chivalric or military orders, groups based around common fighting styles and codes of behavior. These orders only admit those who meet certain criteria of skill and behavior, regardless of any bestowed title.

Responsibilities. As knight or dame, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- Defend the people from danger.

- Keep your gear and mounts presentable.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Put the needs of your liege lord above your own.
- Spend at least one month serving the throne or participating in tournaments.
- Train the next generation by taking on a squire.

Benefits. Among the suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Apart from the followers appropriate to your rank, you can call upon your fellows, gaining the services of a squad of two knights and three fighters. Each NPC has a CR equal to your PB. You can send the squad on personal quests, and after serving you for one month, the squad returns to their normal home of operations. You must wait six months before summoning them again.
- Once per month, you can request spellcasting services for up to 2nd-level spells (though you are expected to pay for expensive components).
- Once per year, you can borrow a magical item with a rarity of up to uncommon from the royal treasury. You must return the item within a month unless you choose to borrow the same item again. If the item is lost, destroyed, or has less than its full complement of charges, you are expected to reimburse the treasury.

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: aswaran, baghatur, baig, cataphract, chevalier, druzhinnik, equites, huskarl (housecarl), kheshig, mankari, ritter, samurai, tze, yunqiwei.

ENNOBLED (NOBLE LORD OR LADY)

The ennobled are the least of the lower-ranking titles and are often called nobles. Throughout history, this title went by a vast array of names, but in general, the term is a courtesy title given to landowners or those of a social level higher than a commoner. Anyone with a middle-ranking title or above can ennoble someone as a lord or lady, though a monarch usually confirms this appointment. The title doesn't necessarily come with lands, though if a monarch does bestow lands, the grant automatically comes with this title if a higher one hasn't been given. Often those holding governmental or judicial positions (such as mayors, judges, and sheriffs) are made nobles as part of their office. This title can be hereditary, such as various landowning families, but not in all cases.

Responsibilities. As a noble, you have the following duties and obligations:

- Answer any royal summons promptly.
- If you have lands, or businesses, you must have a trusted factor who will manage the day-to-day affairs. You must check in with your factor at least once per month.
- Pay taxes or tithes.
- Produce an heir for the stability of the family line.
- See to the defense and management of your lands if you have them.

Benefits. Estates and properties (if you have them) generate 10 gp per month. Among the other suggested perks of this title are the following:

- Once per month, you gain the services of a knight or fighter with a CR equal to your PB. They defend you to the best of their ability, and after serving you for one month, they return to their normal home of operations. You must wait two months before summoning them again.

Synonyms. A brief list of variant titles of equal rank: edelfrei, edler, enjiwei, herr, nobile.

1 NOBLE HEROES

A party of noble heroes receive medals for a successful mission.

None are immune to the allure of the road, and all—from the richest of nobles to the most ragged of groundskeepers—can hear its call. The grizzled army veteran contemplates selling her services for coin, and the lowly scullery lad dreams of defeating dread dragons. People from all walks of life pick up swords, spellbooks, or thieves' tools and take to the path of an adventurer. Within this chapter are new class options reflecting the peoples (lineages and heritages), the motivations (character threads), and the skills and abilities (subclasses) drawn from the courts and castle life.

KINGDOM CHARACTERS

This section presents character options springing from six major kingdom types—dwarven, elven, faerie, gnomish, halfling, and human. Each type describes new options to help inspire building characters that are thematic to any given people and in any setting.

As a brief overview, characters in the **Tales of the Valiant**™ roleplaying game derive from the four building blocks of lineage, heritage, background, and class (see *Player's Guide* for more information on these). A new option—called character

threads—is also presented in this chapter. All can be summarized as follows:

- Lineage is your biology, your hereditary traits and features.
- Heritage is your upbringing, elements you learned from your culture or community.
- Background is your training, your career prior to becoming an adventurer.
- Character threads are optional roles and motivations, what you do between (or during) adventures.
- Class is your occupation, what you do now as an adventurer.

DWARVEN KINGDOMS

The following heritage is rooted in dwarven communities but can be readily adapted elsewhere.

DEEPHALL HERITAGE

Deephall heritage characters were raised with the values and traditions of a scholarly dwarven order responsible for maintaining the complex genealogical web of clan culture.

Whether above or below ground, dwarves highly value family and political alliances within clans. While this fosters loyalty and cohesion within the community, the clans themselves tend to become insular and isolationist, so long ago, the dwarven rulers sought to strengthen the ties between the scattered clans, promoting alliances and more freely exchanging ideas and citizens. They turned to respected sages and scholars to keep the genealogical records of the clans and to facilitate communication between families, clans, and kingdoms. These dwarves were the first of the deephall sages. To this day, virtually every major dwarven community has an order of these sages responsible for recording history, tracking familial lines, and preserving dwarven culture.

Deephall communities work to maintain good relations between clans, operating as diplomatic envoys, and often dispatch agents to search for lost dwarven relics or artifacts. Though most members are dwarves, the orders sometimes recruit exceptional young scholars of other lineages to foster goodwill and cultural understanding. The deephall mark, a stylized tattoo of an upside-down tower that extends below the ground, is a symbol of trust and respect.

Archaic Knowledge. You gain proficiency in the History skill and with either artist tools or navigator tools. Double your PB for any ability check you make that uses that set of tools.

Diplomatic Knack. You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. In addition, if you fail a Persuasion check, you can reroll the check and use the new result. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your PB. You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Languages. You know Common, Dwarvish, and one additional language of your choice. Typical deephall heritage characters choose Undercommon.

ELVEN KINGDOMS

The following heritage is rooted in elven communities but can be readily adapted elsewhere.

SABLE HERITAGE

Sable heritage characters were raised with the traditions and values of the sable elves.

Long ago, when their kin turned to either sun or shadow, the sable elves instead fled. Largely shunned by other elven communities for their indecision, these elves now dwell in fortified communities scattered across the planes. Yet the sable elves alone still possess some of the ancient magics used by their forebears in the early ages of the world. Many are drawn to the sable elves to learn lore, magic, and skills now forgotten in the wider world.

The Court of Golden Oaks is the strongest holding of the sable elves in the ever-changing Shadow Realm and is a planar nexus of commerce between realms. Visitors flock there to trade, visit the College of the Acorn, or partake in the various tournaments, and each lends their cultural uniqueness to a more vibrant collective whole.

Though many raised in the Court of Golden Oaks remain within the city, others leave to travel and adventure. Some sable heritage characters seek new sable elf communities to continue their learning while others simply capitalize on what they learned at court.

Sage's Gift. You gain proficiency in two of the following skills of your choice: Arcana, History, Medicine, Nature, or Religion. In addition, you know the *prestidigitation* cantrip.

Tournament Training. You gain proficiency with construction tools or smithing tools. In addition, you gain proficiency with one type of martial weapon of your choice.

Language. You can speak Common, Elvish, and one language of your choice. Typical sable heritage characters choose Draconic or Sylvan.

FAERIE KINGDOMS

The following lineage and heritage are rooted in the planes and realms inhabited by the fey but can be readily adapted elsewhere.

BRIGHT FEY LINEAGE

In the realms of summer and night, the fey stand divided. The shadow fey inhabit the dusk and darkness of the Shadow Realm, hatching subtle and devious plots. In the Summer Lands, however, exist the bright fey, also known as the sidhe, seelie, or summer elves. Though related to the elves of the mortal world, these fey are as different from elves as elves are from humans. Tall, slender, and graceful, their movements are disturbingly fluid. Most tend to be incredibly beautiful with hair and skin colors in combinations of the summer shades of gold, silver, green, and red. The eyes of the bright fey can be of any color, but when viewed closely, they all sparkle with tiny flecks of light, like a pool of stars.

The bright fey have lived on their planes of summer and light for centuries untold, ever since the sundering of their people. Many flock to the various fey courts where they amuse themselves in the games of politics and favor. Others prefer a life closer to nature, inhabiting the wild places of the planes or the mortal world. Adventuring bright fey enjoy the risk and thrill of a more active life.

BRIGHT FEY LINEAGE TRAITS

Your bright fey character has certain hereditary traits dictated by their lineage.

Age. Although bright fey reach physical maturity around age 20, mental and emotional faculties reach full maturity around the age of 100. Bright fey can live to be 1,000 years old.

Size. Bright fey range from 5-1/2 to over 6 feet tall and tend toward slender builds, averaging around 100 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Magical Honesty. The magic in your blood makes you incapable of telling a direct lie without terrible pain. When you tell a direct lie, you are incapacitated with pain until the end of your next turn. This lifelong compulsion has taught you to expertly shade and bend the truth to suit your needs while avoiding the repercussions. You have advantage on one CHA (Deception or Persuasion) check to convince a creature you are telling the truth. You can use this a number of times equal to your PB. You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Path of Sunlight. When you are in an area of bright light, you can use an action to call on the magic in your blood and make your body shine like summer sunlight on a lake. Choose a number of creatures equal to your PB that are within 30 feet of you and that can see you. Each target must succeed on a CHA save (DC equal to 8 + your PB + your CHA modifier) or be compelled to look at you, suffering disadvantage on WIS (Perception) checks made to perceive any creature other than you, until the end of its next turn. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your PB. You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Magic Ancestry. You have advantage on saves against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Trance. Bright fey don't need to sleep. Instead, they enter a meditative trance state, remaining semiconscious for 4 hours a day. When you meditate, you always dream of the Bright Lands. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefit that other creatures do from 8 hours of sleep.

SIDHE HERITAGE

Sidhe heritage characters were raised among the intricate dance of bargains, favors, and trickery of the bright fey courts.

Widespread throughout the fey realms, bright fey lords rule many courts and cities, shepherding other fey and favored mortals in their golden halls. Ballads abound on the delights of their courts, where the glittering sidhe delight in art, music, and magic. The members of a sidhe court value cunning and loyalty, unless betrayal is necessary, and they place the intricate hierarchy of political favors above all else.

From without, the splendor of the courts appears a perfect society. But from an early age, sidhe heritage characters are raised to play the sometimes-deadly games inherent to the courts, and those lessons run deep. Sidhe courts and communities keep track of their members, both current and past, for once admitted into their number, no one ever truly escapes.

Bargain Bound. Though capricious, the sidhe never break a promise. If you enter into a bargain with another creature, you suffer two levels of exhaustion the moment you break it. Conversely, if you fulfill a promise or bargain, elation fills you for an hour after you fulfill it, giving you advantage on a number of ability checks, attack rolls, and saves of your choice equal to your PB for the duration. The bargain you make can't be for the sole purpose of gaining this benefit. While you can gain this benefit no more than once per day, there is no limit to how often you can suffer exhaustion from broken promises.

Mental Training. You gain proficiency in two of the following skills of your choice: Deception, Insight, Persuasion, or Sleight of Hand. In addition, you have advantage on any ability check made to discern the truth about an illusion.

Languages. You know Common, Sylvan, and one additional language of your choice. Typical sidhe heritage characters choose Elvish, Draconic, or Primordial.

GNOMISH KINGDOMS

The following heritage is rooted in gnomish communities but can be readily adapted elsewhere.

WHISPER HERITAGE

Whisper heritage characters are individuals who employ the teaching and training of the secretive spy organizations of the gnomes.

Gnomish communities exist mostly underground or in hidden or guarded enclaves within other kingdoms. To give them forewarning against the threats of the world, the gnomes employ guilds of secretive scouts and spies collectively known as whispers. The members of these groups are trained from an early age in the arts of stealth, intrigue, observation, and information gathering.

Whisper guilds are still found primarily in gnomish communities, but new guilds appear on the surface world with greater frequency—typically run by expatriated gnomes or those trained by them. These guilds provide training and resources, in the traditions of the whispers, taking in young people of any lineage and turning them into freelance spies, scouts, and agents in exchange for coin or other barter.

Whisper heritage characters value stealth, silence, and the intrinsic value of information. For these clandestine operatives, cunning and skullduggery are deeply respected skills, as is their pledge to never reveal the secrets of the guild.

Ally's Step. On your turn, if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of you, and the ally isn't incapacitated, you can move 5 feet without triggering opportunity attacks. When you do so, you can't move any farther this turn.

Observant. You gain proficiency in the Perception skill and in either the Stealth or Survival skill. In addition, you can't be surprised unless you are asleep or otherwise incapacitated.

Languages. You understand Common, Gnomish, and one additional language of your choice. In addition, whisper heritage characters understand Thieves' Cant.

HALFLING KINGDOMS

The following heritage is rooted in halfling communities but can be readily adapted elsewhere.

COURTFOLK HERITAGE

Courtfolk heritage characters were raised with the values and traditions of those who serve in courts, palaces, and castles, especially the courtfolk halflings from whom their name derives.

No court exists without the army of courtiers, servitors, clerks, ministers, chefs, and others who maintain and run the household, so of utmost importance to the courtfolk is being of service: it is an honor for them, a profound delight to be of benefit to others and perform a job to their utmost. Their dedication comes from loyalty and compassion, rather than fear or awe of the nobles they serve. They consider it their duty to take care of their patrons' needs, so those rulers and decision-makers can, in turn, be free to serve the country as a whole.

Courtfolk are a reserved community, in general, seldom discussing with others the importance of their roles. They find contentment in any reward, praise, or even an acknowledging nod from their patrons. Many devote their lives to a singular occupation, such as chamberlain, butler, chef, or herald. Others advance through the hierarchy of the court, striving to reach as high as possible. Courtfolk take in any and all with the willingness to serve. While they may maintain a detached, professional demeanor, they have a practical, down-to-earth attitude and greatly value the bonds of family and friends.

Eye for Trouble. You gain proficiency in the Insight and Perception skills. Double your PB for any ability check you make that uses Insight.

Servant's Invisibility. If you do not perform a visible action, speak, or otherwise draw attention for at least 1 minute, creatures nearby have trouble remembering you are even in the room. At the end of that minute and at the end of each minute where you continue to not perform a visible action, speak, or otherwise draw attention, each creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of you must succeed on a WIS save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB) or fail to notice you, acting as if you aren't present, for 1 minute or until you speak, perform a visible action (such as moving), or have someone draw attention to you. A creature within 5 feet of you automatically succeeds on this save.

Languages. You can speak Common, Halfling, and one additional language of your choice. Typical creatures of the courtfolk heritage choose Dwarvish or Elvish—or else the most prominent language used in the court where they began their life of service.

HUMAN KINGDOMS

The following heritage is rooted in human communities but can be readily adapted elsewhere.

MILITARY COHORT HERITAGE

Military cohort heritage characters were raised with the skills and traditions found in the baggage train of a large military force.

These hearty communities consist of followers, attendants, and family members whose lives revolve around supporting the warriors they follow. Sometimes referred to as baggage, or "tross," these people transport the supplies, drive the wagons, and generally keep up the camp of the army, using time-honed skills to maintain the horses and equipment of the fighting force at the peak of readiness.

From an early age, members of this heritage learn to set up tents, sharpen weapons, care for horses, and myriad other tasks. Almost every skill and craft are present among the tents, offering vast opportunities to learn. Though not expected to engage in open battle,

every member of a cohort receives instruction in combat as battle respects neither border nor propriety. Among these groups, knowledge, problem-solving, and patience are greatly respected skills.

Characters with this heritage might still be a part of a cohort or might have turned away from one. Perhaps the structured military life did not appeal. Perhaps the army that the character's cohort followed was wiped out, or perhaps some scandal drove the character away. No matter where a cohort heritage character goes, the lessons they learn among the tents and soldiers stay with them forever.

Armor Familiarity. It takes only half the normal time for you to don or doff a suit of armor.

Smattering of Skills. You gain proficiency in any two skills and with either smithing tools or tinker tools.

Languages. You speak Common and one additional language of your choice. Military cohort heritage characters are exposed to a wide variety of languages.

OTHER HERITAGES

The following heritages are less rooted in specific communities and can be used nearly anywhere.

BORDERWATCH HERITAGE

Borderwatch heritage characters spent their formative years on the fringes of civilization, holding back whatever forces encroached on the safety of the realm.

Families who share this heritage usually fall into one of two camps: those who were commissioned to settle in outposts beyond city limits and those who journeyed out to the frontier in efforts to distance themselves from political influence. Whether for a crown or against one, borderwatch communities recognize their duty as pioneers and strive to make the best of it.

Every member of a borderwatch community is a member of the local militia. From an early age, these people train in defending themselves and others, scouting the region for food and threats, and maintaining outpost fortifications. Because of these laborious expectations, few other communities can boast of being as tightly knit, self-reliant, and trusting of one another as borderwatch communities.

Frontier Vigilance. You gain proficiency in the Perception and Survival skills and with construction tools.

Makeshift Construction. As an action, using construction tools, you can erect a 5-foot-by-5-foot barrier in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you, provided there is some combination of suitable raw materials nearby. The barrier provides half cover for one Medium or smaller creature behind it, and it can't be moved. A barrier created with this feature is an object with an AC equal to 10 + your PB and 15 HP. It is immune to psychic and poison damage.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language of your choice. Typical borderwatch heritage characters choose whatever language is most frequently spoken in the nearest neighboring territory or region.

CROWNGUARD HERITAGE

A life of service, not in waiting but in shadow and steel: this and more is the sentinel's vow made for a character of crownguard heritage.

Sovereigns have set servants to perform all sorts of roles, both in public and private, though none is perhaps trusted so implicitly as the crownguard. While any knight or royal army officer might serve as bodyguard for a royal personage, crownguards train from adolescence on how to best serve their lords when they come of age—and until their dying breaths, whether that be by tasting a king's supper for poison or throwing themselves before an ill-fated crossbow bolt.

One of the best ways to defeat a nefarious plot is to allow it to nearly run its course and then strike from the shadows to defeat a penultimate blow from landing true. To best serve the crown—and to best remain unnoticed—crownguards train extensively in stealth, including how to move silently in armor.

Crown's Shadow. You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill. In addition, armor with the Noisy property doesn't impose disadvantage on Stealth checks for you.

Venom Exposure. You gain resistance to poison damage.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Typical crownguard heritage characters choose the language of the sovereign or royal line they are sworn to serve.

FOUNDLING HERITAGE

Whether abandoned by their original family or lost to them due to tragedy, characters with the foundling heritage found a new home and family they could depend on—or rather a new family found them.

A found family is a special thing that often, though not always, balances against the tragedy of one so young being lost in the first place. Many characters thrive in this arrangement, flourishing with those who choose them, even adopting new traditions—and quite possibly a new culture—and then paying it forward by finding new souls with which to grow. In no heritage is it truer that one need not share a common lineage with their family than that of a foundling.

Work with the GM during character generation to determine what unfortunate situation put the character in the position to be a foundling. Perhaps their original family was attacked in a raid, or perhaps their parents lost themselves in the Labyrinth. Or possibly, the extent of these details will come to be known as part of the adventure.

Finding Tradition. You gain proficiency in either the Insight or Investigation skill.

Kindred Spirits. As a bonus action, you can gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your PB. As long as you have at least one ally within 30 feet of you, this amount increases by 1 temporary hit point for each allied creature within 30 feet of you. The temporary hit points last for 1 minute. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Typical foundling characters choose a language spoken by whomever took them in when they were young.

GREAT HOUSE HERITAGE

Characters with the great house heritage have a real, if distant, claim to royal power—or at least to noble authority. The traditions and values of a great house heritage vary by house, for each house and family will cultivate the qualities they wish their scions to exemplify.

While great houses as organizations might have claims to authority and power in a realm, not all of their members can share in that wealth of station. A great house is made up of not only the house's main family, which often includes long ancestral lines of marriage and lineage both within the house and without it, but also retainers, servants, serfs, and any number of cousins and extended family.

Work with the GM to determine the name for the great house, their heraldic symbol, motto, location, and relevance to the campaign setting. How large is the great house, how many retainers, staff, and servants do they have, and how big is its army? These are questions that should be considered, at least vaguely. Does the

great house have rivals or enemies that want to see it destroyed or unseated from power? And do they have allies in other great or lesser houses, or are they on their own? A vulnerable house is just the sort of pivot point many great legends start on, spurring heroes on to escape tragedy—or to meet it.

Heraldic Studies. You gain proficiency in the History skill. When you make a History check related to your nation of origin, your family, or nobility in general, double your PB for the roll.

Noble Pursuits. You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill and with one type of martial weapon of your choice.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Typical great house heritage characters choose either Draconic or the primary language of an allied nation.

LESSER HOUSE HERITAGE

Noble houses rise and fall with generations of conflict, fortune, and political machinations. These unfortunate consequences put lesser houses in serfdom to great houses, placing characters with lesser house heritage in positions of obligation when a great house amasses armed forces for a conflict, makes a political display, or demands tribute in resources like food, livestock, and building materials. For this reason, relationships between characters of lesser house and great house heritages are as often fraught as they are friendly.

Work with the GM to determine the name for the lesser house, their heraldic symbol, motto, location, and relevance to the campaign setting. How does the lesser house fit in with local politics? To whom have they sworn fealty? All the questions posed to great house heritage characters should be considered here as well, at least vaguely. A final point to consider is that few lesser houses are content with their station for long. What aspirations does the house have? How does the character feel and respond to those aspirations if it comes time for the house to pursue them—with or without the character's participation?

House Loyalty. When you use the Help action to assist an ally, that ally gains 1 Luck. If that ally has the great house or lesser house heritage, you each gain 1 Luck. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Sworn Fief. You gain proficiency in shields and one weapon of your choice from the following: handaxe, javelin, mace, or spear.

Vassalage Duties. You gain proficiency in the Animal Handling skill.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Typical lesser house heritage characters choose either Draconic or the primary language of an allied great house or nation.

MERCANTILE HERITAGE

Mercantile heritage characters were raised with core values balanced on turning a profit and seeking out the next big venture. They might keep and manage a brick-and-mortar business within a kingdom's confines, serving the royal family or the public as bookkeepers, merchants, or bankers. Or perhaps they best honor their heritage by traveling from kingdom to kingdom to establish trade routes, act as economic ambassadors, and build their own wealth. Like nomads, mercantile heritage folk are no strangers to the rigors of travel, yet their own desire for the best deal can take them far and away from the comforts of cosmopolitan living.

Dealer's Art. You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill. In addition, goods and services cost 10 percent less for you as long as you are in good social standing with the locals.

Merchant's Knack. You add your PB to your STR score when determining your carrying capacity. In addition, your base movement speed increases by 5 feet.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Typical mercantile heritage characters choose a language used by those they trade with most frequently.

REBELLION HERITAGE

Characters with the rebellion heritage grew up learning the values of combatting tyranny and defying an unjust status quo. For this reason, few other characters have such a developed moral compass—or are as blind to their own actions when they stray from a path of justice.

Tyrannical empires, self-serving dictators, evil laws that benefit the few and unjustly punish the many: these sorts of things foment rebellion, not just of organized communities but of thought and ideology too. To rebel is to take back one's stolen freedoms and defy one's oppressors. But characters of the rebellion heritage don't just fight powers that try to keep them down. They also fight to save what they love, and they do so together, thick as thieves.

Arms of the People. You gain proficiency with improvised weapons. When you make an attack with an item that requires a save, such as alchemist's fire, you can use a save DC equal to 8 + your PB + your INT modifier instead of the item's inherent DC.

Tools of Defiance. You gain proficiency in the Deception skill and with thieves' tools.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Rebellion heritage characters can know Thieves' Cant in this way.

SOCIALITE HERITAGE

A character with the socialite heritage finds home not in any one place but rather among the many galas, fetes, and jubilees that nobles put on throughout the seasons. Brought up in the pageantry of noble get-togethers from an early age, socialites are well-versed in the popular dances, parlor fads, and dalliances with which nobles entertain themselves.

Socialite communities engage in a nonstop parade of activities, with each royal court and noble house trying to upstage the event that preceded it. This constant one-upmanship is all part of the "game," an elaborate and complicated social endeavor that has all participating noble parties engaging in social warfare. Houses both greater and lesser rise and fall in this game as individuals vie for power at any cost. And always present are the socialites, taking no small enjoyment in the spectacle and even participating themselves for their own social maneuvering.

Fashionable Fencer. You gain proficiency with your choice of either the dagger, scimitar, or rapier.

Latest Trends. You gain proficiency in the Performance skill and with one musical instrument or tool of your choice.

Life of the Party. When you make a check related to gossip, you can add your PB to the roll. If you have proficiency in a relevant skill or tool, double your PB for the roll.

Languages. You know Common and two additional languages. Typical socialite heritage characters choose the languages spoken by the noble houses in their region.

SUNCHILD HERITAGE

Characters with the sunchild heritage reject the trappings of metropolitan society and industry, and they reject all the notions of crown and court. For a sunchild, all they need is the light's warmth, the land's bounty, and the freedom to live how they wish, rather than how someone decrees. The first sunchild communities struck out on their own, rebelling in their way against regents they did not agree with and laws they decided weren't for them. Out in the wild, within the reach of the sun's rays, these communities found their new way, in harmony with their surroundings. Sunchild heritage communities toil independently, enjoying the boundless hope they find in forging a new path.

Heartglow. While in bright light, you can add your PB to initiative checks, and you are resistant to the frightened condition.

Natural Knowhow. You gain proficiency in your choice of one of the following skills: Medicine, Nature, or Survival.

Languages. You know Common and one additional language. Sunchild heritage characters can know Druidic in this way.

WARCHILD HERITAGE

Warchild heritage characters have been displaced by large-scale conflict, typically growing up in a community separate from their place of origin, often in a faraway location, where they might work to keep their traditions alive or instead adopt those of the new community.

This can apply to any individual or group of people that have been driven from their place of origin by war, colonization, or similar action beyond their control. Entire communities that are displaced often have a shared history, and they endeavor to retain some semblance of their culture, skills, and traditions, despite the circumstances. Individuals can often trace their histories to before the displacement—and the cultural touchstones that come with it—but the new communities might also develop their own culture, growing from the shared histories and experiences of those involved.

Characters with this heritage should consider their ancestors, whether by lineage or heritage. Work with the GM to determine some details during character generation, including where they originated and why they are where they are now. Perhaps a syderean character can trace their roots back to another plane of existence entirely, or perhaps a halfling character's family has had to move from one nation to another. Perhaps the character knows very little about their situation at the start of their adventure, and finding out their personal history becomes a part of their journey.

Elder's Gift. You gain proficiency with a set of tools of your choice. Double your PB for any ability check you make that uses them.

Old Ways. You have proficiency in your choice of one of the following skills: Animal Handling, History, or Medicine.

Languages. You know Common and two additional languages. Typical warchild heritage characters choose a language spoken by a people influential to the warchild's community during their displacement and one language spoken in their community's native country or plane of origin.

CHARACTER THREADS

Normally, backgrounds reflect a character's training—what came before they ever began adventuring—and they provide various related bonuses such as proficiencies and equipment. For many characters though, a background remains an element relegated to their past. It may occasionally impact a campaign, but it mostly serves the important functions of roleplaying fodder and thematic color. A character might occasionally use something from their background as an adventurer, but it doesn't build from there, doesn't evolve.

On the other hand, what if a defining element, similar to a background, could continue to develop and even change over the course of a character's adventuring career?

Character threads are the occupations, positions, and situations a character might deal with while they continue to go on quests and battle foes. Though similar to backgrounds, these character threads are less about what a character did before becoming an adventurer and more about what the character does in their "downtime" while adventuring. It could be tied to their background, but it doesn't have to be.

Perhaps the character is appointed ambassador to a neighboring country or elevated to the position of minister in a royal court. Or perhaps a character with a noble background learns their family has been cheated out of their fortune and is now impoverished.

Threads are aspects added to characters at any time during their career that have specific short-term or long-term goals and that reward the characters with new features and abilities as they achieve milestones toward that goal. Once the endpoint of a thread is achieved, new threads can be applied as they occur during the campaign. The example threads presented here can be applied directly to characters or simply used as inspiration to create new ones specific to a campaign.

ELEMENTS OF A CHARACTER THREAD

All character threads establish a specific goal as well as thematic milestones that the character must reach in order to achieve that goal, and each new milestone unlocks a new benefit or feature. When the specific goal is ultimately accomplished, the character can change their thread to a new one (see **Adding or Abandoning New Threads**). A character can have only one thread at a time.

When adopting a thread, a certain amount of personalization is required to fit the milestones to the goal at hand and to the overall direction of the campaign. Players should work with their GMs to adjust the goal and milestones for their thread as described below.

Goal. All threads begin with a goal determined by the player. This might be an element chosen from the list of adventuring motivations from the character's background, or it might be created by the player. The goal helps to guide the creation of the thread's milestones and should thematically fit with the character and with the nature of the campaign.

More importantly, the goal should be a specific, achievable objective, something the character hopes to accomplish in the future. The more specific this goal, the better, for this will ease the creation of its milestones.

Milestones. With the goal in hand, the milestones must be decided. These are events of personal achievement or significance. They act as obstacles or thresholds on the path to reach the thread's goal. A thread isn't restricted in its number of milestones, but four is recommended. On achieving each milestone, a benefit is unlocked, depending on its ranking—least, lesser, greater, superior (see **Milestone Benefits**).

While the goal or motivation of a thread is specific, milestones usually are not. This allows the GM some flexibility in applying them to individual campaigns. Each thread description includes a few example milestones, but there are no strict rules about what a milestone might be or when it can occur.

Milestones can even change as the path toward the character's goal shifts. The player and GM might even retroactively determine that an unexpected event counts as a milestone to that thread's goal. Ultimately, this should be worked out with the GM, agreeing on applicable milestones and determining how (and when) they are achieved.

Spacing Milestones. When creating or adding a thread to a character, decide with the GM how long (in theory) it should take to reach the goal. This might depend on the scope or length of the campaign and on the nature of the thread. An impoverished noble thread, for example, might be quite short, ending when a certain wealth threshold is reached. Conversely, the illegitimate scion thread might only end when the character is adopted into a new family, an event which could take 20 levels.

Once the length of the thread is determined, add in the milestones, spacing them out evenly in terms of levels.

Milestone Benefits. The four ranks of milestones—least, lesser, greater, superior—have recommended level ranges that serve as guides for determining the types of benefits a character receives. Threads can have multiple milestones of the same rank. A few sample benefits are listed in the **Milestone Recommended Levels** table.

MILESTONE RECOMMENDED LEVELS

Milestone Rank	Class Level	Types of Benefits
Least	1–4	Tool, skill, or language proficiency; useful contact or a deal with a merchant; common magic item; or minor magic ability or charm that is usable once.
Lesser	5–10	Expertise in a skill; gifted a house or owed a favor; uncommon magic item; or spell of 2nd level or lower (usable once per long rest).
Greater	11–16	Talent; gifted a castle, knighthood, or noble title; rare magic item; or spell of 5th level or lower (usable once per long rest).
Superior	17–20	Boon; married into royal family or appointed important court position; very rare magic item; or spell of 8th level or lower (usable once per long rest).

Characters should generally earn only one benefit for each milestone unlocked, but GMs can always choose to reward additional benefits.

SAMPLE MILESTONE PROGRESSION

Variety Higglesworth, a courtfolk heritage smallfolk (halfling), begins her career with the courtier background and the royal champion thread. Variety's player chooses a goal, "I must defeat the Gray Knight who slew my monarch."

Working with the GM, the player determines that this thread should only go to 10th level, or thereabouts, because after that the campaign might shift away from the area where the Gray Knight operates. They create four milestones that can lead Variety to that final confrontation with her foe, plus benefits for each of those milestones:

- Uncover the identity of the Gray Knight. (Least: gain proficiency in Investigation skill.)
- Defeat an important minion of the Gray Knight. (Least: an unlocking charm usable once per day.)
- Find the magic needed to bypass the knight's armor. (Lesser: gain a *+1 weapon* made from a special material.)
- Defeat the Gray Knight. (Lesser: gain a favor from the new monarch.)

This progression assumes a 10-level arc, but threads can be as long or as short as the GM wishes. Shorter range goals merely require fewer milestones.

NINE CHARACTER THREADS

This section describes nine sample threads from which to choose. Though these threads presume a long arc of milestones, reaching from 1st level all the way to 20th level, they can be adjusted for shorter arcs by reducing the number of milestones or by reducing their spacing.

If a more personalized approach is preferred, simply use the structure of the provided threads as inspiration for creating new threads.

ADDING OR ABANDONING NEW THREADS

Threads give characters another way to show how they change and grow over the course of a campaign. When a thread is completed, or even abandoned, characters can adopt a new thread to reflect the altering events of the story. Having proven themselves to their estranged parent, for example, a character with the illegitimate scion thread now looks to rebuild the family fortune. That illegitimate scion thread might shift then to that of the impoverished noble thread. The player and GM should agree when circumstances are correct for a new thread, but the GM has the final say.

When adding new threads, the character retains all milestone benefits of previous threads. When abandoning a thread (that is, relinquishing it before achieving its stated goal), the character loses all of the thread's milestone benefits already gained. Those features were temporary benefits that didn't become permanent because the character's focus changed, leaving the source of those features unresolved.

AMBASSADOR

Bearing the faith and trust of their monarch or patron, the ambassador travels to distant kingdoms to negotiate treaties, secure important mercantile contracts, and advance the interests of their lands. These envoys often, but not always, hold a high rank in their government and bear documents proving their status. If assigned to an embassy in a foreign land, the ambassador usually ranks higher than the other diplomats on station or else stands outside the hierarchy of that posting.

With your monarch's approval, you have been named as an ambassador. This is a sign of utmost trust and an honor, carrying with it the greatest of weights. Perhaps this is a permanent assignment to an embassy and amounts to little more than exile, or perhaps it is a short-term posting of critical importance. No matter how you find yourself in this position, you have the duty and responsibility as an elite agent of your land.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Ambassador's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

AMBASSADOR'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	Exiled to a foreign land for a crime I didn't commit, I will prove my innocence.
2	I must get the various sides to agree on a critical treaty.
3	I must stop an evil cult from turning our allies against us.
4	I will bring the enlightenment of my land to these foreign shores.
5	The individuals manipulating events from behind the scenes must be revealed and stopped.
6	Using my position as cover, I will find a hidden, ancient relic and return it to my monarch.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone of this thread, you gain the following benefit.

Silver Tongue. When you fail a Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion check, you can reroll the check and take the higher result. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Diplomatic Immunity. If you are accosted or arrested for a crime, you can make a DC 15 CHA (Deception or Persuasion) check to call upon your envoy status to attempt to avoid punishment. The DC for this check is adjusted based on the severity of the crime, relations

OPTIONAL RULE: CHANGING BACKGROUNDS

Much like threads, backgrounds can be considered as a second occupation that a character has when they aren't adventuring. A PC might be an adventuring ranger, but they are also an adherent, for example, or some other background (see *Player's Guide* for more on backgrounds). Viewed in this way, it is reasonable for a character to have the option of changing their background to a new one.

This shift should usually come from an important milestone in a character's story. For instance, the aforementioned ranger might sign on to fight in the army of a charismatic king, signaling a shift from the adherent background to the soldier background.

When changing from one background to another, a character retains only the languages and starting equipment of the previous background plus one skill, tool proficiency, or talent (player's choice), losing all other aspects of the background. The character immediately gains the starting benefits of the new background except for any starting equipment or talents. These adjustments represent the character's change in focus and their dedication to the new background.

with your land, and your reputation as ambassador (see **Diplomatic Immunity Modifiers** table). The GM has the final determination on the success or failure of this check.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 1d6 days before you can use it again.

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY MODIFIERS

DC	Modifier
Severity of Crime	
+1	Minor crime (such as disturbing the peace or public drunkenness)
+2	Medium crime (such as assault, brawling, or theft under 100 gp)
+3	Major crime (such as murder, theft over 100 gp, or use of destructive magic)
Nation's Relations with the Ambassador's Land	
+2	Enemies
0	Neutral
–2	Allies
Ambassador's Reputation	
+2	Loathed
0	Neutral or Unknown
–2	Respected

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Incite Reaction. You can convince a creature to make a hasty decision and act against its better judgment. As an action, choose one creature within 60 feet that can hear you. The target must succeed on an INT save (DC equal to 8 + your PB + your CHA modifier) or be affected by your choice of one of the following effects:

- ***Flinch.*** The target uses its reaction to leave an opening in its defenses. The next attack on the target has advantage.
- ***Hesitate.*** The target uses its reaction to pause and rethink its strategy. It has disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.
- ***Swerve.*** The target uses its reaction to move a distance you select (up to its speed) in the direction of your choice.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Requisition. While within your assigned land, you can make use of the forces and supplies sent by your monarch. At the end of every 30 days of your character's appointment, you can choose one of the following:

- Borrow a rare or very rare magic item (GM's discretion).
- Gain the service of 1d4 knights or veterans.
- Withdraw funds equaling 3,000 gp × your PB.

At the end of the following month, you are required to release the knights/veterans and return the magic item. You aren't expected to refund the gold. Once you use this feature, you must wait 30 days before you can use it again.

COURT ARTIST

Driven by creativity and passion, court artists labor for years to perfect their craft, delighting the wealthy and powerful with their visions of the world as seen through the medium of their art. Now they stand in a respected position in the court of their patron.

As a court artist, your renown can spread far and wide, causing some to view you with awe and others with only jealousy. Perhaps you scheme to use this new position to better your station or to achieve some hidden goal for a mysterious patron. Perhaps this is your true calling, and the adventuring you do is merely to acquire rare and fabulous components for your art. No matter how you reach this state, your relentless practice, eye for detail, and creative spirit will prove indispensable.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Court Artist's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

COURT ARTIST'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	I will secure my social position, so I never return to my life in poverty.
2	If my art touches enough people, my deity will take me as their own.
3	Making art is enjoyable, but I intend to use it to accumulate a massive fortune. (choose amount)
4	My masterpiece will be the greatest ever created and will be displayed in the royal court.
5	Only through my art can I gain access to the nobles who wronged me.
6	Using my station as a cover, I can infiltrate the cult seeking to harm my monarch.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone of this thread, you gain the following benefits.

Artistic Focus. You gain proficiency in the Perform skill and with your choice of either a musical instrument or a set of tools. Double your PB for any ability check you make that uses that instrument or set of tools.

ART PRICES

Art is a subjective medium, and what one person might value, another might not. When a PC creates or performs their art during downtime, they can earn gold for their efforts.

Where this fee originates depends greatly on the PC's type of art. If they are an artist who creates a physical object (such as a painter or sculptor), the fee they earn comes from selling that art. If they perform their art (such as a musician or dancer), the fee is their share of proceeds from ticket sales or from "passing the hat." When in doubt, the fee can come from the donation of a wealthy patron of the arts.

To ease gameplay, a general list of average art prices is listed:

- **Apprentice** (least milestone), 50 gp.
- **Journeyman** (lesser milestone), 500 gp.
- **Master** (greater milestone), 2,500 gp.
- **Grandmaster** (superior milestone), 5,000 gp.

Working Artist. After spending at least 7 days creating a piece of art, you can perform it or sell it, earning twice the normal price for the piece. Once you use this feature, you must wait 30 days before using it again.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Artistic Scrying. As an action, you touch one piece of art that you created, altered, or restored—or the instrument or set of tools that you use—creating a mystical link to that artwork. The link remains in effect for 7 days and doesn't require concentration. The link is immune to effects that detect the presence of magic, but it is visible to creatures with truesight as a luminous thread, stretching between you and the artwork.

The link has three charges. As long as you are on the same plane of existence as the piece of art, you can use an action and expend 1 charge. For the next 10 minutes, you can see and hear through the artwork as if you were in its space. Using the link in this way requires concentration as if you were maintaining a spell. At the end of the 7 days, or after you use all 3 charges, the link is severed, and the effect ends.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 7 days before using it again.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Advantageous Reputation. You can leverage your towering reputation in order to influence others. As an action, you can attempt to influence a Humanoid you can see within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a WIS save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB) or be charmed by you for 1 hour or until you or your companions do anything harmful to it.

The charmed creature regards you as a celebrity and is eager to accommodate your reasonable requests. While the charmed creature won't break the law for you, it will bend it. When the effect ends, the creature is immune to your Advantageous Reputation for 7 days but doesn't bear any ill-will toward you if your interaction with it was peaceful.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Grandmaster's Enlightenment. You can call upon your creative prowess to inspire your companions. As an action, you can inspire each creature of your choice that can hear or see your art and that is within 60 feet of it. Each target gains a bonus equal to your PB to the next attack roll, save, or skill check it makes before the start of your next turn. If your art is a physical medium, such as a painting or sculpture, you can verbally reference your past works to achieve the same effect.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

COURT WIZARD

A court wizard has a difficult and unenviable position in the court of a monarch. It is their responsibility to not only advise their patron on arcane matters but to also protect both monarch and kingdom from magical attacks and use their powers to scry for threats and to destroy foes. Despite the weight of these tasks, or because of it, they have a position of honor and are often feared.

Perhaps you rose to become court wizard through decades of trial and tribulation, or perhaps you were the only one qualified left standing. Perhaps you are not even a wizard! Any spellcaster can potentially earn the title. Either way, the position is yours whether you are ready for it or not. Court wizards often have a close relationship with their monarch, but it need not always be so. You might have the best interests of the kingdom as your goal, you might be working to destroy it all, or you might simply just wish to be left alone to conduct your experiments.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Court Wizard's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

COURT WIZARD'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	Extraplanar threats loom over my nation, and I must find a way to seal the portals between worlds.
2	I must become powerful enough to face the wizard in the employ of our enemies.
3	I shall find the ancient and powerful artifact magically hidden somewhere in the castle.
4	I must uncover and prevent a rumored assassination planned for my monarch.
5	The recent rise of monsters must be stopped at the source.
6	War is upon us, and my spells will assure our victory.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Arcanium. You have a dedicated area to conduct your magical experiments and arcane research. This could be a high tower, a secret dungeon beneath the castle, or a cozy hut on the palace grounds. While you work in your arcanium, you have advantage on all checks made during downtime that are related to researching, crafting items, scribing scrolls, and learning new spells.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Clandestine Casting. You have learned to use your arcane powers in the middle of crowds without attracting notice. As a bonus action, you can set yourself up to cast a spell clandestinely. The next spell you cast before the start of your next turn is very hard to discern without magical means.

Creatures attempting to spot your casting must succeed on a WIS (Perception) check against your spellcasting DC. If the spell you are casting has two or fewer components, creatures have disadvantage on the check.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Esoteric Arcana. Your access to visiting dignitaries and ambassadors allows you to uncover secrets unavailable to most mages. Choose three spells of a circle you can cast from any source's spell list. If the spells don't appear on your class's associated source list, they are now considered to be on that source list for you.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Mage Coterie. Your arcanium hosts a number of lower-level spellcasters equal to your PB. These apprentices can conduct downtime activities while you are adventuring or otherwise occupied, halving the time it would ordinarily take to accomplish that activity. The chosen downtime activity must be related to researching, crafting items, or scribing scrolls.

In addition, you can call upon your coterie to aid you with a specific task for up to 30 days. When you do so, you gain the service of two **mages** who accompany you and follow your orders to the best of their abilities. When the task is complete, the mages return to the arcanium.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 30 days before you can use it again.

COURTIER

Whether advisor, companion, hanger-on, or patron, the role of a courtier is one of unlimited potential. Some courtiers are insincere flatterers whose ambition never extends past the next pleasure. Others play the endless games of intrigue and backstabbing so common among the gentry. There are also courtiers who are patriots,

using their connections to better the lives of the common people, foster the development of education and the arts, or otherwise protect the national interest.

As a courtier, you come from a noble or wealthy family, or you have otherwise impressed your monarch with your deeds and prowess. You might accept the position to better your social situation or to further the aims of you and your companions. You might do so to gain access to resources or individuals untouchable by the common adventurer. What you learn as a member of court will serve you in the realm of politics and intrigue as well as a sword upon the battlefield.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Courtier's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

COURTIER'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	I will become the monarch's favorite.
2	I will bring about the downfall of my rival courtier.
3	Only by playing these political games can I stop the war that is looming.
4	The hidden threat to my monarch must be exposed and stopped.
5	There are spies among us, and they must be unmasked.
6	Using the resources at court, I can finally get to the bottom of these murders.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone of this thread, you gain the following benefits.

Polyglot's Knack. You know three languages of your choice.

Royal Stipend. At the end of every 30 days, you receive a gift from your monarch for your ongoing service. Choose one of the following:

- Finely crafted piece of nonmagical equipment.

Pouch containing a number of gems (worth 50 gp each) equal to your PB.

- *Potion of healing* or a common magic item (GM's discretion).

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Ear for Gossip. At court, knowledge is a better currency than gold or jewels, and you have trained yourself to always keep an ear open for the latest tidbits of scandal and slander. You can spend 1 hour mingling in a crowd and gathering information. This can be in a tavern, town marketplace, the deck of a sailing ship, or the high halls of the palace. At the end of the hour, you must make a DC 15 WIS (Perception) check. On a success, you overhear information (GM's discretion) pertaining to an ongoing quest, a known enemy, a lost treasure, or some other bit of lore. The information you overhear may not be what you expect, but it must be useful.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 7 days before you can use it again.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Rhetorical Duelist. You have learned well from the duels of wit and language waged between courtiers. When you speak publicly in front of a gathering of at least 10 people, you have advantage on Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks.

In addition, your relentless rhetoric exhausts those who face you in verbal combat. When a creature publicly debates or argues with you, that creature must make a CHA save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB). If you are proficient in Persuasion, you can add double your PB to the DC. On a failure, the creature gains one level of exhaustion. Once you use this feature in this way, you can't use it in this way again until you finish a long rest.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Subtle Support. The lessons of court have taught you how to lend your assistance to an ally without interrupting your other activities. You can take either the Help or Ready action as a bonus action. If you use the Ready action in this way, you can't use it to make an attack or cast a spell.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

GENTLEMAN BANDIT

Though you were born to wealth and nobility, you have never been ignorant of the plight of the less fortunate. Perhaps you tried to work within the system to better the lives of others, but time and again, you witnessed cruelty and injustice at the hands of the so-called upper class. No more. Putting your skills, daring, and confident charm to the task, you take matters into your own hands to redress the balance. Typically, each gentleman bandit has one specific noble or group of upper-class families they target.

As a gentleman bandit, you seek to take the rich and noble down a peg or two by robbing them of what they clearly value most: their wealth. Perhaps you take to the roads as a highwayman. Perhaps upper-story thievery is your preference. You might even use your other career as an adventurer to stop their plots and plans wherever you come across them. Every caper, every robbery, is a stage for your glib wit and your daring showmanship.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Gentleman Bandit's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

GENTLEMAN BANDIT'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	I gather followers with each escapade, and soon my rebellion will overthrow the corrupt throne.
2	I will become the most famous thief ever, and my poster will be in every city—and the nation's highest bounty on my head. (choose amount)
3	I will rob the rich to support the poor during the current crisis.
4	My blade and daring keep the evil baron's plots in check, and one day, I will end his plots for good.
5	My capers will continue until the usurper king is thrown down.
6	With every robbery, I hope to coax out my rival to face me at last.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Unsettling Quip. There are few who can wield their wit as sharply as you. This feature has 3 charges, and you regain all expended charges when you finish a long rest.

You can spend a charge as a bonus action to force a creature within 30 feet of you to make a CHA save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB). On a failure, the first attack against that target, by someone other than you, before the start of your next turn has advantage.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Poised Overconfidence. Your self-confidence and surety carry you forward where others might fail. A creature that tries to use Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion on you has disadvantage on the check.

In addition, if you fail a WIS save, you can choose to succeed instead. Once you use this feature in this way, you must wait 2 days before you can use it again.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Stand and Deliver. You can call out to a group of creatures, insisting they agree to your demands. As an

action, choose a number of creatures of your choice (equal to half of your PB) within 60 feet that can see and hear you. Each target must succeed on a CHA save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB) or be charmed by you for 1 minute. You must maintain concentration on this effect as if it was a spell. While charmed by this effect, a creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. The effect ends for a charmed creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its shock.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Nom de Plume. You are so accustomed to separating your banditry from the rest of your life that you begin to think of yourself as two different individuals. You are immune to magic that allows other creatures to read your thoughts, determine whether you are lying, know your alignment, or discern your location. In addition, you have advantage on WIS saves.

ILLEGITIMATE SCION

Born on the wrong side of the sheets, the illegitimate scion is one step removed from nobility or inheritance. These individuals typically exist at the edges of their social class, standing in the shadows of privilege, wealth, and power. Often they can tackle jobs and situations unsuited to their more advantaged siblings and cousins. Some characters are born with the knowledge of their status, and others discover it later in life.

This state's importance depends greatly on your social and economic lifestyle and on the culture you come from. Perhaps you yearn for the acknowledgement of your important family, perhaps you have such acceptance but are treated as inferior to your other relatives, or perhaps you simply don't care. Regardless, you carry the weight of the circumstances of your unique status on your shoulders.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Illegitimate Scion's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

ILLEGITIMATE SCION'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	By accomplishing a great deed, I will finally receive the acceptance of my family.
2	Disinherited by the revelations of my birth, I must regain my position in society.
3	I must discover which powerful individual is my birth parent.
4	I must prove my loyalty to my family by succeeding at a task no one else can do.
5	I will destroy each and every member of this corrupted family.
6	I will escape from this blood-soaked family and make it so they can never find me again.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone, you gain the following benefits.

Educated Lexicon. You know an additional language of your choice.

Noble Contact. Though not acknowledged by your own family, you have insight into the interconnected world of wealthy merchants and nobility. You can capitalize on this knowledge in the following ways:

- With 1 hour of preparation in an urban area, you can locate a merchant who has an item for which you are searching. Because of your proximity to nobility, the merchant will offer a 10 percent discount on the price of the item.
- With 1 hour of preparation, you can make contact with a member of the local nobility. This allows you to gain access to locations or individuals not usually reachable by the general population.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 7 days before you can use it again.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefits.

Kindred Aid. Once every 30 days, you receive a stipend (500 gp × your PB), or an uncommon magic item of equal value, from a sympathetic relative.

Rally Ally. You can use an action to encourage a friendly creature within 60 feet of you. When you do so, the creature can remove one condition afflicting it. The condition can be blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Charismatic Aura. With or without the acknowledgement of your family, your innate nobility shines through for all to see. Whenever you or a friendly creature within 10 feet of you makes a WIS (Insight) or CHA (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check, the creature gains a bonus to the check equal to half your PB.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Scion's Strike. The blood of heroes runs through your veins, inspiring you to deeds unmatched by others. You can make one weapon attack or cast one spell as a bonus action.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

IMPOVERISHED NOBLE

Once, the impoverished noble's family was rich and powerful with every imaginable comfort at their disposal and unlimited prospects. That was the past. Perhaps the downfall came from an invasion or plague or from the machinations of ancestral rivals. Perhaps the family earned some disgrace or exile—or execution. Perhaps the fault lies solely on a family member. Whatever the reason, despite the family once being noble and rich, today they have what they carry.

As an impoverished noble, you may be seeking a way to rebuild your fortunes. You could be out for revenge against the individual or group who brought your family low. The redemption of your noble name might be your goal, or you might just seek to distance yourself from the shame of your past. Perched as you are between prosperity and poverty, you have learned from both worlds, and the future is yours.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Impoverished Noble's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

IMPOVERISHED NOBLE'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	Among the items stolen from my family is an ancestral artifact, and I must recover it.
2	Honor demands I redeem my family name.
3	I must erase all record of my past.
4	I will restore my family fortune to be greater than it ever was.
5	I will use my disgrace to rob the corrupt nobles who caused it.
6	The ones who stole my fortune will all pay for their crimes.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Accomplished Haggler. You know how to stretch your coin to cover shortfalls and how to get the most out of a deal. When you negotiate with a merchant or prospective employer, you can make a DC 15 CHA (Persuasion) check. On a success, you can add or subtract half again as much as you were offered on your deal. For example, if a patron offered you 1,000 gp for slaying a monster, you could succeed on this feature to increase that payout to 1,500 gp.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 7 days before you can use it again.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Etiquette and Protocol. Though your fortunes are diminished, you are still adept at navigating the social circles of the rich and elite. You have advantage on CHA (Deception and Persuasion) checks when interacting with nobles and members of the upper classes.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Familial Gift. A distant relative or old friend of the family, having heard of your troubles, pledges their support and sends you a token to aid you in your quest. Choose one of the following gifts:

- A coffer containing a number of gems (worth 1,000 gp each) equal to your PB.
- An ancestral family heirloom equivalent to a rare magic item (GM's discretion).
- The services of an attendant (**spy**) for 60 days, who has important information regarding your family, their lost fortune, or your family's status.

After you use this feature, you must wait 60 days before you can use it again.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Noble Condemnation. Summoning up your ancestral pride and imperious spirit, you lash out at your foes, demoralizing them with your words. As an action, choose a number of creatures (equal to your PB) within 60 feet that can hear you. Each target must succeed on a WIS save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB) or be frightened of you until the start of your next turn. While the creature is frightened in this way, attacks against it have advantage.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

MINISTER

When a church or other religious organization needs a leader to oversee a community of the faithful or to manage the operation of a specific temple, they appoint a minister. This individual doesn't need to be a cleric or even religious, though they typically are one or both of these things. A minister performs certain ceremonies and religious rituals, but the greater part of their role is to see to the day-to-day needs of the priests within their community. In the court of a monarch, the minister handles the business of the church: sitting in judgment on religious tribunals, making deals for the church, and managing the exchange of goods needed for services.

As a minister you have the well-being of the religious community in your hands, be it a pastoral temple or the bishop's household within the court of your monarch.

You could be a spiritual person who sees this role as a way to honor your god. You might view the ministry as a cunning way to make a few coins off the corrupt priesthood. The job may even be an avenue to secure hidden lore from within the church. No matter how you came to this honorable and respected position, you have your feet firmly planted in the halls of power, both secular and divine.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Minister's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

MINISTER'S GOALS

d6	Goal
1	A false prophet lures away my flock, so I shall expose the demon hiding in sheep's clothing.
2	Hidden somewhere within the royal cathedral is the ancient relic I must find.
3	I defend my monarch from the machinations of the cult of an evil deity and won't stop until that cult is vanquished.
4	My divine task is to convert the heads of state to the worship of my deity.
5	No one is as gullible as the faithful, so I'll milk this community of every coin. (choose amount)
6	With attendance waning, I must reignite the faith of the community until the temple is full every worship day.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone of this thread, you gain the following benefit.

Skilled Negotiator. A significant part of your job is to talk to everyone from ambassadors to merchants to clergy. You gain proficiency in the Persuasion skill, and you learn two languages of your choice.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Gift of the Gods. Your efforts on behalf of your community have won some approval. Choose one of the following benefits:

- Choose a single spell of a circle you can cast from any source's spell list. If it doesn't appear on your class's associated source list, it is now considered to be on that source list for you, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you know or can prepare.
- Gain proficiency in one weapon of your choice.
- Whenever you finish a short or long rest, you gain 1 Luck.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Extensive Contacts. Thanks to your network of relationships within the wider religious world, you can arrange for a wide variety of church services, given enough time. This need not even be in your own religion, but it should be something within reason given the nature of your clergy and faith.

When you use this feature, decide on the specific need you wish to fulfill. This could be borrowing a relic, arranging for entry to a location to which clergy might have access, spellcasting services, or even resurrecting a fallen companion. Work with your GM to determine how long it takes to accomplish the task and what it might cost.

Typically, there should be few religious services that you can't arrange for, and the price should be something the group of characters can afford. If the item or service is outside what the GM is comfortable allowing, an alternative should be given.

Once you use this feature, you must wait 30 days before you can use it again.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Blessing of the Gods. Your ongoing support and administration of your community earns you a blessing from your deity. Choose one of the following blessings or a different supernatural blessing (GM's discretion):

- ***Blessing of Battle.*** Any nonmagical weapon you wield shines with divine light and deals additional radiant damage (equal to your PB) on a hit.
- ***Blessing of Lore.*** Each time you finish a long rest, you can choose one spell of a circle you can cast from any source's spell list. Until you finish another long rest, that spell is considered to be on that source list for you and doesn't count against the number of spells you know or can prepare.
- ***Blessing of Luck.*** When you spend Luck to increase a roll, if the newly adjusted result is a success, you gain 1 Luck.

ROYAL CHAMPION

Defending the crown is more than just a weak pledge, and the royal champion has dedicated their life to fighting for their patron. Perhaps this dedication comes from duty, personal loyalty, or idealism. No matter the reason, they have trained hard and with a singular focus most never achieve. Now, it is their task to challenge anyone who contests their monarch's reign, to defend the crown in trial by combat or open warfare.

Perhaps you are a loyal member of the court, a fallen noble seeking redemption, or a ragged survivor seeking vengeance. Whatever path you follow, you always carry the weight of your responsibility to your monarch and will always be first to defend the crown.

Goals. Work with your GM to create a goal specific to your campaign or use one from the **Royal Champion's Goals** table. The specific nature of each milestone is dependent on the goal selected and should be agreed upon by both player and GM. Use one of the suggested milestone benefits described in this section or create a new one based on the rules for creating a thread.

ROYAL CHAMPION'S GOALS

d6	GOAL
1	I must redeem my reputation by accomplishing a deed so great it will live forever in song and story.
2	I must stop a specific threat to my monarch before it reaches court.
3	I pretend to be a common adventurer to undertake a secret mission from my monarch.
4	I shall defeat the champion who replaced me.
5	I travel by the side of my monarch's unwitting offspring to honor the monarch's memory and instate the offspring as the rightful heir.
6	I will get my revenge on those who murdered my patron.

Least Milestone Feature

When you achieve the first milestone of this thread, you gain the following benefit.

Commanding Presence. Accustomed to wielding the authority to defend monarch and crown, you gain proficiency in your choice of one the following skills: Insight, Intimidation, or Persuasion.

Lesser Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Champion's Challenge. Choose one creature within 30 feet that you can see. The target must succeed on a WIS save (DC equal to 8 + your CHA modifier + your PB), or it must move toward you by the shortest and most direct route available on its next turn. In addition, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls against creatures other than you for 1 minute or until it successfully hits you with an attack.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Greater Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Towering Will. You are a paragon of fortitude and can inspire others to ignore temporary weakness in order to focus on the tasks at hand. As a bonus action, choose one creature within 30 feet, which can include yourself. One condition afflicting the target ends. The condition can be blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Superior Milestone Feature

When you achieve this level of milestone, you gain the following benefit.

Titan's Strike. You channel all your prodigious skill into a single awesome blow. As an action, you can make one weapon attack against a target within range. You have advantage on this attack, and if it is successful, it is an automatic critical hit that deals three times the normal damage of your weapon. Your titan's strike can't be combined with other attacks on the same turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

COURTLY SUBCLASSES

What follows are a few class options emerging from the glittering courts of the nobility and the tall stone walls of the castle.

BARD SUBCLASSES

Artists and entertainers serve an important function in the glittering halls of the nobility, and bards delight in performing. Keeping morale high is important in times of war, and magnificent artists are a source of pride and prestige. Some bards simply relish the chance to show their skills while others use their art as a cover for more secretive work.

JEST

The craft of the college of Jest—that of the jester—developed in glittering noble courts and disreputable taverns, on refuse-strewn street corners and makeshift wooden stages. The common jester is merely an entertainer, spurring laughter with their chaotic antics. Others, however, push past the mundane to explore the swirling maelstrom of chaos itself.

Distinct in your panoply of motley colors, you are an agent of havoc. You strive to become one with bedlam and dance on the eddies of mayhem. What others see as random chance, you bend to your will, adjusting the odds of fate so that your smiling face always comes out on top.

Martial Tumbler

3rd-Level Jest Feature

You can tumble over, around, and under your enemies, avoiding their blows and laughing while you do so. You can take a bonus action on each of your turns in combat to use the Disengage action. When you move while disengaging in this way, you can move through a hostile creature's space, regardless of its size. If you expend a use of your Bardic Inspiration feature when you use Martial Tumbler, your speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 × the number rolled until the start of your next turn.

Probability Trick

3rd-Level Jest feature

You can manipulate the myriad permutations of chaos. When an effect would cause you to roll a die and consult a table to determine a random result, such as the *confusion* spell or a *wand of wonder*, you can use a reaction to expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration feature and choose the result instead. This feature can't be used to manipulate artifacts, legendary or fabled magic items or other unique effects or relics.

Chaotic Legerdemain

3rd-Level Jest Feature

You can craft a marotte, a jester's stick topped with a carved head, that can be used as an arcane focus. In addition, you can use an action to tap your marotte on a container you wear or hold—such as a bag, pouch, pocket, or even a hat or closed fist—and magically draw an item from it. The size of the container or of the item doesn't limit this feature. The object, or effect, is chosen randomly by rolling on the **Marotte Random Effects** table (or GM's discretion).

Only one item you produce from the container can exist at a time. The item or effect vanishes after 1 hour, if it is sold, once it is used (in the case of consumable objects), or if you use this feature again. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

If you use your Probability Trick feature, you can roll twice on the table and choose which result to take.

MAROTTE RANDOM EFFECTS

d20	Random Effect
1	Oops! A part of you changes to that of an animal, like the ears of a donkey or a cat's tail.
2	A bouquet of color-changing flowers that sing love songs in different languages.
3	A complete outfit of clothing of your choice.
4	A finely crafted set of tools of your choice.
5	A handful of tiny seeds that burst into magical sparkles when thrown into the air.
6	A life-sized marionette that resembles you and mimics your movements and actions.
7	A musical instrument that sounds like a completely different musical instrument.
8	A nonmagical object weighing no more than a pound, which appears in the pocket of a friendly creature within 100 feet of you.
9	A nonmagical weapon of your choice, which you gain proficiency with until it vanishes.
10	A piece of adventuring equipment, such as 50 feet of rope, a ladder, or an oil lamp.
11	A *potion of healing*.
12	A small cake or cream pie.
13	A small hand puppet that comically resembles a random creature within 30 feet of you.
14	A small painted ball that always returns to your hand when you bounce it.
15	A Tiny Beast (CR 0) that flees the moment you release it.
16	A wicker picnic basket containing a fine meal for two, complete with wine and dessert.
17	An egg that utters any sound you choose at a volume up to a shout when it breaks.
18	The illusion of a random creature from a random *bag of tricks*, which lasts 1 minute and performs acrobatic tricks at your command.
19	The key to a lock within 1 mile of your current location.
20	Red dragon! Well, its head, which roars in fury before disappearing.

At 10th level, you no longer need to roll when using Probability Trick with this feature and can produce whichever item you desire.

Improbable Shield

7th-Level Jest Feature

As an action, you can conjure a number of floating juggling batons, confections, balloon animals, or similar tools of the jester trade up to your PB, causing them to swirl around you for 1 minute. For the duration, ranged attacks made against you have disadvantage.

While this is active, you can use a bonus action to launch one of your batons (or other objects) at a target you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on an INT save or be blinded, incapacitated, or deafened (your choice) until the end of its next turn—as the pie splatters in its eyes, the baton bonks it on the head, or the cymbals crash on its ears.

The effect ends early if you expend the last floating object. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your PB, regaining all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Chaotic Tumbler

11th-Level Jest Feature

When you use your Martial Tumbler feature to move through a hostile creature's space, that creature must succeed on a DEX save against your spell save DC or be marked with chaos until the start of your next turn and knocked prone. Whenever a creature marked with chaos would roll a die and consult a table to determine a random effect, the creature must roll two dice for the effect, and you choose which die result the creature uses.

Surprise

15th-Level Jest Feature

As a bonus action, you can point your marotte (see the Chaotic Legerdemain feature) at a creature you can see within 60 feet of you. The target must succeed on an INT save, or you vanish from your current position and magically spring out of a container the target is wearing or holding—such as a bag, pouch, pocket, or even a hat or closed fist—appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target. When you do so, you can make one weapon attack against that target as part of the same bonus action.

You can use this feature a number of times per day equal to your PB and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

FIGHTER SUBCLASSES

Soldiers, warriors, and officers abound in high courts and looming fortresses. Traditionally, their roles are to guard the monarchs, defend the battlements, or take the fight to the enemies of the realm. While fighters of every imaginable sort exist, the chivalric armored warrior holds a high place in song and story.

KNIGHT

The word summons images of warriors wearing plate armor and charging on horses, meeting a challenge on the field of honor with their weapon held high. Fighters who choose the path of the knight are elite warriors who are expected to adhere to their chivalric code on the battlefield and in the halls of court alike. Knights pledge themselves to their monarch, their kingdom, or their feudal lord. This oath is the core of knighthood, and many knights believe it is the source of their prowess and skill.

Oath of Service and Code of Honor

Two aspects guide a knight: their oath of service and their code of honor. Knights swear oaths of loyalty to kings, nobles, or moral guidelines, binding them to serve and defend. They faithfully follow the orders of their liege as long as such orders don't violate their code of honor. These oaths of service are not a lifetime bond, for death, betrayal, and the changing tides of fate can convince a knight to relinquish their oath, which would typically be done in public, in front of witnesses.

Above your oath of service, as a knight, you follow a personal code of honor, a set of guidelines you strive never to break. Among the community of knights is an old saying, "The more numerous the code, the more honorable the knight." To determine your code, roll 1d6 and consult the **Knight's Code of Honor** table or work with your GM to create your own.

KNIGHT'S CODE OF HONOR

d6	Precept
1	Be ever loyal to the one to whom you give your oath.
2	Defend the honor of others.
3	Hold your word as an unbreakable bond.
4	Let honor always guide your actions.
5	Let no slight go unanswered.
6	Protect the weak against those who would prey upon them.

Bonus Proficiencies

3rd-Level Knight Feature

You gain proficiency in two of the following skills of your choice: Deception, History, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion.

Renown

3rd-Level Knight Feature

Your notoriety provides you some benefits in combat and when interacting socially, represented by Renown dice. You have a number of Renown dice equal to your PB and regain all expended Renown dice when you finish a short or long rest. At the GM's discretion, you can temporarily gain or lose a Renown die by upholding or violating your code of honor.

As a bonus action, you can choose a creature within 30 feet of you and expend one or more Renown dice to cause one of the following effects:

- ***Challenge.*** When you attack the target of your challenge, you can roll any number of your Renown dice and add the result to the attack roll.
- ***Proclaim.*** You regale the target with tales of your past honors and accomplishments as part of a WIS (Insight) or CHA (Deception, Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion) check. The target must have an INT of 5 (−3) or higher and must share a language with you. When you do so, you can roll any number of your Renown dice and add the result to the check.

Your Renown die changes when you reach certain levels in this class. The die becomes a d6 at 5th level, a d8 at 10th level, a d10 at 15th level, and a d12 at 20th level. In addition, at 10th level, the range of this feature increases to 60 feet.

Commander's Precept

7th-Level Knight Feature

You inspire your companions to greatness, and they embolden you with their companionship. You gain additional Renown dice equal to your CHA modifier (minimum of 1), but these additional Renown dice can be spent only to aid friendly creatures.

As a bonus action, you can call out to a number of friendly creatures (up to your PB) within 30 feet that you can see and that can hear you, expending one Renown die for each target. Each target can use a reaction to roll the Renown die and gain one of the following benefits of the target's choice:

- ***Bolster.*** The target gains a bonus to its AC, equal to the roll of the Renown die, until the end of its next turn.
- ***Maneuver.*** The target moves up to a number of feet equal to 5 × the roll of the Renown die without provoking opportunity attacks.
- ***Rally.*** If the target is charmed or frightened, it immediately repeats the save to end the effect, gaining a bonus on the save equal to the roll of the Renown die. Otherwise, the target gains temporary hit points equal to twice the roll of the Renown die.

When you reach 12th level in this class, this feature's range increases to 60 feet.

Daunting Prowess

11th-Level Knight Feature

Foes become demoralized at your prowess in battle and in court. When you reduce a target of the challenge effect of your Renown feature to 0 HP, each creature of your choice within 15 feet of you has disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of your next turn. When you use the proclaim effect of your Renown feature and roll a 20 on the d20 roll, each creature of your choice within 15 feet of you has disadvantage on WIS (Insight) and CHA (Deception, Intimidation, Performance, and Persuasion) checks until the start of your next turn. Creatures that are immune to being frightened are immune to this effect.

Unstoppable Strikes

15th-Level Knight Feature

To fell the greatest foes, you channel all your skill and fortitude into a series of devastating strikes. As a bonus action, expend any number of your Renown dice and roll them. Until the start of your next turn, you gain a bonus to all your attack rolls equal to the number of dice you rolled, and each successful hit gains a bonus to damage equal to the result of those dice. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

RANGER SUBCLASSES

Even in the urban world of royal courts, the ranger serves important roles. Some scout the region around a castle, alert for threats. Others prowl the streets of the city, hunting spies and saboteurs. In the world of politics, diplomacy, and war, perhaps the most critical role of the ranger is as a messenger, delivering critical missives between nations or summoning aid in advance of enemy troops.

COURIER

Galloping along lonely, bandit-infested roads or running through assassin-filled streets, the courier protects their package or message with blade and spell until it is delivered to its rightful recipient. As a courier, you learn to move swiftly and avoid obstacles. Your array of spells and tricks are meant to keep you free from impediments. You are by no means defenseless, a fact those who try to stop you often learn to their sorrow.

Courier Magic

3rd-Level Courier Feature

You gain the *find steed* ritual, and you gain calling spells at the ranger levels listed in the **Courier Calling Spells** table. See the Ranger Subclass class feature for how these spells work.

COURIER CALLING SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	*longstrider*
5th	*knock*
9th	*haste*
13th	*freedom of movement*
17th	*passwall*

Adroit Traveler

3rd-Level Courier Feature

You learn two languages of your choice, and you learn to travel faster and weave through combat, avoiding the attacks of your foes. On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to take the Disengage action. In addition, if you spend 10 minutes examining a mount you plan to ride, its speed (in all movement types) increases by 10 feet until you finish a long rest. This bonus speed increases when you reach certain levels in this class: 20 feet at 7th level and 30 feet at 15th level.

Instinctual Awareness

3rd-Level Courier Feature

Your instincts allow you to quickly react to danger and maneuver through social situations. You can add your WIS modifier to your initiative rolls.

In addition, choose one skill from the following list: Deception, Insight, Intimidation, or Persuasion. You gain proficiency in that skill, and your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make using that skill.

Inconspicuous

7th-Level Courier Feature

You can weave a shroud around yourself, becoming unobtrusive and unnoticeable. As an action, you can magically render yourself inconspicuous for 1 minute. You must maintain concentration on this effect as if it was a spell.

For the duration, WIS (Perception) checks made to see or hear you have disadvantage, and any creature that targets you with an attack or harmful spell must first make a WIS save against your spell save DC. On a failure, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This doesn't protect you from spells that affect areas, such as the *fireball* spell. On a success, the target is immune to your Inconspicuous feature for 24 hours.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your PB, regaining all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Evasive Strike

11th-Level Courier Feature

You know how to avoid attacks while maneuvering to deliver unexpected strikes. When a creature you can see moves within 60 feet of you, you can use your reaction to move up to your speed toward that creature without provoking opportunity attacks. If you end this move within 5 feet of a hostile creature, you can immediately make one melee attack against that hostile creature.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your PB, regaining all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Dimensional Traveler

15th-Level Courier Feature

You can shift your form beyond mortal realms and can cast one of the following spells on yourself without expending a spell slot: *etherealness* or *plane shift*. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

WIZARD SUBCLASSES

Those who study the arcane arts traditionally focus on a specific aspect of the craft, honing their research to delve into the depths of their chosen obsession. Yet there are others who prefer a more worldly approach.

ARCANE ADVISOR

While many wizards isolate themselves in far-flung towers to pursue their esoteric studies, others use their craft in service to their monarch or nation. These mages defend their lieges from magical attacks, perhaps riding with the army to provide magical artillery and support.

As an arcane advisor, you stand by the side of your monarch, ready to share your knowledge and magic. This tradition offers a wide breadth of arcana and the ability to form mystical bonds with other creatures, casting spells through them or defending them from hostile magic.

Expanded Studies

3rd-Level Arcane Advisor Feature

Your mind is open to a wider breadth of magical knowledge. Whenever you gain a level in this class (including this level), you can add one additional spell to your spellbook, which doesn't count against the number of wizard spells you learn each level. You must choose these bonus spells from the abjuration, divination, enchantment, or illusion schools, but they can be on any source's spell list. If you gain access to a spell that doesn't appear on the Arcane spell list, the spell is considered to be on the Arcane spell list for you.

Mental Insight

3rd-Level Arcane Advisor Feature

As you hone your mind, you study the magical fabric that connects all of creation. You add half your PB, rounded down, to any INT, WIS, or CHA ability check that you make that doesn't already include your PB. In addition, you have advantage on INT (Investigation)

checks to discern illusions and on WIS (Insight) checks to detect lies.

Eldritch Bond

7th-Level Arcane Advisor Feature

You can construct a magical bond between yourself and another creature, allowing you to render aid and communicate from afar. When you finish a long rest, you can touch one willing creature and establish your Eldritch Bond, which lasts until you are no longer on the same plane of existence as the target or until you are reduced to 0 HP. While linked in this way, you gain the following benefits:

- You always know the general health of the bonded creature and the direction to its location.
- You can cast spells with a range of touch on the bonded creature from a range of 60 feet.
- You can speak telepathically with the bonded creature if you are within 100 feet of each other.
- While you are within 90 feet of your bonded creature, if one of you takes damage, you can use your reaction to magically switch positions, each of you teleporting into the other's space, provided there is enough room in each space to accommodate each of you.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Versatile Arcana

11th-Level Arcane Advisor Feature

You can manipulate the threads of power to cast a limited number of spells without preparation. You can cast one of the spells in your spellbook without needing it to be prepared, but you must still expend an appropriate spell slot. You can do so a number of times equal to your PB, regaining all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Extended Counterspell

15th-Level Arcane Advisor Feature

At 14th level, you add the *counterspell* spell to your spell book (if it isn't already). In addition, when you see a creature casting a spell that includes you or the subject of your Eldritch Bond feature, you can choose to use *counterspell* regardless of range and without it being prepared. You must still expend a spell slot, and you must be aware of the creature casting the spell to use *counterspell* in this way.

2 COURTLY CAMPAIGNS

An assassin disguised as a noblewoman poisons a jeweled goblet during a raucous feast.

Courtly adventures revolve around people—around factions and the interplay of different groups of individuals, all existing within the larger social structure. And these people have wants and needs, simple and complex, and under the right circumstances, with the right incentives, they will pursue these motivations. Such adventures might revolve around anything from petty jealousies to violent revolutions, from celebrations and showy one-upmanship to treaty negotiations and border skirmishes. Within this chapter are details on the types of factions and events that can create exciting adventures fit for a courtly campaign.

FACTIONS IN ADVENTURES

Factions are small, organized groups, perhaps subsets of larger groups, whose members share similar beliefs, interests, or goals. Factions form around some core ideology and espouse various values, strategies, and priorities within a particular social class or organization. As a result, the individuals bond over common goals and principles. Faction members work together to advance social agendas that allow them to influence their broader community, society, or region. Over time, a faction's increasing social influence allows members to grow more prosperous and powerful.

ANATOMY OF A FACTION

A faction's shared ideological foundation forms the basis for collaboration and coordination, and a faction might exert their focus on politics, social movements, religion, military conquest, or criminal activity, to name a few likely candidates. Despite sharing a common ideology though, they're still made up of individuals, which will tend to make the faction's overall shape and function extremely dynamic.

A faction's viewpoints and strategies are independent of the greater community in which they operate and might contrast sharply with those of other factions.

HIERARCHY

Typically, individuals of wealth, power, and prestige quickly rise to a faction's highest ranks. This leadership determines a faction's direction, and they might be elected or appointed or simply emerge naturally within the faction. Lower-ranking members support the decisions of the leadership by performing tasks as needed and strengthening alliances, contributing to the faction's overall goals.

Members might pursue greater levels of influence to further advocate for their own views and more directly shape the community. A faction's nature and purpose determine how one might attain such influence, determining the overall hierarchy and the means and occasion of any such mobility within the ranks.

However it gets there, a faction needs to be cohesive, whether through solidarity or coercion, or it will simply fall apart. A faction requires its members to be able to work together to achieve their shared objectives.

Ranking. A faction member's rank defines the amount of authority they wield, though how rank is determined will depend on the nature of the faction, on their values and their hierarchy. For example, factions based on nobility might rank their members with formal titles, military organizations typically assign military ranks, and mercantile associations distinguish members by wealth and property. High-ranking individuals assert greater influence than those of lower rank, creating a power dynamic that impacts decision-making, resource allocation, and the overall efficacy of the faction.

Rank also allows for the approximation of a character's influence when determining the outcome of social interactions. Determine an individual's rank by importance to their faction, not to the community or society. For example, an elusive criminal wanted for the murder of three castle guards might hold a very high rank within a criminal faction. Similarly, an honored military captain might be viewed as a war criminal by a mercantile guild from a land subjugated at their command. The values of the faction determine rank, which might be inclined toward elements like royal blood, legacy, wealth, infamy, notoriety, or formal title.

During a social interaction, a character might attempt to leverage their rank to influence the outcome. Once per interaction, a character can attempt to "pull rank" on a target in order to re-roll the result of an unfavorable outcome. The character informs the target of their rank and station, and if it is greater than that of the target's, they can re-roll a failed ability check. However, if the target has higher standing, then the character attempting to pull rank automatically fails and has disadvantage on any future social interactions with the target until they publicly apologize, making a successful DC 20 CHA (Performance) check, or complete a formal request or personal favor for the insulted individual (GM's discretion).

Note that a rank doesn't need to be held in high regard to be acknowledged and feared. For example, a mid-level cleric might not acknowledge the importance of an assassin's higher rank but might still recognize the rank's meaning and therefore fear the consequences of being threatened.

A character can impose their rank to any ability check used to resolve a social interaction between two or more characters that acknowledge each other's rank. Once a character makes such an attempt, they cannot do so again within the same encounter, regardless of the outcome.

Contesting Individuals of Higher Rank. Effective communication and collaboration are crucial within a faction, allowing members to engage in discussion and debate that shapes the faction's goals, strategies, and internal processes. Individuals who display these skills generally improve their standing within their faction.

Private debates require the lower-ranking character to change the opinion of the higher-ranking character. In a public debate, the lower-ranking character can attempt to sway their opponent's opinion by gaining the support of a majority of the rest of the faction or other high-ranking members to override statements made by the opponent. A public win for a character that comes from overriding a higher-ranking character might breed enmity while a public loss might cause a reduction in rank or status.

ALLIANCES

Faction members can form alliances within the group or with other factions with similar interests or goals. Allies combine resources to achieve common objectives and support each other in political and social conflicts.

A strong alliance helps to strengthen the faction's influence, to recruit and grow its membership, and to extend its capabilities. Individuals with strong alliances have advantage in social encounters with their allies.

Strengthening Alliances. Factions can forge strong alliances by repeatedly and successfully performing mutually beneficial actions. Strong alliances help maintain trust, and allied partners can expect that exchanges run smoothly and that joint efforts attain reliable outcomes. Loyalty to the faction's goals and principles strengthens the unity and resilience of the faction. Characters that actively display acts of loyalty improve their alliances.

Differing opinions inevitably cause conflict within a faction. The ability to navigate and resolve such conflict constructively is crucial for maintaining cohesion within the faction. Characters that successfully resolve conflicts between faction members improve their alliances. Members must trust one another's intentions and commitments to maintain such cohesion, and they can build that trust by supporting each other in social encounters. Individuals might also share resources and expertise to nurture alliances.

Weakening Alliances. While strong alliances contribute to healthy debate, diverse ideas, and general progress, weak alliances lead to division and conflict within the larger group—and the underpinning actions might be intentional or not. Here are some actions an individual or faction might take to weaken an alliance:

- Break an agreement, treaty, or commitment established with an ally.
- Disagree with allies in such a way as to create opportunities for serious arguments or altercations.
- Make or strengthen alliances that compete with an existing ally.
- Perform activities that mar the reputations of allies and associates.
- Sidestep or subvert the framework of an existing alliance to establish agreements with others.
- Support or exacerbate existing conflicts in regions where allied factions maintain interests.

Rivals. In campaigns where multiple factions compete for power and resources, PCs or their rivals can deliberately attempt to weaken alliances between rival factions. Here are some ideas for actions individuals or factions might take to weaken an alliance with another:

- Conduct covert actions, such as espionage or sabotage, to undermine the alliance's cohesion.
- Disseminate propaganda that fosters skepticism, hostility, or division among alliance members.
- Encourage opposing ideologies and rhetoric within a community to shift focus from the faction and diminish the commitment of individual members toward the faction's collective goals.
- Exploit existing economic, ideological, or political differences between allies.
- Lobby for legislation that imposes tariffs, quotas, or other trade barriers on alliance members to hinder their economic growth and discourage cooperation.
- Lobby for policies that disproportionately benefit one ally at the expense of others, leading to economic imbalances and resentment within the alliance.
- Manipulate access to vital resources in order to leverage specific alliance members, creating dependencies and vulnerabilities.
- Publicly question the alliance's relevance, effectiveness, or necessity, casting doubt on its purpose and diminishing its standing.
- Reduce military support and presence for alliance concerns, weakening its collective defense capabilities and undermining the sense of security it provides to affected allies.
- Spread disinformation that undermines confidence in the alliance.
- Spread rumors that foster competition between individual faction members to divert their attention from cooperation and to promote self-interest.
- Undermine morale within the alliance by discrediting the leadership, perhaps by spreading rumors or creating scandals involving individuals in high standing.

ARCANE FACTIONS

Sorcerers, mages, and other arcane spellcasters are a mysterious lot. They tend to work alone, spending long hours developing their craft and greedily hoarding their secrets. Still, a faction of powerful spellcasters might assemble to serve a common goal, such as recovering or protecting an artifact or addressing an event of grand significance capable of drastically altering the world.

Sometimes a sovereign or other wealthy patron, such as a mercantile guild, might assemble or provide funding for such a faction with the expectation of mutual benefit. Often, these relationships between arcanists and their benefactors become strained as both sides vie for control over the other. While they might share a cause, it is just as likely the arcanists are interested only in the funding or resources to continue their work uninterrupted.

Arcanists often have little respect for non-spellcasters, particularly those in power merely because of their birth. Conversely, non-spellcasters in positions of power often distrust spellcasters, seeing them as necessary evils.

Arcane Factions as Campaign Villains. Arcane factions display a mastery of magic and arcane knowledge that grants them immense power and makes them formidable adversaries. Factions run by a single powerful spellcaster will fill their ranks with younger, less-experienced mages that seek to hone their abilities. Such factions tend to be more focused on their goals, though perhaps less skilled in their actions, depending on how experienced the members are. Alternatively, a wizard's council of similarly powered mages specialized in different schools of magic might wield more arcane might, though their personalities and individual goals might reduce the faction's overall focus and resolve.

Villainous themes typically focus on moral ambiguity and the dangers of unchecked magical power:

- ***Dark Arts.*** The pursuit of forbidden or dark magic leads down a treacherous path. Evil arcane factions embrace malevolent forces and upset the balance of magical energies. Leaders of such factions are frequently driven by insatiable ambition, thirst for ultimate power, or misguided beliefs in their superiority. They delve into ancient texts, decipher cryptic symbols, and unravel enigmatic rituals to manifest their power. Those seeking to thwart their efforts might likewise need to pursue such knowledge and understanding of their magical practice and eventually risk the same temptations and ethical dilemmas.
- ***Esoterica.*** Arcane factions are often associated with unique magical traditions or rituals: ancient prophecies, hidden magical artifacts, and lost spells are common motivators. Corrupted arcane casters that seek to harness the untold potential of lost lore often create conflicts with other faction members, all of whom prize such rich resources. The faction's adversaries are confronted with the ethical implications of wielding such potent forces or are torn between pursuing knowledge and preserving balance.

ARCANE MOTIVATIONS

Use any of the following motivations to help flesh out why the faction does what it does.

Mind Control Network. The faction establishes a network of enchanted objects that allow them to control the thoughts and actions of anyone who comes into contact with them, effectively turning the populace into their puppets.

Plague of Shadows. The faction unleashes a virulent plague that turns its victims into shadowy, mindless creatures that rapidly spread chaos and destruction.

Reality Sunder. The faction aims to tear open the fabric of reality itself, creating a rift between dimensions that would unleash unimaginable horrors upon the world.

Shadow Veil. The faction creates a powerful spell that cloaks an entire city in eternal darkness, allowing them to conduct their dark rituals and experiments unnoticed.

Soul Harvest. The faction develops a ritual that allows them to drain the life force of innocent victims, using it to empower themselves and extend their lifespans.

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

The following locations provide backdrops for arcane factions that can be easily added to any campaign.

Eldritch Academe. A massive stone edifice known as the Eldritch Academe shadows the cobblestone houses of the west ward. The ancient institution stands dedicated to teaching and preserving arcane mysteries. It consists of interconnected buildings surrounded

ARCANE FACTION GOALS

d10	Goal	Means and Ends
1	Arcane Mastery	***Means.*** Develop new magical techniques. Expand knowledge of spells and rituals. Unlock deep secrets of arcane arts. ***Ends.*** Achieve unparalleled mastery over magic. Become the most powerful magic wielders in the realm.
2	Ascendency	***Means.*** Explore portals and project into other planes. Reshape reality. Train bodies to absorb arcane energy. Undergo near-death rituals. ***Ends.*** Transcend to a higher plane.
3	Balance	***Means.*** Arbitrate ethical and responsible use of arcane arts. Guard portals. Prevent misuse of arcane powers. ***Ends.*** Balance the forces of magic with the world's natural order.
4	Dominance	***Means.*** Assert superiority in conflicts. Leverage rivals. Manipulate arcane politics. ***Ends.*** Establish magical dominance over other factions and realms.
5	Education	***Means.*** Adopt apprentices. Establish magical academies. Pass knowledge and skills to the next generation of arcanists. ***Ends.*** Preserve and perpetuate arcane arts through the generations.
6	Interdimensional Power	***Means.*** Explore other planes of existence. Forge alliances with extraplanar beings. Uncover hidden power. ***Ends.*** Tap into interdimensional sources of magic.
7	Ley Lines	***Means.*** Amplify magic with outside forces. Conduct large-scale rituals. Construct powerful enchantments. Harness raw magical energy. ***Ends.*** Gain control over key ley line intersections.
8	Mystery	***Means.*** Adopt apprentices. Establish magical academies. Pass knowledge and skills to the next generation of arcanists. ***Ends.*** Preserve and perpetuate arcane arts through the generations.
9	Preservation of Lore	***Means.*** Probe the workings of the multiverse. Study magical creatures. Uncover ancient secrets and hidden magical realms. ***Ends.*** Decipher the origin of magic.
10	Research	***Means.*** Discover new components and wellsprings of magic. Perfect spellcasting techniques. Uncover relics and lost knowledge. ***Ends.*** Develop powerful new magics.

by ancient trees adorned with glowing sigils and runes. Halls are filled with classrooms where masters teach arcane theory and practical spellcasting. Each room is imbued with a unique magical ambiance to facilitate specific magical disciplines, such as elemental manipulation, illusionary arts, or necromantic studies.

A cabal of wizards runs the academy, and they pass their positions down over the centuries to select apprentices to whom they teach their craft. Hidden within its depths are secret chambers containing forbidden texts and powerful artifacts protected by enchanted guardians. They only grant the most trusted cabalists access to these forbidden secrets.

Tower of Arcane Wisdom. The tower stands as the sacred meeting place and training ground for an order of elite arcane seers obsessed with deciphering and altering fate. The tower is an architectural marvel, constructed of shimmering stone and inscribed with ancient runes that amplify trapped magical energies. Its height pierces the clouds, granting a breathtaking view of the surrounding lands. Inside the stone walls lies a labyrinthine network of chambers and corridors. Elaborate libraries house ancient tomes, scrolls, and mystical artifacts while alchemical laboratories brim with bubbling potions and enchanted instruments. Hidden chambers contain scrying pools and divination chambers where seers delve into visions and foretell the future.

At the tower's heart lies the Astral Chamber, a great celestial observatory where spellcasters commune with the stars and draw upon the power of the cosmos. The chamber is adorned with intricate celestial charts and astronomical instruments.

ARCANE FIGURES OF INTEREST

Low-Status	Arcane NPCs
Charlatan	Street performer Baelsia Smokecloak uses sleight of hand and minor illusion magic to entertain crowds. She might serve as a local informant for PCs, or they might employ her to draw crowds and create distractions.
Court Jester Magician	Jaxer Shinwhipper is a whimsical court entertainer, frequent courier, and occasional counsel. He also has a drinking problem, which PCs can leverage for favors or information.
Curiosity Shopkeeper	Lily Spellbinder owns a small curiosity shop that sells magical trinkets, luck charms, and simple enchantments to curious customers. PCs might seek Lily for advice or magic items.
Stone Scribe	An eager young dwarf named Ulgrim serves as an apprentice to a master runecaster, learning how to create runes and enchant items. He possesses a valuable understanding of magical symbols and their meanings.
Street Mystic	Willow Alderbrook serves as an apprentice to the royal seer, studying magic and assisting in experiments. She needs practice telling fortunes and similar divinations, so she offers the PCs her services free of charge if they befriend her.
Mid-Status	**Arcane NPCs**
Alchemist	A dedicated practitioner of alchemy, Magister Nephrim holes himself away in his shop. PCs might seek him out for his potions and transmutation magic.
Eldritch Sage	Known only as the Sage of Braxmire, this elderly sage possesses the key to a hidden library beneath the grand throne room, which he has spent years cataloging. PCs might seek him out for knowledge of the Void and ancient cults.
Martial Mage	Kesiniya D'Avengne specializes in combat magic. She serves as advisor to the military leadership and uses her spells to create protective barriers and enhance the soldiers before battle.
Weapon Enchanter	High Enchanter Mirastyn can imbue armor and weapons with powerful enchantments. She is in high demand with adventurers and nobles alike and keeps her secrets well-guarded.
Weather Witch	Iysripha uses her spells to manipulate the local weather. Despite her limited powers, she plays a crucial role in ensuring the health of local agriculture.
High-Status	**Arcane NPCs**
Archmage	Archmage Xothorian Mankor is the most skilled and respected spellcaster in the kingdom. He has mastered multiple arcane disciplines and schools of magic and frequently serves as an advisor to the high court.
Astral Sorceress	Drawing upon the vast energies of the Astral Plane, Esthryela can project her consciousness across great distances, scry upon distant lands, and tap into cosmic forces.
Chronomancer	The appointed lord of the Tower of the Broken Dawn can manipulate temporal anomalies. He sends agents back in time to collect magnificent artifacts and tomes to use for his own gain.
Elemental Archon	Ghiro, the Primordial Heir, wields fire, water, earth, and air on a grand scale from the safety of his palace, controlling powerful elemental entities, commanding cataclysmic storms, and reshaping the earth.
Grand Diviner	An unparalleled master of divinations, Grand Diviner Rathgrol peers into the deepest mysteries of the past, present, and future. His counsel is sought by rulers and generals.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- ***Arcane Assassins.*** The PCs are targeted by a shadowy group of arcane assassins known as the Veiled Blades. These assassins are highly skilled spellcasters who seek to eliminate those who possess rare arcane abilities or knowledge. The PCs must uncover the motivations behind the assassins' actions, unveil their identities, and ultimately confront the Veiled Blades leader to end their deadly agenda.
- ***Artifact Heist.*** The arcane order hires the PCs to recover a dangerous artifact from a notorious crime lord who plans to harness its power for personal

gain. PCs must locate and infiltrate the crime lord's inner sanctum and retrieve the artifact before he triggers it and unleashes irreversible mayhem upon the realms.

- ***Forbidden Ritual.*** An ancient prophecy speaks of a forbidden ritual that, if completed, will grant unimaginable power to the one who performs it, sacrificing entire cities and channeling the collective energy of the population to transcend mortal limitations. The PCs become embroiled in a race against time to prevent a malevolent sorcerer from gathering the necessary components and carrying out the ritual.
- ***Oracle's Vision.*** The PCs receive a vision from an ancient oracle, foretelling the rise of a malevolent entity who will plunge the realm into darkness. They must unravel the cryptic messages of the oracle, gather allies, and embark on a quest to locate and confront the villain before their dark plans come to fruition. Along the way, they must navigate treacherous territories, decipher hidden clues, and make fateful choices shaping the realm's fate.
- ***Shadow Realm Incursion.*** A secret cabal inadvertently opened a breach to the Shadow Realm, unleashing dangerous and chaotic entities into their stronghold. The PCs must navigate the fortress, banishing the shadow creatures and closing the rift to prevent the fabric between the planes from collapsing and pulling the region into shadow.

ARISTOCRATIC FACTIONS

A noble is a member of a privileged class of the local society, often tied to an aristocratic government. Whether or not they support that government, they and their families have certainly benefitted from it. Typically, nobles publicly acknowledge an affiliation with the ruling class and are seen as emblematic of it, both its strengths and its excesses. The privilege is often hereditary, though it could be appointed in some way. Additional details depend on the cultural and political system in which they participate.

Those of noble bloodlines frequently acknowledge each other using the term *cousin*, suggestive of all nobility being related by their noble blood, either by birth or marriage. In such matters, the value of these relations and the strength of familial ties should be determined.

A campaign might have several aristocratic factions, each dedicated to a specific lord. As a source of conflict, each such faction might possess a semi-legitimate claim to inherit the throne. In a campaign with a single aristocratic faction, a noble might seek to supplant power, abuse the system for personal gain, or fight to change the system, for better or worse. PCs dealing with corrupt systems might seek out like-minded allies, form alliances, and root out corruption to establish righteous and just authority.

Aristocratic Factions as Campaign Villains. The inherent power, influence, wealth, and lore typically surrounding nobility make such factions superb adversaries. As a villain, they create conflict based on political intrigue and social injustice. An aristocracy's oppressive nature and sense of entitlement can provide a formidable challenge for PCs. Nobles typically have access to significant resources, including land ownership and political connections, and they will leverage them to manipulate power dynamics, perhaps perpetuating oppression and exploiting the common folk.

Villainous themes typically focus on the intricate webs of nobles' alliances and rivalries, on their betrayals and ever-shifting loyalties:

- ***Ancestral History.*** Nobility is often generational, offering a rich historical tapestry from which to build plots and narratives. Ancient bloodlines,

curses, or hidden secrets can be woven into the story, adding a layer of mystery and intrigue. Unraveling the secret pasts of noble families can make for compelling quests in an investigative campaign.

- ***Narcissism.*** Entitlement and superiority often nurture arrogance and disregard for the well-being of others. Driven by their narcissism, nobles might use their privilege to suppress dissent and enforce increasingly oppressive laws, forcing PCs into confrontation in the pursuit of justice.
- ***Social Conflict.*** The class divide between the nobility and the common folk introduces themes of social injustice and inequality. PCs might align with resistance movements or stand directly against such oppressive systems, adding depth and moral complexity to a campaign. The levels of excess often attributed to the wealthy and powerful also provides opportunities in the campaign for dramatic conflicts and grand spectacles: lavish parties, extravagant displays of wealth, and decadent lifestyles, perhaps embroiling the PCs in courtly intrigue, duels, or tournaments.

ARISTOCRATIC MOTIVATIONS

Use any of the following motivations to help flesh out why the faction does what it does.

Courtly Scandal. The faction secretly compiles rumors and sensitive information on various members of the high courts to be used as leverage or blackmail at some unknown point in the future.

Dangerous Propaganda. The faction disseminates propaganda to fabricate a threat of imminent aggression from neighboring lands as grounds for immediate territorial expansion. Nobles seek to use the threats to claim new properties along borders.

ARISTOCRATIC FIGURES OF INTEREST

Low-Status	Aristocratic NPCs
Bumbling Oaf	The notorious mishaps and social blunders of Viscount Olun have given him a reputation as a hapless inept. If PCs encounter him, he spills something on them or breaks one of their mundane possessions.
Catty Gossip	Those of high society avoid the company of Lady Andrus, for she relishes spreading tales of scandal and intrigue, twisting the truth to further her amusement and reputation. If PCs encounter her, she reveals any information they tell her to an adversary of theirs.
Eccentric Royal	Countess Coryna collects oddities, partakes of unconventional indulgences, and hosts bizarre soirees to the bewilderment of high society. If PCs meet her, she gives them a "lucky" hobgoblin's toe.
Forgetful Fool	Marquis Alfrun the Brilliant is notorious for his forgetfulness, often misplacing important documents and forgetting appointments, to the frustration of his staff and family. If PCs encounter him, he offers assistance but forgets to follow through.
Overbearing Countess	Folks around the castle know Countess Moryina for her domineering and controlling nature. She dictates her servants' every action and constantly meddles in the private affairs of her family. If the PCs encounter her, she rebukes their wardrobe and picks at their etiquette.

Pauper Lord	Lord Thedric has fallen on hard times due to reckless spending and the mismanagement of his lands. He struggles to maintain appearances and is burdened with debt. If the PCs encounter him, he asks to borrow money, which he will repay in double next week. (But he never does.)
Pompous Fop	Lord Cegin has an inflated sense of self-importance. He constantly boasts of his superior lineage, and his arrogance often strains his relationships. If the PCs encounter him, he places them in a socially awkward position, such as with an unflattering comparison to a rival noble.
Skinflint	Baron Edmund is a noble known for his extreme frugality. Despite his wealth, he lives a modest lifestyle and famously haggles with merchants, earning him a reputation as a miser. If the PCs encounter him, he attempts to overcharge or shortchange them for their services.
Social Climber	Viscountess Isabella is determined to climb the social ladder and eagerly tries to impress those with influence, often hosting extravagant parties. Her attention is always shallow and fleeting. If the PCs encounter her, she attempts to use their accomplishments to validate her own importance.
Unfortunate Heiress	Baroness Glarcinda suffered a string of unfortunate events, including failed business ventures and disastrous marriages, and her peers treat her as a laughingstock. If the PCs encounter her, the more superstitious of servants and officials might avoid them for fear of contagious bad luck.
Mid-Status	**Aristocratic NPCs**
Duchess	As the ruler of a prosperous region, Duchess Avalyne Von Cahmore holds significant political sway and is known for her diplomatic skills and fair governance. A skilled negotiator, she often represents the crown in important diplomatic missions.
Fashionista	Baroness Clarina Vin-Noys is a prominent fashion icon and trendsetter. Nobles and fashion designers seek to emulate her influential style and elegance. She might hire the PCs to protect one of her designs, to recover a stolen dress, or to be her bodyguards for a high-profile event.
Master Equestrian	Count Armand is a famed horse breeder and trainer. His stables produce exceptional specimens, which he showcases at prestigious equestrian competitions. PCs might seek his aid in purchasing or training horses or might serve as guards during a competition.
Master Huntsman	Among the region's aristocracy, Viscount Agar is well regarded as a famed tracker and trophy hunter and is known for organizing legendary hunts. PCs might seek him out for his prowess in the wilderness, or he might hire them as aids for one of his grand hunting expeditions.
Scholarly Lord	The Baron of Stonewalt spends his fortune collecting books and transforming his family manor into a library. His vast knowledge of ancient texts and artifacts makes him a sought-after advisor. PCs might seek him out for his knowledge or be hired by a rival to steal from his collection.
Hight-Status	**Aristocratic NPCs**
Grand Architect	Emperor Gnis Xopis maintains a court of two dozen arcane engineers, adorning his empire with magnificent palaces, soaring cathedrals, and elaborate fortifications, all of which are attributed to his genius. His designs are renowned for both their function and beauty.
Indomitable Champion	High King Pol is a legendary warrior-king renowned for his unmatched bravery and skill on the battlefield. Unyielding, he expands his empire through conquest and commands loyalty, engendered by a mix of respect and fear.
Prophet Empress	The empire reveres Empress Isamy as a visionary ruler gifted with prophetic abilities. She guides with foresight and wisdom, shaping the destiny of her realm. After seeing them in one of her visions, she might seek the PCs either to champion a quest or to be imprisoned.
Shadowmaster	Lord Morquen is one of several mysterious and enigmatic lords of the Shadow Realm, ruling over the Citadel of Crystal Tears, a timeless domain that manifests randomly once every half-century. They keep their court shrouded in an air of mystery and foreboding.
Wise Rulers	King Alaum rules a vast kingdom with keen insight and benevolence. Likewise, his Queen Tyramore has earned widespread accolades and respect as a powerful patron, supporting several dozens of artists. Rumors hint at a shadow struggle between the two for control, but to unknown ends.

Infernal Pact. The faction manipulates factors that force the kingdom into unfavorable infernal contracts. The ruler faces moral dilemmas that drive them to make decisions favoring a select group of nobles in order to protect the souls of loved ones.

Shifting Power. The faction convinces the ruler to break with tradition and seek new divine patronage, ostensibly to restore order to the land. However, the real intention is to steal power from rival noble houses and improve the faction's standing with the throne.

Shuffling Rivals. The faction, charged with the defense of border territories, duplicitously forfeits a strategic location to another noble in exchange for benefits in contraband, trade, or future political power.

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

The following locations provide backdrops for aristocratic factions that can be added to any campaign.

Blood Orchid Estate. Nestled in the sprawling countryside, this estate is the clandestine gathering place for a group of especially entitled nobles. Hidden by a facade of opulent gardens and grand architecture, it conceals a labyrinth of secret chambers and hidden passages. The manor house is a low, sweeping building that circles a central courtyard with a large fountain and several smaller buildings, which serve as guest quarters and also face the fountain.

Within the fountain hides a staircase that descends to a private underground level. The collected nobles leveraged their wealth and connections to obtain several important artifacts, each located in a different wing of this level and watched over by elusive magical guardians.

Talithspire Manor. Near the center of the wealthiest district in the old city stands Talithspire Manor, a slender, four-story home with conical slate rooftops and narrow windows set with crystalline panels in lead-and-iron frames. A high fence of spike-tipped black iron surrounds the property, beyond which is an eerily sparse and cobbled courtyard punctuated by a few spindly pear trees. The manor is owned by Madame Talith, the aged matron of her clan. No one knows for sure how old she is, but there are portraits of her childhood rumored to be well over a century old. While the house appears to see little traffic, careful observers note she hosts guests several times a week, all similarly aged nobles who arrive by carriage in late evening. These visitors and the nature of the meetings have sparked many rumors among her wealthy neighbors.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- ***Conspiracy of Succession.*** The ruler of a powerful kingdom has died under suspicious circumstances, and several nobles are vying for control of the throne. The PCs find themselves caught in a deadly political game as they navigate allegiances, unmask hidden conspirators, and ensure the rightful heir ascends to power, preventing chaos and civil war.
- ***Cursed Bloodline.*** A noble family is plagued by a centuries-old curse that threatens to wipe out their entire bloodline. The PCs are called upon to break the curse, which requires finding ancient relics, delving into forbidden magic, and facing formidable supernatural foes. Their success or failure will determine the fate of the noble family and their ancestral lands.
- ***Disgraced Lord/Lady.*** A once-respected noble is accused of a heinous crime that they claim they did not commit. The PCs take on the role of investigators, tasked with uncovering the truth and proving the noble's innocence. They delve into the

depths of intrigue, interrogate witnesses, gather evidence, and confront those who seek to bring down the accused noble.

- ***Haunted Estate.*** An ancient noble estate is rumored to be haunted, and the PCs are hired to investigate and dispel the supernatural presence. As they explore the sprawling mansion, they uncover dark secrets, encounter vengeful spirits, and must confront the tragic history of the noble family. Their actions will determine whether peace can be restored to the haunted estate.
- ***Lost Successor.*** A noble family discovers the existence of a long-lost heir who could disrupt the current line of succession. The PCs are entrusted with finding and protecting the newfound heir from those seeking to eliminate them. Their quest takes them through dangerous territories and requires them to gather allies and unravel the truth behind the heir's disappearance.
- ***Rival Houses.*** Two influential noble houses are locked in a bitter rivalry that threatens to escalate into open conflict. One of the houses approaches the PCs about spying and sabotaging their rivals, perhaps under the guise of justice or vengeance. As they carry out their clandestine tasks, the PCs navigate the consequences and moral implications of their actions.
- ***Stolen Heirloom.*** The PCs are tasked with retrieving a priceless family heirloom that is believed to have been stolen by a rival noble family. Their investigation leads them through a web of political intrigue, hidden agendas, and rival noble factions as they race against time to recover the stolen artifact and restore honor to the noble house.
- ***Tax Revolt.*** The people are rebelling against oppressive taxes and tyrannical rule. The PCs are tasked with negotiating a peaceful resolution to bridge the divide between the nobility and the commoners. They must navigate the volatile situation, defuse tensions, and prevent conflict from escalating into an all-out revolution.

CRIMINAL FACTIONS

Criminal factions consist of organizations intent on manipulating the social and political system for personal gain. Their actions range from petty theft, blackmail, and arson to espionage, insurrection, and assassination. Faction members come from all walks of life, some driven to criminal activities by circumstance while others lust for the promise of wealth, power, or sheer excitement. Criminals of high birth leverage their status or wealth to grasp positions of power within the faction. Those born into poverty carve out their status with determination and cunning.

Not all criminal factions are evil, especially within a morally ambiguous or corrupt social or political structure or when in opposition to an evil ruler. In this scenario, the faction might work to sabotage, sow dissent, and bankrupt a tyrant. Despite being branded a criminal faction, its actions against the throne are morally just.

Criminal Factions as Campaign Villains. A criminal faction's moral complexities and specialized skills make them intriguing adversaries. A typical criminal faction consists of diverse individuals with unique skills and backgrounds, providing a potential range of memorable villains, from ruthless crime bosses to cunning thieves, skilled assassins to master strategists. They are known for disregarding the law and participating in illicit activities, though they might also follow a code of honor that governs their operations. They can have far-reaching effects on society, often causing chaos, fear, and instability. Their activities can disrupt trade, corrupt political systems, and destabilize regions. Encounters involving complex criminal schemes force PCs to unravel the layers of conspiracy and reveal the depth of criminal influence.

Villainous themes typically focus on justice, redemption, and the struggle against oppression:

- ***Gang Warfare.*** Criminal societies often operate in a complex network of rival factions and gangs, vying for power and control. Characters frequently get dragged into the conflicts between criminal organizations or must work to dismantle an entire network of rival factions. Competition between rival factions forces all those involved to navigate shifting alliances, forge alliances, and strategically target key figures or resources.
- ***High Stakes Heists.*** Factions orchestrate elaborate schemes with high stakes against wealthy, intelligent, and well-prepared adversaries. As much as the faction appreciates getting rich, they equally enjoy the thrill of pulling off a successful heist or outmaneuvering rivals. Adventures feature burglarizing heavily guarded vaults, infiltrating secret lairs, or intense chase sequences. Odds of success are often stacked against the faction.
- ***Intrigue and Subterfuge.*** Criminal organizations thrive on secrecy, deception, and manipulation. They operate in the shadows, pulling strings and orchestrating elaborate schemes. Individual factions

create a web of intrigue, forcing rivals to navigate through layers of deception to uncover hidden agendas and outwit cunning adversaries.

CRIMINAL MOTIVATIONS

Use any of the following motivations to help flesh out why the faction does what it does.

Assassination. The faction employs skilled assassins and negotiates lucrative contracts to eliminate influential figures that threaten faction operations or that hold valuable secrets, which are possibly used for leverage.

Blackmail. The faction gathers compromising information on influential nobles and high-ranking officials, using it to manipulate them for personal gain or to further the guild's interests.

Counterfeiting. The faction creates counterfeit gold coins, flooding the market with the fake currency. Guildmembers profit by exchanging counterfeit coins for genuine ones, inciting economic chaos in the kingdom. Alternatively, an organization might specialize in producing forged deeds or other legal documents, fake gemstones or jewelry, or valuable items by silverplating cheap materials and passing them off as fine goods.

Disruption. The faction orchestrates attacks and disruptions along crucial trade routes, hindering the flow of goods and causing economic instability. This threat allows them to profit from smuggling and to extort merchants that seek alternative routes.

Espionage. The faction recruits and trains a network of spies and informants to gather intelligence on rival factions, political figures, and law enforcement. This gives them a significant advantage in planning heists, avoiding capture, and staying one step ahead of their enemies.

Extortion. The faction extorts protection fees from local merchants, threatening to steal their goods or sabotage their businesses if they refuse to pay. The threat of violence assures a steady stream of income for the guild and a tight grip on the local economy.

Fight Club. The faction arranges illegal fighting tournaments where participants, often slaves or prisoners, battle to the death to entertain wealthy spectators who place bets on the outcomes.

Heist. The faction plans a daring heist to infiltrate the heavily guarded royal treasury and steal the kingdom's most valuable treasures, leaving it in chaos.

Infiltration. The faction strategically places their members within the city watch or local law enforcement, gaining inside information and ensuring that investigations into their activities are compromised or redirected away from the guild.

Kidnapping. The faction abducts the relatives of influential nobles and demands a hefty ransom. They operate from hidden locations, making it difficult for the authorities to track them down.

Scam. The faction infiltrates noble households, posing as long-lost relatives or distant heirs. They manipulate the family's trust to wrest control of the noble's personal finances and social influence.

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

The following locations provide backdrops for criminal factions that can be easily added to any campaign.

Ironcrag Garrison. On an isolated rocky crag, jutting from the frigid waters and pounding waves of the Northern Sea, there rises a fortified tower of gray-green stone known as the Ironcrag. The garrison's impenetrable walls and merciless guards hold some of the realm's most notorious criminals, all serving life sentences. Nevertheless, the garrison's walls hold other secrets. A powerful criminal faction lurks within these iron cages, forged from unlikely alliances.

CRIMINAL FIGURES OF INTEREST

Low-Status	Criminal NPCs
Cat burglar	Lisarin Slyhands plies her trade as a cat burglar, rooftop runner, and safecracker, specializing in high-end homes. PCs might hire her for reconnaissance to assess the layout and security of a potential target.
Cutpurse	Bron the Whip is a cutpurse, preying on the crowds of passing pedestrians. He occasionally sets up the gullible to distract potential targets, framing it as street performance or a joke or wager between friends. He attempts this trick on the PCs.
Enforcer	A gruff, heavily muscled half-orc, Grugnar the Brute sells his services as a thug to various criminal factions—or whoever has the coin. While his intimidating presence is enough to resolve most encounters, he does so enjoy violence. Someone might hire Grugnar to teach the PCs a lesson.
Hustler	Padris is a transporter, shuttling goods between smugglers and merchants that trade on the black market. He is somewhat cowardly and easily broken for information about clients and deliveries.
Snitch	Posing as a sickly old beggar, Gabby the Snitch watches the streets, collecting snippets of conversation and observing the comings and goings. He sells the juiciest information to the highest bidder, whether law enforcement or criminal organizations. PCs might seek Gabby for information.
Mid-Status	**Criminal NPCs**
Darkblade	Areth Arn is a master thief whose talents have earned him notoriety among rival factions. He is rumored to have connections throughout the criminal underworld. He can be an asset to allies, but those who fail to protect his privacy tend to disappear mysteriously.
Fence	Shrewd and well-connected, Hyron buys and sells stolen goods, often acting as a middleman for his clients. The fence has extensive knowledge of the criminal underworld but holds secrets tight in the hopes of living longer. PCs might seek Hyron to procure hard-to-acquire items.
Master Forger	Known by merchants and smugglers as the Yellow Serpent, Yas Aomen specializes in forging receipts and documents. His work is of the highest quality so doesn't come cheap. He delivers finished pieces in unmarked vellum envelopes sealed with yellow wax marked with a coiled serpent.
Mistress of Secrets	A former street orphan, Arymith assumed the surname of a deceased aristocrat and, posing as a lost heir, duplicitously climbed her way into the ranks of nobility. Though now possessing power and wealth, she secretly despises the aristocracy and sells their secrets to the highest bidders.
Poisoner	A skilled assassin, Fyrinessa assumes the role of some servant in order to access the kitchens and personal chambers of the wealthy. Once in, she often manipulates others into unwittingly poisoning her victims' food, drink, or bathwater and then framing the unknowing accomplice for the murder.
Hight-Status	**Criminal NPCs**
Butcher	Lord Byrak "The Butcher" extorts protection money from business owners, using raids, import inspections, and confiscation of goods as motivation. He keeps numerous public officials on his payroll, and his thugs pose as mercenaries or city guards as needed.
Diabolist	Bound by a pact, the crime lord Dirasma offers up ritualized sacrifices to her patron in exchange for title and power. While most of those under her don't know of the pact, she maintains an inner circle of fanatics that assist in her dark deeds.
Grand Assassin	The Prince of Sorrows lords over a group of elite assassins dedicated to a grisly death god. No one outside the faction has ever seen him as he works though his vassals. Some claim he doesn't actually exist but is merely a manipulative fiction.
Liberator	Balwor hates the aristocracy. Over the years, he has built up a network of sleeper agents within the courts—drawn from the poor beholden to the land—to act as spies and saboteurs. He is planning a violent coup, which he claims is in service to the common folk.
Puppet Master	Known among his followers as the Gray Chancellor, Earl Mortimas is a master of political scheming, manipulation, and espionage. He secretly controls a network of corrupt officials and spies, which he uses to consolidate power, maintain social status, and control the kingdom from the shadows.

Originally coming together for survival, these murderous brutes run a criminal empire from within the garrison walls. Faction members rely on a network of corrupt guards and well-trained crows to communicate with the outside world, and issues within the prison are easily handled through bribes and intimidation. Those asking too many questions about the faction lose access to meals, water, or social contacts. Open opposition results in death.

Deep within the garrison's heart lies the Shadowed Sanctum, a cellblock filled with several rows of stone isolation chambers, each sealed with a heavy iron door. Faction leaders convene there for any critical decision-making. Within are secret maps, valuables plucked from guards, and confidential documents. It is constantly guarded, and only those the leaders trust are granted entry.

CRIMINAL FACTION GOALS

d10	Goal	Means and Ends
1	Black Market Control	***Means.*** Run illegal gambling operations. Sell illicit substances. Smuggle contraband. ***Ends.*** Gain absolute control over the black market.
2	Corruption	***Means.*** Blackmail public officials. Bribe guards. Covertly exert social or political influence to allow illegal activities to go unnoticed or unpunished. ***Ends.*** Gain control or leverage over officials, law enforcement, and other influential figures.
3	Criminal Dominance	***Means.*** Define clear roles within criminal underground. Employ labor divisions and chains of command. Enforce discipline. Reward loyalty and obedience and punish deviation. ***Ends.*** Become integral to the success of all criminal activity in the region.
4	Exclusion	***Means.*** Assassinate key targets. Build reputation for violence. Weaken competitors. ***Ends.*** Eliminate or neutralize rival criminal organizations and prevent upstarts.
5	Exploitation	***Means.*** Exploit conflicts, wars, or periods of unrest. Manipulate power struggles. Take advantage of weakened institutions. ***Ends.*** Capitalize on political or social turmoil to further criminal exploits.
6	Influence	***Means.*** Dominate rival criminal factions. Exploit new opportunities. Expand into new territories. Monopolize illegal trades. ***Ends.*** Grow influence and control through continual expansion and diversification of criminal activity.
7	Invisibility	***Means.*** Deny the faction's existence. Destroy evidence, cover tracks, and wrap up loose ends. Develop false identities and alternate personas. Maintain a low profile. ***Ends.*** Avoid detection, arrest, and prosecution by law enforcement.
8	Revenge	***Means.*** Assert power and dominance. Commit acts of public humiliation or slander. Disrupt operations. Retaliate threefold against slights. ***Ends.*** Enact full-scale revenge on a long-despised individual or faction.
9	Underground Network	***Means.*** Establish and maintain a vast network of contacts, informants, and safehouses. ***Ends.*** Create a clandestine infrastructure to covertly share information and elude capture.
10	Wealth	***Means.*** Extortion. Heists. Kidnapping. Thievery. ***Ends.*** Amass wealth and secure financial resources.

Seven Spires. Within the towers of an ancient cathedral hides the operations of the Atrusu crime family. Only accessible through secret street entrances and treacherous rooftop paths, the location offers a vantage for watching the city and for carrying out covert operations. The interconnected spires provide private meeting spots, secret chambers, and hidden caches. Narrow walkways and treacherous bridges connect them and other nearby structures, providing members with quick and discreet access.

The Penumbral Chamber, in the broken clock tower, offers a panoramic view of the city. Atrusu leaders assemble there under cover of darkness to discuss strategy, assign missions, and resolve internal disputes. They communicate with agents throughout the city by positioning the clock's hands to broadcast secret codes known only to the shadowy members.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- ***Heist Gone Wrong.*** A heist orchestrated by the thieves' guild goes awry, and a guild boss calls on the PCs to clean up the mess and help the would-be thieves avoid capture. The PCs must navigate a guarded castle to salvage the situation.
- ***Missing Informant.*** An informant gathering critical information has gone missing. PCs must locate and rescue them before the knowledge falls into the wrong hands.
- ***Mole.*** The PCs are tasked with infiltrating a criminal faction to gather evidence or disrupt operations. They must earn the trust of its leaders while keeping their true intentions hidden.
- ***Rogue Benefactor.*** A mysterious figure claiming to oppose a mutual rival approaches the PCs. They offer information, resources, and assistance in destroying the individual, but their motives and identity remain secret. While the offer is compelling, success might have negative repercussions. PCs must decide if they trust this enigmatic benefactor.
- ***Secret Vault.*** Rumors circulate of a secret vault hidden somewhere within the thieves' guild and rumored to contain vast treasures and dangerous secrets. The PCs are hired to locate and break into the vault, navigating its traps and the guild itself.

DIVINE FACTIONS

Divine factions differ from other religious groups and ecclesiastical powers in that their beliefs and goals don't necessarily parallel those of their associated churches. Instead, such factions function more as special interest groups. Some use the influence of their beliefs, of their faith, to create a context for supporting a ruling dynasty or specific policies. Others devote themselves to causes such as expanding the faith or establishing cross-faith alliances. A faction might utilize its influence to appeal to local worshippers. Similarly, they might accept donations of wealth or acquire land holdings by providing their divine support to a ruling lord or a royal lineage.

Such factions often follow strict hierarchies. High-ranking members typically hold similarly powerful titles as within their formal congregations. Sometimes, these positions overlap. For example, a deacon might serve as a low-ranking intermediary between the faction and the common

folk whereas a bishop might also assume a similarly powerful leadership role within a faction. Factions with goals that run contrary to the religious hierarchy might invert the tradition or break from the structure altogether. Secretive factions tend to establish complex and convoluted hierarchies known only to members.

These factions focus on furthering the agendas of the divine or semi-divine powers they serve. Members tend to hold their beliefs above all else and closely adhere to the teachings of their religious leaders or sacred texts directly. Complex relationships arise when individual goals come into conflict with church or faction goals.

DIVINE FIGURES OF INTEREST

Low-Status	Divine NPCs
Musical Acolyte	Sophia is an apprentice musician who sings in a temple choir and helps maintain its musical instruments. She always carries her hymnal and sings from it throughout the day.
Naive Initiate	Recently initiated into the secretive cult, Well of the Mystic Flame, Arasm Kyr is tasked with the daily gathering of ritual ingredients. He refuses to speak of his training and claims to seek enlightenment.
Silent Brother	Tas lives in a local monastic order and maintains a vow of silence. He spends much of each day in meditation and physical training but also performs basic tasks for the order throughout the greater community.
Solemn Sister	Myrina is an elderly nun, living in a nearby though secluded convent. She prays through the evening, tends the gardens in the morning, and assists with daily chores and rituals in the afternoon.
Urban Monk	Brother Caiden serves at his monastery's soup kitchen for the city's underserved population. He offers guidance to troubled souls and assists in daily operations.
Mid-Status	**Divine NPCs**
Abbess of the Veil	Pradissia trains monks how to better control their bodies and to practice astral projection. Of those who seek her out, she accepts only the most dedicated as disciples.
Chaplain	Rianeth the Grim serves as the chaplain of a holy order of paladins that act independently from the local church and crown. He bolsters the soldiers with wards before battle and heals the injured.
Shrinekeep	In the old cemetery at the city's north end, there stands a small shrine. A young priestess, Sister Aelera, conducts daily rituals there and acts as a healer and advisor for any seeking solace. Rumors persist that her devotion stems from a dark secret.
Spirit Speaker	Matron Isolde of the Order of the Merciful Hand oversees operations at its nearby charitable hospital. Rumors say that she guides the dying into the afterlife and shares the wisdom of the dead with the living.
Vicar of the Flame	Within the crypts under the city, Vianey Eveningstar stands watch over the eternal flame that wards those interred from the taint of undeath. Many seek her for purification rituals and for knowledge of the omens of the Epoch of the Fallen Star.
High-Status	**Divine NPCs**
Archbishop	Archbishop Lucian IV heads the church, proving a strong and influential spiritual leader in the community for decades, and still leads ceremonies on high holy days. He tends to wield his tremendous authority like a club and greatly dislikes when his edicts are challenged.
Black Abbot	The faceless leader of the secretive Black Abbot order tasks himself with guarding forbidden knowledge, preserving ancient lore, and guiding those seeking hidden truths. Rumors hint that he maintains discreet ties with the church.
Chief Theologian	Despite his humble appearance, the aged Cardinal Goetri Vyn brutally enforces religious orthodoxy, roots out heresy, and performs the purifications of the faithless.
Grand Inquisitor	Dahaleria serves as chief interrogator and head of the inquisition of the Order of Shadowed Truth. Her faction hunts and eradicates heretics and cultists. She routes hidden enemies and maintains order within the religious hierarchy.
Soulweaver	Mother Aieringold specializes in the harnessing of one's soul to manipulate life energy and restore vitality. It is rumored that she can raise the dead and even transfer a soul to another body.

While some in a faction might argue aspects of their faith, it is the rare individual that will challenge established dogma.

Divine Factions as Campaign Villains. A villainous divine faction presents a compelling mix of ideological conflict, corrupted power, supernatural danger, moral ambiguity, and rich symbolism. While there are villainous factions dedicated to evil gods (see also *Campaign Builder: Cities & Towns* for more on cults and secret societies), the focus here is instead on those that have deviated from their primary beliefs, perhaps corrupted by an outside source. Such a faction can serve as a potent force for evil—even if they don't see themselves that way.

Villainous themes typically focus on abuse of authority, perversion of beliefs and symbols, and manipulation of dogma, whether for personal gain or for a larger goal:

- ***Covert Corruption.*** A faction might have covert members who maintain public personas for a mainstream religious institution. Such manipulators are often influential leaders that use the church's hierarchical structure, vast resources, and network of devoted followers to their advantage. These factors make them capable of exerting significant influence and implementing grand plans. As villains, the faction can use their power and connections to pull strings behind the scenes, manipulating events and using their resources to further their dark agendas.
- ***Fanatics.*** Evil divine factions often hold extreme or fanatical views. Their beliefs clash with other factions or dominant social or political values. Use such ideological clashes to explore themes of tolerance, freedom, and the nature of faith.
- ***Otherworldly Influences.*** Corrupted or villainous factions might channel dark or forbidden magic, summon malevolent entities, or perform twisted rituals that threaten the balance of the world.

DIVINE FACTION GOALS

d10	Goal	Means and Ends
1	Charity	***Means.*** Promote the welfare of the less fortunate. Provide services, such as hospitals, orphanages, shelters, or educational institutions. ***Ends.*** Alleviate suffering and poverty.
2	Influence	***Means.*** Promote the welfare of followers. Shape laws, policies, and societal principles. ***Ends.*** Dominate political and social influence.
3	Interfaith Dialogue	***Means.*** Foster understanding, respect, and peaceful coexistence among religious groups. Promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation. ***Ends.*** Bridge gaps between faiths and harmonize disparate communities.
4	Protection	***Means.*** Confront external threats. Protect followers. Provide sanctuary, counsel, or defense. Stop persecution. ***Ends.*** Ensure the safety and well-being of surrounding community.
5	Revelation	***Means.*** Commune with divine forces. Perform rituals, meditation, or prayer. Seek revelations, visions, or prophecies. ***Ends.*** Gain insight into the future or into hidden knowledge.
6	Spiritual Guidance	***Means.*** Deepen connections to a deity or belief system. Guide religious practices. Help followers find meaning in their lives. ***Ends.*** Provide spiritual guidance and support to the faithful.
7	Spread the Faith	***Means.*** Establish missionaries. Organize religious events. Proselytize to and indoctrinate new adherents to the faith. ***Ends.*** Spread their religious teachings and convert new followers.
8	Tradition	***Means.*** Document ceremonies and practices. Eradicate changes or alternate interpretations of church doctrine. Preserve sacred texts. ***Ends.*** Uphold and preserve the traditions and rituals of their faith.
9	Unity	***Means.*** Bridge internal divisions. Promote cooperation. ***Ends.*** Unify sects, denominations, or religious orders within region.
10	Values	***Means.*** Guide individuals toward a set of particular values. ***Ends.*** Create a community based on moral guidelines.

DIVINE MOTIVATIONS

Use any of the following motivations to help flesh out why the faction does what it does.

Corruption of Religious Texts. The faction alters or suppresses religious texts, selectively editing scriptures to justify their actions, manipulating religious laws, and exerting control over the beliefs and practices of their followers.

Divine Assassinations. The faction employs assassins disguised as devout priests or clerics to eliminate influential figures that threaten their power. These assassinations are carried out under the guise of religious sacrifice or divine punishment, ensuring that no suspicion falls upon the faction.

Excommunication. The faction excommunicates individuals who oppose their authority or challenge their beliefs. They use the threat of eternal damnation or divine punishment to silence dissent and maintain absolute control over the faithful.

Exploitation of Devotees. The faction preys on the vulnerability and devotion of their followers, using emotional manipulation and coercion to extract resources, wealth, or acts of service. They exploit the trust and faith of their followers to enrich themselves.

Fanatical Prophet. The faction follows a charismatic and influential leader who distorts the teachings of their religion to promote extremist ideologies and incite violence. Faction members willingly commit heinous acts in the name of their twisted faith, with the leader at the forefront of their destructive plans.

Inquisitor of Heresy. The faction consists of inquisitors that hunt and persecute individuals accused of heresy. They use their religious authority to condemn innocent people, accusing them of crimes they did not commit. Their true motivation is to eliminate rivals, gain power, and enforce their twisted interpretation of religious doctrine.

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

The following locations provide backdrops for divine factions that can be easily added to any campaign.

Heretic's Block. Situated in a remote and desolate wasteland far from civilization, there sits a lone fortress of time-weathered gray stone. Known as Heretic's Block, its imposing thick walls climb high into the sky, only narrow slits allowing some small amount of light to intrude. A massive iron gate, reinforced with heavy bars, serves as the only entrance. Heavily armored sentinels, wearing tabards emblazoned with the holy symbol of the god of wrath, stand watch at the gate.

Heretic's Block is a prison-fortress built for the sole purpose of interrogating heretics. The structure's formidable design instills fear and discourages escape, built with a focus on security and containment. Inside, the halls are narrow and winding, lit by flickering torches. Deeper within, far from prying eyes, lie the interrogation chambers, designed to break the spirit of those who dare challenge the revealed truth. Thick iron bars partition its cell-lined walls, and rusty chains hang from the ceilings, ready to bind the accused.

Most Holy Temple. This grand temple stands dedicated to a deity of war, protection, or justice. The military especially finds solace and inspiration within its hallowed halls, organizing rituals, forging alliances with religious leaders, and receiving divine blessings before embarking on campaigns. Often serving as an unofficial outpost, it also provides military leaders with a base from which to launch covert operations.

The facilities have been built to accommodate the training and education of officers and specialists: complete with lecture halls, training fields, sparring arenas, and dormitories. It also serves vital roles as a knowledge center and recruitment hub. The

surrounding grounds serve a visiting troop's encampment needs and act as a staging area for missions, providing supplies, command tents, and medical facilities to support soldiers during campaigns.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- ***Divine Trials.*** A religious order holds a series of rigorous trials to test its members' faith, devotion, and skills. Its clerics invite the PCs to participate, facing physical and spiritual challenges and earning the faction's recognition and rewards.
- ***Heretic's Cult.*** A cult has emerged, spreading heretical teachings that threaten to undermine the authority of the local church. An aged priest tasks the PCs to infiltrate the cult, expose its leader, and stop their nefarious plans. The cult's leader possesses knowledge of a forbidden ritual that, if performed, could unleash great power but at a terrible cost. PCs must prevent the ritual's completion, confronting cultists and unraveling the mysteries behind the dark magic involved.
- ***Holy Purification.*** The religious faction believes a nearby village has fallen under the influence of dark forces or heretical beliefs. The PCs must investigate to uncover the truth and, if necessary, cleanse the village of the taint, all while navigating political intrigue and facing resistance from the villagers. While studying one of the faction's ancient texts, the PCs uncover a cataclysmic prophecy. To avert the impending disaster, they must fully decipher the text to perform three sacred tasks.
- ***Pilgrimage.*** The church is organizing a sacred pilgrimage to a remote shrine or holy site. They enlist the PCs to ensure the safety of the pilgrims, protecting them from bandits and other dangers along the way.
- ***Prophesy Manipulation.*** A cloister of high-ranking priests claims prophetic visions and revelations. They use these supposed insights to manipulate events and further their agenda, twisting or outright fabricating prophecies to maintain control and instill fear. One priest is an advisor to a monarch or influential figure, and providing counsel aligning with their self-serving goals, they use their knowledge of religious doctrine and prophecy to manipulate the crown, pushing it toward actions that benefit their ambitions. A noble or state official becomes concerned and approaches the PCs for help.

MERCANTILE FACTIONS

Commerce and trade define a mercantile faction's goals and aspirations. A merchant leader might possess a wealth and influence that allows them to wield power like a lord or high priest. Still, one cannot assume such a faction's members' positions in the greater social hierarchy. Within the faction, rank is based on wealth and must be earned, and though chicanery or nepotism might play a role, advancement is generally meritocratic, for money speaks with greater authority than blood.

Mercantile Factions as Campaign Villains. A prominent merchant guild or other mercantile faction has the potential to wield immense economic power and widespread influence. They can make formidable campaign villains, controlling vast resources, monopolizing trade routes, and manipulating markets to their advantage. They pursue profit at any cost, including by engaging in illicit activities, exploiting vulnerable populations, and disrupting the balance of political power. Opposing such a faction requires strategy, diplomacy, and often moral flexibility.

Villainous themes typically focus on money and influence, often through devious and surreptitious schemes that might flout law or, rather, manipulate its every nuance and loophole:

- ***Connections.*** Mercantile factions maintain vast regional networks, allowing leaders to pull strings and manipulate events to their gain. To uncover secret trade alliances, PCs attempting to stand against a guild must navigate a web of intricate trade negotiations and economic espionage. The underlying agendas and plots of greedy merchants create layers of intrigue that require both cunning and diplomacy to navigate. Additionally, villainous merchants employ skilled assassins, spies, and other mercenaries to protect their interests and eliminate threats.
- ***Monopolies.*** Corrupt factions gain wealth and power by monopolizing the trade of essential, rare, or desirable goods. Controlling access to food, building supplies, or magic items creates conflict centered around wealth and scarcity. Evil factions force those affected by their monopolies to decide whether to support the exploitative practices or fight for economic equality. This creates conflicts that explore themes such as greed, corruption, and the price of power.
- ***Vast Wealth.*** Villainous factions use their accumulated wealth to fund ambitious and nefarious projects. Currency is used to bribe leaders and incite conflict between political powers. Wealth fuels grand ambitions.

MERCANTILE MOTIVATIONS

Use any of the following motivations to help flesh out why the faction does what it does.

Corruption. The faction bribes government officials and key influencers to ensure favorable legislation and regulations that benefit their interests. Continual manipulation and intimidation help to maintain a stranglehold on trade and suppress threats to power.

Extortion Racket. The faction runs an extortion racket, coercing local businesses into paying exorbitant fees for "protection" against imagined threats. Those who refuse face harassment, sabotage, or physical violence.

Guild Sabotage. The faction covertly undermines rival guilds by spreading rumors, inciting conflicts, and sabotaging operations. Weakening or eliminating competitors solidifies the guild's dominance.

Monopoly. The faction conspires to control the supply and pricing of a critical commodity, manipulating the market to ensure exorbitant profits while crushing competitors. Threats and coercion help in the acquisition of smaller guilds or businesses, and manipulating debt forces competitors into submission. Consolidating power assures continuing influence.

Smuggling and Trade Routes. The faction orchestrates intricate smuggling operations, bypassing taxes and tariffs. Successfully transporting illicit goods across borders or through guarded trade routes generates immense wealth and evades law enforcement.

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

The following locations provide backdrops for mercantile factions that can be added to any campaign.

Banker's Tower. Rising high above the city skyline, the tower is the financial epicenter for the merchant's guild. This towering structure is home to a network of bankers, moneylenders, and accountants who oversee their many economic transactions. The tower serves as a hub for the guild, where members gather to trade, negotiate contracts, exchange valuable information, and deploy caravans.

From the tower runs a network of routes that stretch across the lands. The routes provide the lifelines of trade to distant cities and kingdoms. Guarded by mercenaries and patrolled by hired guards, these perilous routes are key to the guild's success.

MERCANTILE FIGURES OF INTEREST

Low-Status	Mercantile NPCs
Blacksmith	Master Olin Stonebridge is a successful blacksmith. His shop supplies arms and armor to adventurers and local militias, and he occasionally takes on special commissions. His apprentice Estrith assists in forging and repairing simple tools and deals with customers.
Fishmonger	Jonan the Fishmonger hawks fish from his stall at the local market. His offering varies based on his daily catches from nearby rivers or the coast. He gives cooking tips and recipe suggestions to everyone he encounters.
Street Peddler	Atricia wanders the streets, pushing a cart of trinkets, inexpensive charms, and small curiosities. She attracts passersby with her lively personality.
Town Crier	Maizy, the town crier, regularly rings a large brass bell and announces important news and events to the townsfolk. She keeps the community informed and occasionally acts as a messenger.
Mid-Status	**Mercantile NPCs**
Apothecary	Wyneth works as an apothecary, selling herbs, potions, and medicines to locals, offering treatments for ailments, and sharing herbal lore. PCs might seek her for supplies, herbal or alchemical research, or experimental new potion.
Captain	Tandan Alshan captains a merchant ship for a wealthy trading company, transporting goods to ports and nearby coastal islands. He oversees operations, negotiates trade, and ensures the safety of cargo.
Haberdasher	Posh aristocrats seek master tailor and famed designer Albstroth Whitestone for his exquisite garments. PCs might seek him for cosmopolitan attire, information on uniforms and exclusive fashions, or the clothing sizes of various members of high society.
Master Craftsman	Radgrift is a highly skilled woodworker who trades in exquisite wooden furniture. He supplies noble households, creates custom pieces for wealthy clients, and participates in local craftsmanship competitions.
Vintner	Wynsong Glimmerest owns a thriving vineyard and winery that produces and sells fine wines and spirits to local nobles and wealthy patrons. She oversees production and keeps meticulous records, which contain information about her clientele and more than a handful of secrets.
High-Status	**Mercantile NPCs**
Caravan Kingpin	Shandrine Myrahn controls a vast fleet of trading caravans, built from the shipping and trade industries, and his agents control lucrative trade routes, manage caravans, negotiate trade rights, and set terms with foreign merchants. PCs might seek him for work as caravan guards or transportation.
Guildmaster	Isynea built her considerable fortune trading in diverse goods, including textiles, spices, and raw materials. As head of the merchant's guild, she sets trade policies and maintains relationships with other guilds and influential merchants. PCs seeking to negotiate with the guild must win her favor.
Highborn	After Baroness Amelyne of Redoak inherited considerable land, she expanded her properties through agricultural ventures and resource extraction and uses her title to develop land and influence local politics. PCs might seek her aid in gaining property or in negotiating food supplies for an allied lord.
Magic Item Dealer	Amaliyse Faer deals with notable adventurers, paying a fair coin for magical artifacts and arcane goods. She is the proprietor of the famous Eldritch Emporium, her massive and heavily guarded magic shop. PCs might seek her aid in sourcing magical items or connecting with spellcasters.
Warmonger	Lord Edrac Ravenswood gained a place on the merchant's council to influence negotiations with suppliers. He now oversees a vast trading network, specializing in arms, mercenary contracts, and siege weaponry. PCs might seek his favor to aid a lord or kingdom in procuring weapons or troops.

MERCANTILE FACTION GOALS

d10	Goal	Means and Ends
1	Commercial Expansion	***Means.*** Buy foreign businesses. Construct branch offices, trade posts, and warehouses in new territories. Extend caravan routes. ***Ends.*** Expand operations into new territories and markets.
2	Cultural Exchange	***Means.*** Build companies in foreign territories. Establish shipping companies. Form trade alliances. Hire foreign workers and use foreign resources. ***Ends.*** Grow profits through exchange with foreign mercantile factions.
3	Economic Stability	***Means.*** Invest in other mercantile factions. Maintain fair trade practices. Promote financial stability. Sponsor public projects. Support local businesses. ***Ends.*** Establish a stable and prosperous economy within the realm.
4	Guild Supremacy	***Means.*** Broker exclusive rights and privileges. Control trade routes. Establish monopolies. Set industry standards. ***Ends.*** Dominate rival merchant guilds or associations and become the preeminent guild within a trade sector.
5	Legacy	***Means.*** Invest in the arts and commission grand monuments and landmarks. Patronize renowned artists and architects. ***Ends.*** Establish a prestigious reputation and leave a legacy for future generations.
6	Market Domination	***Means.*** Control key industries. Gain a significant share of local and regional markets. Monopolize trade routes. ***Ends.*** Earn a dominant position in the regional economy by outperforming and surpassing competitors.
7	Philanthropy	***Means.*** Acknowledge social responsibility. Contribute to the well-being of the community. Engage in philanthropic endeavors. Support charitable causes. ***Ends.*** Impact society in positive way while enhancing reputation and garnering public support.
8	Political Influence	***Means.*** Engage in lobbying and bribery, shaping policies and regulations to benefit trade activities. Forge alliances with powerful nobles. Support choice political candidates. ***Ends.*** Wield influence over the ruling authorities.
9	Profit Maximization	***Means.*** Employ cheap labor. Engage in most profitable transactions. Establish lucrative business ventures. Expand trade networks. ***Ends.*** Generate wealth by maximizing profits.
10	Resource Acquisition	***Means.*** Engage in mining, logging, or fishing. Establish trade agreements with distant lands. Secure steady resource supply chains. Sponsor expeditions to discover new resources. ***Ends.*** Acquire control over valuable resources and raw materials.

Once a year, the tower hosts a grand trade fair, attracting merchants and traders from throughout the realms. PCs tasked by the guild attend the fair to engage in fierce negotiations, uncover hidden agendas of rival factions, and protect guild interests from sabotage attempts.

Trade Emporium. Nestled within a walled district of a prosperous city lies the Emporium, a gated community exclusively reserved for members of the merchant's guild. It is a bustling hub of commerce with opulent mansions, extravagant marketplaces, and luxurious meeting halls where merchants gather to make deals and shape economic policies. Just inside the walls rests the grand marketplace, a sprawling complex of interconnected stalls, warehouses, and meeting halls where merchants from across the realm gather to conduct business.

A council of wealthy and influential merchants runs the Emporium, negotiating lucrative trade deals, uncovering smuggling operations, and exposing corrupt practices within their ranks. Council members often have conflicting interests and rely on barristers and other financial agents when negotiating favorable trade agreements in a complex web of politics and cutthroat competition. The council chambers serve as the epicenter of decision-making for the guild.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- ***Cursed Contract.*** A prominent merchant has unwittingly entered into a contract with a dark entity, binding the fate of their entire guild. The guild approaches PCs to help break the contract to prevent misfortune and doom. PCs must uncover the details of the pact, seek out the necessary components for a ritual, and confront the malevolent force behind it.
- ***Financial Scandal.*** A scandal rocks a respected merchant's guild, threatening to tarnish its reputation and destabilize the local economy. PCs investigate the scandal, seeking to uncover financial fraud and identify the responsible parties. Along the way, they must confront corrupt officials, infiltrate unscrupulous financial institutions, and protect innocent guild members from false accusations.
- ***Missing Caravan.*** A valuable trade caravan, belonging to a powerful merchant guild, has vanished without a trace while traveling through a dangerous region. The guild hires the PCs to investigate, which unravels a web of banditry, rival factions, and hidden agendas. PCs must navigate treacherous terrain, track down the missing caravan, and uncover the truth behind its disappearance.
- ***Stolen Secrets.*** A rival merchant faction has stolen vital trade secrets from the PCs' patron guild. The guild tasks characters with tracking down the thieves, recovering the stolen knowledge, and ensuring the rival faction doesn't gain an unfair market advantage. Along the way, they encounter spies, engage in high-stakes negotiations, and face off against enforcers.
- ***Trade Summit.*** PCs receive an invitation to a grand trade summit that gathers merchants and guild representatives from across the realm. Hidden agendas, rivalries, and diplomatic tensions emerge amid the bustling marketplace, embroiling PCs in high-stakes negotiations, trade disputes, and potential sabotage that threatens to disrupt the delicate balance of power in the merchant world.

MILITANT FACTIONS

Militant factions are alliances of diverse individuals skilled in martial matters. While these factions organize independently, a military leader often answers to a higher authority, such as an emperor or high priest. The faction chooses its ranking members by their devotion to the faction and by the active pursuit of its goals.

While high-ranking individuals might wholeheartedly push an agenda, lower-ranking members, such as conscripts, mercenaries, and others not bonded by faith or blood, can be less predictable or wholly unreliable. Many join seeking personal opportunity or gain rather than for any ideological conviction. Among low-ranking members, personal conflicts pose more significant risks, and trust breaks along the lines of kinship or greed when facing faction goals. A militant faction

might demand initiates swear oaths or follow chivalric codes, helping to unify its members. Joining might require a screening period, during which the applicant might receive additional training and be required to complete tests of mettle.

Militant Factions as Campaign Villains. A militant faction's expertise in combat and covert operations poses a significant threat to those who oppose them. As trained warriors or clandestine operatives, they possess specialized skills, tactical knowledge, and access to advanced weaponry or forbidden magic.

Villainous themes typically focus on visceral, head-to-head conflict and self-serving ambition:

- ***Clandestine.*** Militant factions might maintain a hidden agenda. Uncovering the extent of the faction's influence could require digging through layers of conspiracy, unmasking traitors within ranks, and exposing dark, well-guarded secrets. The faction might also rely on unifying elements, such as uniforms or insignias, or on specialized communication, such as secret symbols, codes, or hand gestures, making their plots extremely challenging to decipher.
- ***Hierarchal Structure.*** Militant factions maintain hierarchical structures and strict codes of loyalty. This cohesion enables them to carry out strategic plans, execute coordinated attacks, and maintain secrecy within their ranks. The hierarchical structure makes identifying faction motives difficult and safeguards the members from any outsiders attempting to infiltrate or dismantle their operations. The one at the top holds the real power and makes the big decisions.
- ***Ideological Motivations.*** Ideologies bind people together and drive them. Such a faction might seek to establish a totalitarian regime, conquer neighboring lands, or purge certain peoples or creatures from the realm. An evil faction's

MILITANT FACTION GOALS

d10	Goal	Means and Ends
1	Defense	***Means.*** Defend the homeland and people from external threats. Fortify borders. Maintain a strong army. ***Ends.*** Ensure the safety and security of the realm.
2	Eradication	***Means.*** Conduct covert operations. Eliminate oppositional figures. Launch preemptive strikes. ***Ends.*** Eradicate specific enemies or rival factions that threaten faction interests or ideology.
3	Expansion	***Means.*** Conquer and subjugate neighboring lands. Expand territory and influence. ***Ends.*** Establish a mighty empire or kingdom under faction control.
4	Exploration	***Means.*** Explore new lands. Increase knowledge. Uncover antiquities. ***Ends.*** Establish outposts and claim uncharted territories.
5	Order	***Means.*** Enforce laws. Hunt out traitors, dissenters, and conspirators. Quell unrest and suppress rebellion. ***Ends.*** Maintain law and order within the realm to ensure stability and peace.
6	Power	***Means.*** Control the mechanisms of power. Manipulate political structures to advance agenda. Seize positions of authority. ***Ends.*** Consolidate power and influence within the realm.
7	Promote Ideology	***Means.*** Convert or subjugate others. Enforce religious doctrines. Suppress dissenting opinions. ***Ends.*** Establish ideological purity.
8	Restore Balance	***Means.*** Compel rivals into alliances. Intervene in conflicts. Leverage influence through diplomatic resolutions. ***Ends.*** Restore harmony and equilibrium in the realms.
9	Succession	***Means.*** Cache food, water, and other supplies. Seek independent funding. Stockpile weapons. Support allies who would benefit from a change in the political landscape. ***Ends.*** Break from established leadership and force change.
10	Suppress Magic	***Means.*** Destroy tomes, items, and artifacts. Dismantle magical organizations. Suppress magic users. ***Ends.*** Regulate or control the use of arcane arts.

MILITANT FIGURES OF INTEREST

Low-Status	Militant NPCs
Herald	Sharvos serves as standard-bearer, carrying her regiment's banner into battle as a rallying point. She can boost morale in her allies with her inspiring speeches, granting advantage on a relevant skill check.
Quartermaster	Raldron oversees the distribution of supplies. He also manages the armory and ensures the troops are well-equipped. PCs might seek him out for equipment, which is available to faction members at steep discounts, if not free. He is also knowledgeable on makers' marks.
Scout	As a scout, Etros Quol regularly navigates hostile territories to gather intelligence. PCs might seek her instruction in subterfuge or wilderness survival, granting advantage on a relevant skill check.
Siege Engineer	Engineer Morgrath constructs siege weapons and diverse fortifications. PCs might seek him for related training, especially with regard to their evasion and sabotage.
Watch Commander	Commander Garval oversees the castle guard. She devotes long hours to their training, ensuring they are well-disciplined and can effectively manage coordinated tactical maneuvers.
Mid-Status	**Militant NPCs**
Captain of the Briar	Mardus of the Briar commands a company of soldiers. He might approach the PCs for their assistance on a mission or serve as their opposition if the PCs belong to a rival faction.
First Lieutenant	Second in command, Isathor leads the scouts, providing her captain with vital intelligence. PCs might seek her out to trade news of the enemy, such as troop movements.
Master-at-Arms	Lieutenant Johorn trains recruits, honing their skills across various weaponry. PCs might seek him out for training, perhaps gaining a weapon proficiency or a feat.
Sergeant-Major	Erand Stone specializes in close-combat fighting. He is responsible for discipline, drilling the soldiers, and maintaining order.
Tactics Lieutenant	Lieutenant Lonbourne is a master of tactics and assists the captain in planning battles and executing battlefield maneuvers. She also advises on troop deployments and analysis of enemy weaknesses. PCs might seek her tactical advice, granting surprise in a relevant encounter.
Hight-Status	**Militant NPCs**
Admiral	Benthorn Seaheart is the king's chief naval strategist and fleet commander. An expert in amphibious assault, he oversees operations along the coast. The admiral might insist on the PCs service as foreign advisors or hired marines, perhaps in exchange for passage on one of his ships.
Grand Marshal	Kaelena is a master of mounted warfare and equestrian tactics, commanding a formidable cavalry. PCs might seek her out to get mounts trained. She frequently needs skilled riders and might hire the PCs as cavalry or couriers.
High Commander	Eldrin of Ninetowns is a master swordsman and brilliant tactician, inspiring his elite troops with a high degree of loyalty, his unparalleled leadership winning countless victories. PCs might serve under him for a time or could face off against him on the battlefield.
Siege General	A master of the art of siege warfare, including defending against it, General Nothamn is methodical and precise, expertly matching strategy to the conditions on the ground and understanding when to wait and when to breach. PCs might meet him during a siege encounter, on one side or the other.
War General	General Valridian serves as chief military advisor to the throne. A seasoned battle master, she now commands the entire royal army, focused of late on troop deployments and border defenses. She might conscript or hire PCs for a series of sensitive scouting missions before a military campaign.

aspirations conflict with those fighting for freedom and justice or with those seeking to protect the innocent from oppression.

- ***Internal Struggles.*** Conflicts with militant factions or secret societies can also explore complex moral dilemmas such as loyalty, honor, and the nature of power. Faction members might question their loyalty or be torn between their duty and conscience.

MILITANT MOTIVATIONS

Use any of the following motivations to help flesh out why the faction does what it does.

Coercion of Mercenaries. The faction coerces or bribes powerful mercenaries to personally pledge their loyalty to the faction's leader. By controlling a private army, they gain leverage over the ruling powers and can dictate terms to their advantage.

False Flag Attacks. The faction covertly orchestrates attacks on strategic locations or key individuals, framing rival factions or neighboring kingdoms. They secretly support or install puppet rulers in neighboring territories, exerting control and breeding fear and chaos to allow for the consolidation of power and exploitation of resources.

Manipulation of Loyalties. The faction seeks to exploit the loyalties of members of other factions by spreading rumors and sowing discord among their ranks, possibly gaining some new members from those affected.

Propaganda. The faction launches a sophisticated propaganda campaign, manipulating public opinion to view them as heroic and indispensable saviors. Through carefully crafted narratives, they rally the support and loyalty of the populace, further solidifying their power.

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

The following locations provide backdrops for militant factions that can be easily added to any campaign.

Azure Citadel. A stronghold hangs high upon a rocky cliff face on the kingdom's western coast, boasting high walls, a well-defended gatehouse, barracks, training grounds, and a central keep. The position monitors the border and safeguards trade routes from its highly defensible vantage. Numerous lookout towers, a garrison of soldiers and a small harbor, which provides moorage for a handful of warships, stand ever vigilant.

A network of underground tunnels that extend some distance from the coast provide for a sheltered supply chain and rapid communication with the crown. Due to its potential as a target for enemies. Its existence and details are kept strictly need to know. Though some

rumors have suggested the leadership is stockpiling weapons and treasure, perhaps for a potential coup, depending on who's doing the talking.

Hammerhold. Embedded within a sprawling network of mine tunnels beneath a lonely mountain rest the ruins of a subterranean stronghold. Built in centuries past by a dwarven clan that mysteriously vanished, this site is characterized by natural defenses, intricate traps, and hidden passageways. A secretive group has recently and clandestinely taken up residence, and they appear to be preparing for an extended conflict, but the focus of any imminent aggression is currently unknown.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- ***Ancient War Machine.*** A long-lost war machine of immense power and destructive capability is unearthed by a violent organization. PCs must race against time to prevent them from fully activating and deploying it, which could devastate the entire region and plunge it into chaos. PCs must find a way to neutralize or safely destroy it.

- ***Stolen Battle Plans.*** Someone has stolen sensitive battle plans from the crown. The PCs must track down the spy, recover the plans, and prevent the enemy from capitalizing on the information.
- ***Traitor.*** While performing their duties, the PCs uncover evidence of a high-ranking officer secretly aiding the enemy. They must gather sufficient proof and expose the traitor without alerting the opposition.
- ***Vanishing Soldiers.*** Soldiers, and perhaps colleagues, are mysteriously disappearing near the border of a remote territory. The PCs are sent to investigate, and they ultimately uncover that eldritch powers are responsible. They must rescue the soldiers and find a way to end the threat before it engulfs the entire region.
- ***War Orphan.*** In the aftermath of a devastating battle, the PCs come across a young orphan who holds a gruesome secret that could change the tide of the war. They must protect the child from those who would exploit this knowledge, all while unraveling the mystery and determining its significance.

CREATING A FACTION

The most important element to consider when creating a faction is the role it will play in the game world, which will in turn make fleshing it out easier. In this manner, the faction is similar to an NPC: it has an agenda, and its members employ abilities and resources to achieve goals. Further, it must function in the game world, so consider its various levels of influence (and potentially those of its members if notably different for some reason), such as in the social, political, and religious arenas, and its ability to generate wealth and acquire resources.

STEP 1: DETERMINE ROLE

Determine how the PCs would view the faction. While it's always fun to think up ideas and motivations for various factions, consider starting the design with the intent of filling a specific need within the game world based on the perspective of the PCs. For instance, a faction can provide a strong framework for recurring characterization:

- A complex nemesis that seems to be always one step ahead.
- A shadowy and mysterious bystander that leaves the PCs constantly guessing as to their motivation.
- Or a staunch ally able to offer assistance, resources, and a public voice.

Determine whether the PCs would likely view the faction as an allied, adversarial, or neutral party. Also determine whether the PCs' perception of the faction is accurate or if the faction conducts itself in a manner inconsistent or even completely opposite from its public facade.

STEP 2: DETERMINE GOALS

Once the role of the faction is decided, determine some goals that align with it. For example, if a faction's primary role is to maintain political dominance over an exiled noble clan, they might demand the persecution and detainment of all members of that clan or even confiscate or redistribute the land and wealth once owned by those exiled. Also make use of the various schemes detailed earlier to help define faction goals. It's recommended to set the general alignment, for the faction leaders at least, since this will influence what measures they might be willing to employ in order to attain their goals.

STEP 3: DETERMINE MEMBER MOTIVATION

Determine why anyone belongs to the faction and what such members might hope to gain from joining. In other words, a given NPC, for instance, should have a reason for joining an evil occult society. It shouldn't just be because they are evil themselves. Instead, that occult society might participate in ritual sacrifices to appease a demanding god in exchange for blessings or power, and individuals might join out of fear or desperation, perhaps with the intent of sacrificing their ethics to change their circumstances.

STEP 4: DETERMINE INFLUENCE

Determine how much power or influence the organization wields relative to other factions, whether social, political, or religious. This needn't be anything more than broad strokes, just enough to determine the extent of their influence over in-game events and encounters that directly affect the PCs. Throughout a campaign, a faction's influence might shift in various ways as the PCs progress and the game world changes.

SAMPLE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

Below is a sampling of additional factors to consider when determining a faction's influence:

- ***Alliances.*** Decide if the faction maintains alliances with individuals or organizations. Note how the alliance extends the faction's influence as well as the extent of the influence.

- ***Congregation.*** Decide how the organization gathers and holds group discussions. Decide who is required to attend and if the faction congregates openly or covertly.
- ***Contracts.*** Decide if the faction is bound (either favorably or unfavorably) to another individual or organization. Set the contract's terms and any benefits. Similarly, set a consequence for breaking the contract.
- ***Piety.*** Even some non-clerical factions might still operate in accordance with various religious tenets. Decide whether that's the case with this faction.
- ***Properties.*** Decide on a location for the faction's base of operations. Properties might consist of one or more buildings within a city or of a parcel of land in the country or something more nonconventional. Factions that own property might make a public show of their holdings while less scrupulous factions likely keep their properties secret. A faction of vassals might gain property by serving the property lord.
- ***Reputation.*** Decide on the faction's reputation (whether good or bad), which represents the public's opinion and can help resolve social encounters. Individual members can also operate as representatives of the faction, and this might change their perceived reputation, situationally modifying the faction's reputation to be lesser or greater than their actual reputation.
- ***Wealth and Other Resources.*** Decide on the faction's access to wealth and other resources, which can provide a significant advantage when it comes to attaining faction goals. A faction that expends resources on a goal might require extra time before they can attempt to attain a different goal. Similarly, lack of wealth or resources might hinder the completion of faction goals.

SAMPLE FACTIONS

The following sample factions provide organizations that can be easily added to any campaign. Modify them as needed or simply use them as inspiration for other new factions.

ORDER OF THE CRIMSON NIGHTSHADE

The Order of the Crimson Nightshade traces its origins to the Age of Plagues. A group of enigmatic knights founded the order to deal with a rising tide of flesh-starved undead. Those joining the faction pledge their lives to eradicating the undead and protecting the realm from their sinister influence.

Role. The faction introduces an ongoing threat of the undead to the game world. It provides players the opportunity to join the faction and go on missions to cleanse problem areas as well as to explore areas with strong ties to necromancy and the dead, which have the potential to become problems. Introducing the PCs to the threat of the undead before they actually encounter the creatures can also amplify the tension.

Goals. The faction conducts twilight hunts in which agents venture into haunted forests, ancient crypts, and abandoned graveyards to seek out and vanquish the undead. The primary goal of a hunt is always to destroy undead, but the hunts frequently have additional objectives that participants keep secret. Rumors persist that members seek parts of a mysterious artifact associated with the undead that was lost or destroyed during the Age of Plagues.

Motivation. The following motivations drive the faction in all its endeavors:

- ***Dark Magic Mastery.*** The faction recognizes the power of dark magic in their fight against the undead. Some members join with the intent to learn the arcane arts and to study necromancy and forbidden rituals in order to better understand and counter their enemies.
- ***Stygian Blade Techniques.*** The faction's members are renowned for their distinctive combat techniques. They favor using long, slender blades forged from obsidian and etched with intricate designs. Priests enchant the blades to disrupt the necromantic energies that sustain the undead, making them particularly effective against these creatures. Members might join seeking to learn the secret arts of the stygian blade.

Influence. The following factors impact how influential the faction is and how it is perceived by others:

- ***Alliances.*** The faction is on good terms with churches opposed to undeath, and several members attend regular services.
- ***Congregation.*** The faction operates in secrecy, seldom revealing their presence or true nature to the outside world. Their gothic appearance and enigmatic practices have fueled rumors and legends, painting them as fearsome protectors and harbingers of the macabre. Their true purpose, however, remains known only to those within their ranks, committed to the eternal war against the undead. Faction members partake in midnight vigils, gathering in candlelit chambers to recite ancient incantations, share tales of battles, and meditate on the darkness they face. These vigils serve

as a source of spiritual strength and as a reminder of their eternal struggle against the forces of undeath.

- ***Contracts.*** The faction sometimes takes contracts with authorities such as churches or lords to deal with making sure bodies do not come back from the dead. These contracts are paid in resources, privilege, or exclusive rights to access the crypts and burial grounds where undead are problematic.
- ***Piety.*** While there are more than a handful of clerics, paladins, and similar individuals with religious background, the order itself focuses more on historical and arcane topics associated with the Age of Plague. However, members do take solemn oaths, binding themselves to a code of honor and dedication and vowing to wield their weapons and darkly adorned armor in service to the eradication of the undead, seeking to restore balance and peace to the realm.
- ***Properties.*** The faction's stronghold is a foreboding fortress atop a desolate hill shrouded in perpetual mist. Within its shadowed halls, order members undergo rigorous training in combat, dark magic, and the study of undead creatures. The fortress is adorned with macabre artwork and eerie decorations, emphasizing the faction's connection to the realm of the undead.
- ***Reputation.*** The faction is generally respected by the common folk. They are considered somewhat aloof but reliable. Members can expect to be welcomed in most settlements.
- ***Wealth and Other Resources.*** The faction has access to the wealth and resources they acquire by fulfilling contracts and performing services. Their ability to generate wealth is entirely based on their reputation. It's worth noting that the order also expends a lot of resources performing its duties, so there are times of scarcity, when they are forced to seek aid or take additional contracts, which might be less than favorable or extremely dangerous.

SHROUDED VEIL

The Shrouded Veil is a priestly order dedicated to the enigmatic and ever-changing God of Changes and Mysteries. They believe that their god's essence lies in the realm of the unknown, so that is where they seek the divine spark.

The members are devout priests and practitioners of the occult. They delve into the mysteries of magic, drawing upon both divine and arcane sources, to gain deeper insights into the nature of reality.

Role. The faction provides a source of knowledge for PCs that focuses on existential threats, esoteric lore, and arcane mysteries. The faction might hire PCs to undertake missions to recover items or explore anomalies or to serve as test subjects in dealing with those anomalies. PCs might in turn use the faction for aid in research or to acquire magic items.

Goals. The faction's primary goal is to safeguard and expand esoteric knowledge. They collect ancient texts, artifacts, and rituals, striving to understand the intricate workings of the universe and the divine mysteries that lie beyond mortal comprehension. The faction is unafraid to explore forbidden realms and knowledge. They might journey into dangerous spaces, from ancient crypts to extradimensional realms, in their quest for enlightenment and discovery.

Motivation. The following motivations drive the faction in all its endeavors:

- ***Balance.*** The faction believes in the balance between chaos and order. They see chaos as the wellspring of creativity and change while order provides structure and stability. Members seek this balance, striving toward that delicate equilibrium between, recognizing that the resulting interplay reveals the greatest mysteries of existence.
- ***Transformation.*** The faction's members perform intricate rituals to invoke transformative energies and embrace change. These rituals involve symbolic representations of growth, rebirth, and metamorphosis, for they believe change is the catalyst for spiritual evolution.
- ***Wisdom.*** The faction selectively shares their acquired knowledge and wisdom with the world. Members join for their genuine thirst for enlightenment, for their desire to learn esoteric teachings and to walk the path of mystery and change.

Influence. The following factors impact how influential the faction is and how it is perceived by others:

- ***Alliances.*** The faction has alliances to the church of the god of mysteries. They are a division of the church and have access to church resources.
- ***Congregation.*** The faction holds most of its gatherings within the church or in spaces owned by the church. They are reclusive and maintain a modicum of separation from church authority. Faction dealings are kept to strict secrecy.
- ***Contracts.*** The faction doesn't hold contracts with others, though high-ranking church officials might exert influence over the faction.
- ***Piety.*** The faction is extremely pious. It can be called upon by the church at any time.
- ***Properties.*** It holds no property independent from the church.
- ***Reputation.*** The faction's reputation is one of community respect, but some view them with fear and distrust.
- ***Wealth and Other Resources.*** The faction has moderate access to wealth, though that is also tied to the church. They have significant access to artifacts and relics, which the faction collects and catalogues as part of its mandate. The faction occasionally uses this access as leverage when interacting with other factions.

RUNNING COURTLY ADVENTURES

Running a courtly adventure creates unique challenges—for both the GM and PCs—as they typically feature a more non-linear, "sandbox" style of play in which the adventure doesn't drive PCs through a singular path but opens to multiple possible options in the unfolding story.

But given this nature, certain impediments and obstacles are also necessary to reflect the adventure's hallmarks of power dynamics, political influence, courtly intrigue, and covert operations, of dark secrets and audacious displays. (Plus, some safeguards can be helpful when too many options might be overwhelming.) This might be as simple as limiting the PCs' access to certain areas, such as based on privilege or title or on something more ephemeral like political or social connections. Obstacles such as locks, wards, traps, and guards prevent easy access to particular districts, buildings, chambers, black markets, secret armories, or even to a high-stakes dice game. Limited-access areas also motivate PCs to use skills creatively, to investigate more fully, and to interact with NPCs to find alternative paths forward. Perhaps they earn the trust

or respect of a manor servant, they perform a task that earns them an honorary title, or they acquire a skeleton key from someone in a bar fight.

There should also be consequences, such as fines, imprisonment, or even death, for being caught in certain locations or performing certain actions. Providing the PCs a clear understanding of local laws and their enforcement can also help shape the experience for all, both fleshing out the game world to make it feel more real and lived in and establishing a loose framework within which to play. The PCs should know what constitutes criminal activity, for instance, and how it will be handled. Such legal information will help PCs make choices (and help the GM determine consequences). So armed, the PCs will wield their skill and ingenuity to navigate obstacle after obstacle.

In such an adventure, it's the NPCs that drive the conflict. Their actions, especially those from positions of power, demand reactions from the PCs, so it's important to have defined the intentions, motivations, and personalities of important NPCs. Provide appropriate information as PCs interact with the NPCs, enabling players to anticipate their intentions. Also provide opportunities for the PCs to make allies, which can be helpful for leveraging the PCs into certain actions later, such as villains exploiting those relationships, and for disseminating information (and adventure hooks) to the PCs. For adventure hooks, they should be relatively straightforward to start; misinformation, red herrings, and plot twists are far more effective when used sparingly (and the PCs will often naturally create their own dead ends and turnabouts anyway).

Trying to drive a singular storyline (or "railroading") is best avoided. Rather, use the tools available to focus on the various NPCs and their schemes, the idea that the game world is in motion, that events are already happening, except that now the PCs have arrived on the scene to impact all the NPCs' lives, uncovering secrets, forcing hands, and shifting goals.

COURTLY LIFE

Political maneuvering, secret plots, complex interpersonal relationships—the intrigue of courtly life can bring something different to the game, especially for players most familiar with dungeon delves and extensive combat. PCs will instead get sucked into complex social webs with the NPCs and be forced to navigate hidden agendas, manipulations, both subtle and overt, and power struggles.

Courtly adventures often bring encounters and challenges of a more social variety to the forefront, and instead of swinging a sword, PCs are better served by talking, gathering information, uncovering secrets, and focusing on strategic decisions. Interactions are often based more on skill and heavily feature NPCs, each with distinct personalities, motivations, and relationships, that frequently force the PCs into morally ambiguous choices. And the rewards are often in the form of hints and clues that lead to further intrigue. Choices during such events still have consequences, often significant even if not immediately obvious, that impact the PCs' reputations and allies and that change the overall political and social landscape of the game world.

This section details potential court-inspired scenarios that can be adapted to any campaign and that tend to focus on character interactions other than strict combat.

ASSASSINATIONS

It's simply a truth that people kill other people, whether that be for power and wealth or for vengeance or for high-minded beliefs. The act itself might be irredeemable, but the motivations behind it might range from base villainy to tainted heroism, such as if the target were more terrible than the act of killing them.

This scenario is described from the point of view of stopping an assassin but could easily be recast if the PCs are performing the assassination (which would be a moral threshold event that should have prior consent from all players).

The adventure begins when the PCs receive word that someone is going to be assassinated. They likely know the presumed target, though probably not when and how it will happen, nor by who. It could be a secret organization they are currently unaware of, influential rivals of the target, or a rival faction of their own trying to get to them.

Investigation. PCs must first investigate the target, using skill checks to determine their routines, weaknesses, defenses, any bits of information that will make their job of safeguarding easier—and maybe even learn more about the killer. This could take almost any shape but preferably the players have some choice in the matter. Do they alert the target or keep them in the dark? Do they bring in authorities or handle it themselves? Are they patient and decide to watch from a distance over time, are they going to infiltrate the target's home to look for clues, or are they going to sneakily tail the target wherever they go? However they approach this, they will find clues that help them effectively plan their next steps.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- Alerted rivals who might launch a counterattack or set up a false target.
- Alerted the guards who might shake down the PCs or start an investigation.
- Tipped off the target or the killer that something is amiss, causing them to change their routines, making the PCs' lives harder later.

Approach. Once the PCs have the needed information, they must make a plan on how to stop the killer or how to protect the target. Perhaps they'll make disguises, create elaborate cover identities, access secret passages, or rely simply on stealth to identify and approach the killer unaware. Or maybe they fortify the target's position and wait for the killer to show themselves, perhaps posing as the target. Encourage the players to plan this out as much or as little as they want. They might need to gather resources, forge new alliances, acquire specialized equipment, or hire skilled accomplices. Reward especially strategic plans by giving PCs advantage on a relevant roll made during the mission.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- PCs identified by killer, who retaliates, perhaps hiring thugs or even coming themselves. Or rather, they're instead misidentified by the target as the killers.
- Target or killer put on high alert, perhaps hiring bodyguards or going to ground (or hiding themselves away until things cool off).

Assassination. While the actual assassination can use standard combat rules, consider presenting the PCs with an alternative that more heavily relies on skill checks or roleplaying, such as the killer using poison, complex traps, improvised weapons, or even an elaborate plan that sets someone else up to take the fall. Perhaps it's made to look like an accident, or perhaps it's done to leave a very clear message. Reward the PCs for creatively handling the situation.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- PCs identified by rival faction who might come after them or put out a significant bounty for their capture or death.
- PCs suspected and under investigation by guards or some other form of law enforcement—or maybe even actively pursued—so if they didn't make any contingency plans, they'll be forced to do it on the fly, such as how to cover their tracks and where to hide.

CORONATIONS

Whenever a ruler takes the throne, the occasion is marked with a coronation—a grand public spectacle and formal ceremonial acknowledgment of the transfer of power. Appointing a new ruler can change a campaign's structure, and actions made during a coronation can shape policy, alliances, and conflicts, possibly defining or tainting the ruler's reign. A PC's personal, moral, and political beliefs determine their general opinion of the incumbent and of how their actions might be viewed.

The challenge to running a coronation is balancing the various components of the ceremony with the surrounding political intrigue. Beforehand, determine how each PC's political views compare with the politics of those of the new ruler. Next, build in social conflict by using three distinct political factions or

noble houses, each vying for influence and power in the kingdom. During the coronation, the PCs must interact with the different factions, forming alliances and deciphering their motives based on their politics. For the three factions, make sure that at least one is in opposition to the party's general views and at least one can be swayed to align with the party.

To make an adventure out of a coronation, there are two prime scenarios:

- ***Avert Disaster.*** In this scenario, the PCs side with the ruler or have a vested interest in the coronation going as planned. Conflict occurs when some faction or entity attempts to stop the coronation. The PCs must uncover the plot (whether that be assassination, kidnapping, general mayhem, or something else) and then identify and stop the culprits. To this end, the PCs will need to use their social and investigative skills to canvass the attendees, such as intuiting troublesome behavior and noticing secret signals.
- ***Stop the Coronation.*** In this scenario, the PCs are opposed to the ruler. This could be for any number of reasons but should be significant enough to warrant the potentially serious consequences of failure. For instance, the PCs might need to uncover and present evidence to the court that the ruler isn't the legitimate heir to the crown.

Announcement and Preparation. Initially, officials will publicly announce the coronation, and those responsible will begin their preparations for the event, including staging the venue, sending invitations, arranging for security, and taking care of all the other details of ceremony. News will spread throughout the region, attracting the attention of powerful factions and individuals who must now consider the potential effect the ruler might have on their interests. Amid the excitement, rumors might begin to surface about the ruler.

During this phase, the PCs can gather intelligence about the upcoming event and should gain a clear idea of the following:

- Location of the coronation and its general layout.
- NPCs scheduled to attend the event.
- Rough overview of the event's security.
- Sense of which attendees support or oppose the coronation.

Track the public opinion and the general attitudes of the commoners, nobles, and various influential figures toward the coronation. PCs might take on specific actions, such as making speeches or otherwise engaging with NPCs to shape opinion. Interactions likely concern topics such as the legitimacy of the ruler and the efficacy of their policies.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- PCs discover that an individual close to the ruler is heavily involved in the rivals' plot.
- Rivals deliberately spread rumors, or they exchange notes that contain false plans to misdirect any potential interference.

Arrival and Procession. Attendees take their seats, and guards and other officials take their positions. Once everything is in place, a trumpet, music, or some other form of heraldic signal is given to start the ceremony. The procession is a grand affair, during which the ruler, accompanied by royal dignitaries, military escorts, guards, and officials, makes a formal entry and walks to the stage. The procession is a spectacle unto itself, and the ruler might arrive on the back of a tremendous draft animal, such as a horse, ox, or elephant, and march down a long walkway littered with the petals of fresh flowers or the leafy boughs of a sacred tree. Along the walk, people burn incense, throw grains, or release butterflies. The distraction allows PCs to watch for clues.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- Access to various parts of the coronation is regimented by social standing and profession with noble courtiers, diplomats, and loyal advisors having the most access to events, so PCs can determine if the seating arrangements are not set according to plan or if specific individuals are in places they shouldn't be or trying to slip away.
- The coronation is peace bonded. Only official guards are permitted to attend with weapons and armor.

Recognition and Oath. Officials recognize the rightful ruler with much ceremony and offer up the symbols of authority. After accepting, the ruler makes a public proclamation of acceptance, typically in the form of an oath of allegiance to the land and its people.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- Ceremonial items, regalia, or artifacts associated with the coronation hold great symbolic importance and might even possess magical properties. Someone stealing, cursing, or using these items inappropriately could cause significant damage.
- PCs might determine that the person performing the ceremony is not the designated cleric or other officiate.

- The oath might contain a spell that enchants the ruler, an officiate, or crowd members. It might contain a code or command words that trigger an item or sleeper agents.

Anointing and Consecration. A religious figure, such as a bishop or high priest, anoints the ruler with holy oil or performs a blessing to sanctify their reign.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- The anointed ruler might be an impostor.
- The holy oil might be cursed or poisoned.
- The officiate might fake the anointing to discredit or annul the coronation.

Crowning. The moment of crowning is a pivotal stage of the coronation. The crown, a symbol of royalty and authority, is placed on the head of the ruler, usually by a religious leader, representative of the nobility, or a designated official. The act of crowning signifies the formal assumption of power. After the crowning, various individuals or representatives pay homage to the ruler. Members of the nobility, government officials, or representatives from the clergy pledge their loyalty and support.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- Rivals bribe the guards to eject the PCs from the ceremony.
- The crown has gone mysteriously missing.

Recognition by the People. The newly crowned ruler stands on a balcony or stage and addresses the crowd to express gratitude and make any promises or declarations. After addressing the crowd, the ruler exits the venue.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- A rival attempting to stop the coronation places attendees in grave danger by setting off an explosive device, committing arson, or summoning a violent monster.
- The ruler is targeted by an assassin.

Festivities. Following the triumphant coronation, attendees engage in games, parades, and feasts to celebrate and demonstrate their support for their ruler.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- A rival attempting to escape takes a hostage.
- A successful or botched assassination might place the castle and the surrounding territories on military lockdown.

MARRIAGES

A marriage can bring families together in joyous celebration, or for some, perhaps it's more solemn and holy. As part of an adventure, a marriage can be used to emphasize interpersonal relationships and power dynamics among everyone involved. But tensions can also run high and old grudges can quickly resurface.

When running such a scenario, utilize NPCs with unique personalities, backgrounds, and motivations to help build the story. Populate the wedding with diverse guests, including friends, family, allies, and potential rivals. Provide opportunities for PCs to interact with guests through conversation or activities. Encourage PCs to be social and make friends.

In anticipation for an upcoming wedding, allow PCs to engage in pre-wedding preparations, such as choosing wedding attire, arranging decorations, and general planning. Provide opportunities to participate

WEDDING RUMORS

d8	Rumor
1	***Arranged.*** The parents or other individuals arranged the couple's marriage.
2	***Birthright.*** One of the lovers uses forged documents to present themselves as a member of a higher social class.
3	***Polygamy.*** One of the lovers is a polygamist and has another spouse or several lovers elsewhere in the kingdom.
4	***Pregnant.*** One of the lovers is pregnant, and their traditional parents want to wrap up the marriage before anyone finds out.
5	***Questionable Dowry.*** The families exchanged gifts, but the cow gifted to one of the families appears sick.
6	***Ruse.*** The marriage is a ruse. At least one of the lovers isn't in love, and they are only marrying for political, social, or financial reasons.
7	***Sacrifice.*** The couple performed a ritual or sacrifice to ensure a happy future.
8	***Tainted Bloodline.*** One of the individuals getting married has an ancestor that had an unwholesome affair with a supernatural entity, and that has tainted their blood.

WEIRD TRADITIONS

d6	Tradition
1	***Exorcism.*** Favored guests are called upon to spit on the couple in order to drive out evil spirits. PCs must make ranged attack rolls to hit the couple and bring them luck. Any character rolling a 1 on this attack accidentally spits on someone else, causing a social uproar.
2	***Foul Consumption.*** Favored guests participate in eating or drinking something awful. PCs must make a DC 5 CON save to avoid regurgitating the substance and bringing bad luck.
3	***Goat Kissing.*** Favored guests must kiss a goat to bring the newlyweds luck. One of the PCs must kiss a goat without getting butted in the head. During the kiss, they must calm the goat with a DC 5 CHA check to prevent giving the new couple bad luck.
4	***Pastry Pulling.*** The hosts invite all singles to pull colorful ribbons from various desserts. The various colors are said to predict relationships in the future. Have each PC who participates call a number from 1 to 8 and then roll 1d8. If the number they called matches, they gain Luck.
5	***Spousal Stealing.*** Following tradition, the PCs must "steal" one of the lovers. (Use the NPC with whom they have the strongest connection.) As part of the ceremony, the PCs must then ransom the stolen spouse-to-be to the other's family in exchange for gifts.
6	***Wedding Dance.*** A favored guest must perform a special dance to entertain and bring luck. One of the PCs must make a DC 15 DEX check to perform well. If successful, the newlyweds' families gift the PC with a milk cow.

in cultural traditions, rituals, or tasks related to the wedding. If one (or more) of those getting married is a PC, the wedding ceremony and festivities should reflect their tastes and backgrounds. Incorporate cultural or religious customs, symbolic gestures, or unique traditions into the ceremony and celebrations. Design activities to engage PCs and guests, which might include rehearsal dinners, bachelor/bachelorette parties, ceremonial rituals, or traditional games. Create challenges or opportunities for characters to make decisions that will impact the wedding ceremony but also future social or political events. Focus on character development and on building relationships during the lead-up to the wedding, allowing PCs to deepen their connections with NPCs and with each other. Create moments for heartfelt conversations, shared memories, or romantic interactions.

Rumors. Weddings are emotionally charged social events filled with gossip. As PCs socialize, they will undoubtedly hear tons of rumors about the couple and the various guests. Some of the rumors are true while others potentially cause conflict. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Wedding Rumors** table or create other relevant rumors.

Ceremony. Before the ceremony begins, guests gather at a venue such as a pavilion, church, or castle square where they feast, dance, and fulfill various traditions in order to build unity between the two families and their guests. Roll 1d6 and consult the **Weird Traditions** table or create other traditions.

Conflicts. A wedding ceremony doesn't require conflict, but sometimes it's inevitable. It can be used to disrupt festivities, threaten the guests, or to introduce a burden of long-standing consequences. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Wedding Conflict** table or create other conflicts.

PCs that effectively quash rumors and suppress conflicts avoid negative consequences. Should negative consequences arise due to the PCs' actions, the couple or members of their families might hold them responsible and demand they repair relations between attendees or the couple.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- Events at the wedding create a longstanding rift between the two families. If the couple still agrees to marry, several notable relatives walk out and refuse to acknowledge the union. In more severe cases, notable family members attempt to cancel or dissolve the union. In extreme cases, evidence or actions create a rift between the couple, prompting them to cancel the wedding and dissolve their union.
- Rumors and conflicts create negative feelings about the marriage, and both families view each other with suspicious trepidation. Despite the union, the two families do not view each other as allies.

Conclusion. A royal wedding should incorporate dramatic elements such as mythical creatures, enchanting music, and unique unity rituals. The officiant can call upon the blessings of ancient gods and use symbolic elements like fire and water to represent

WEDDING CONFLICT

d8	Conflict
1	***Arcane Sabotage.*** A rival of the couple hires a mage to play tricks on guests. Most are harmless, but they accidentally set fire to some of the decorations as they progress.
2	***Curse or Prophesy.*** A mystic or fortune teller was hired as entertainment. Most of the fortunes appear fun and good-natured, but when attempting to read cards for one of the newlyweds' parents, they turn pale and rush from the party. The upsetting display causes much distress among the guests, and the PCs must track the person down to reveal what they saw in the cards.
3	***Feuding Families.*** The couple getting married each come from opposing sides of a long-standing feud. The wedding serves to bring peace to both families, but there are still some unable to accept the marriage. These individuals attempt to crash the wedding and disrupt the ceremony. The PCs must handle the upstarts before the situation turns violent.
4	***Ominous Omens.*** During the event, guests witness a mysterious omen, such as an eclipse, comet, foul-smelling wind, or sudden hail. One of the couple's parents believes the portentous event was caused by the displeasure of an angry god to whom the families failed to honor with an offering. They insist that the PCs retrieve a unique object to give to the god before the wedding, or the couple will suffer years of misfortune.
5	***Pilfered Finances.*** The braggart father of one of the lovers insists on paying for the entire affair. He spares no expense, but when it comes time to pay, he discovers his locked coin chest has been pilfered. The PCs must determine who has stolen the coins or if the theft is a ruse concocted by the braggart.
6	***Promised Child.*** A twisted hag or warlock mysteriously appears and attempts to interrupt the ceremony before the couple exchanges vows. The figure holds a pact with one of the couple's great ancestors and expects the couple's firstborn child as their long-awaited payment.
7	***Stolen Ring.*** Someone finds the ringbearer knocked unconscious in a private dressing area. The ring is missing. The PCs must recover the stolen ring before the ceremony begins.
8	***Vermin.*** During the grand feast, the celebration falls under the attack of swarms of insects, rodents, or birds.

the joining of two souls. At its conclusion, a cleric performs a benediction to conclude the ceremony, followed by a joyous celebration filled with feasting, dancing, and enchantment. Incorporate the exchange of vows and promises during the wedding ceremony. If the PCs are the ones getting married, encourage them to create meaningful and personal vows reflecting their intentions, commitments, and hopes for the future. These promises can serve as adventure hooks in future adventures.

MASQUERADE BALLS

Parties are a grand way to spend time with friends, meet new people, and forget about everything but having fun. They're also great for showing off status, wealth and power, for one-upping colleagues and for keeping tabs on rivals.

In this scenario, PCs are going to a masked ball. Perhaps they were invited, or perhaps they were not. Either way, this is a masquerade, so they'll need to adopt false personas and don masks and costumes to conceal their identities. Beforehand, allow the PCs to create their alter egos. Encourage them to be creative with the false personas they're adopting and with their costumes and masks and what symbolism they might represent. They might also want to discuss whether they'll employ any secret communication while in attendance, what their escape routes are, and other contingencies.

The masquerade is a social challenge that focuses on social interactions and intrigue. While attempting to meet their objectives, the PCs must navigate the web of relationships, alliances, and rivalries among the other masked attendees. The PCs will engage in verbal duels, flirtations, and deceptions to uncover secrets and manipulate their opponents. Allow the PCs to discover the identities of others, whether through clever deduction or skill use. Certain revelations might create significant consequences that influence the campaign's narrative and the PCs' relationships. For example, a trusted ally who'd sworn not to attend is there, and if PCs can identify and covertly observe them, they might see them scheming with rivals.

Importantly, the masquerade does have a limited duration, so consider running the interactions in real time to add a sense of urgency.

The PCs might also have specific objectives for being at the masquerade:

- ***Exchange.*** The PCs must obtain information or an object to complete a larger campaign objective, and there's a certain guest that possesses it. The PCs know this individual will be at the event, along with various rivals, but they do not know their true identity. To find them, the PCs must determine the identities of partygoers without revealing themselves. Since it's likely the PCs possess magic that can quickly disrupt an investigation, the contact should be anonymous, and the exact nature of what is to be exchanged should be vague.
- ***Murder Mystery.*** The PCs receive invitations to an extravagant masquerade ball hosted by a prestigious noble family. However, the ball turns sinister once someone is murdered. The PCs become embroiled in a high-stakes investigation to uncover the culprit, and they must unravel a web of secrets, decipher masked identities, and navigate the intricate social dynamics of the other guests.

CLUES AT THE MASQUERADE

d4	Clues
1	***Conversations.*** While socializing, the PCs overhear bits of a hidden agenda that pique their interest.
2	***Dancing Surprise.*** One of the attendees (such as a contact or suspect) likes to dance and enjoys a certain waltz. It's slow and close, allowing enough privacy to whisper or covertly exchange small objects, such as a key, necklace, or handkerchief.
3	***Hidden Sigils.*** A mask bears a cleverly concealed insignia or crest, such as that of a faction, guild, or family.
4	***Unseen Attendee.*** A PC repeatedly experiences sensations of an invisible attendee, such as misplaced footfalls and phantom nudges.

Resolution. The masquerade ends and everyone leaves. The PCs might have successfully achieved some goal, such as finding a contact. Consequences develop if the PCs

COMPLICATIONS AT THE MASQUERADE

d8	Description
1	***Card Game.*** Waitstaff solicit one of the PCs to play a high-stakes card game in a back room.
2	***Clothing Mishap.*** A PC's mask slips, and it's clear another guest has noticed and recognizes the PC, though their own identity remains unknown.
3	***Faux Pas.*** A PC or guest misbehaves and is ejected by the house staff or royal guard. A trip or spilled cup of wine might create similar disasters.
4	***Fumble.*** After a PC fails a skill check, a cunning guest observes their poorly executed dance step or misuse of silverware and relays their suspicions to one of the PC's rivals.
5	***Insult.*** A perceived insult instigates an argument ending in a duel between two guests.
6	***Loose Lips.*** One of the PCs speaks to the wrong person in an offensive or careless manner. Their actions alert staff or rivals that one or more of the PCs are at the masquerade.
7	***Suitor.*** A contact accidentally attracts the interest of another attendee who becomes jealous over a PC's increasing attempts to draw the attention of the contact. Conversely, an unknown guest takes a romantic interest in a PC or engages them in a lengthy conversation about a business prospect, politics, or religion.
8	***Theft.*** A missing coin purse sparks allegations of an unidentified pickpocket. The victimized guest demands various attendees reveal their identities.

fail to achieve their objective, reveal their identities, or draw too much attention to themselves or their contact, potentially placing people in danger.

SABOTAGE

To deal a blow to one's opponents, sometimes the best targets are the things they care about, whether that be a business venture, social organization, lavish personal property, such as a mansion or a sailing ship, or any other object or organization that is held with regard or that simply stands in the way of an opposing agenda.

In such a scenario, the PCs might need to damage infrastructure, steal vital information, or discredit faction leaders. The sabotage can emphasize stealth or physicality or both or maybe different PCs have different roles. Perhaps they're especially good at picking locks, making alchemical bombs, bypassing guards and magical defenses, or disabling alarms and traps. Perhaps they want to use disguises, cover identities, bribes, false documents, magical charms, or diversions to slip past defenses.

Formulating and preparing for the plan is part of the fun and needn't be rushed. Once they've received their assignment—or come to this mission on their own—they will most likely need to gather intelligence, scout locations, acquire necessary tools or supplies, and develop a comprehensive plan.

Reconnaissance. The PCs will likely want to undertake an initial investigation to gather crucial information about their targets' vulnerabilities, schedules, and behavior patterns. Perhaps they need to retrieve a map from a guard captain's safe, to interrogate a prisoner locked in an asylum, or to break into an adjacent chamber or gain sewer access to achieve their goal. Any recovered intelligence identifies weak points that the PCs can exploit during the mission. (This is the "fishing expedition." If the PCs already have a very defined target, this can be combined with the scouting stage.)

SABOTAGE MISSIONS

d8	Mission
1	Break hostages or prisoners out of an isolated prison fortress.
2	Collapse a bridge or similarly strategic structure.
3	Deface or destroy a large monument dedicated to an evil despot or dark god.
4	Disrupt an alchemical or magical ritual.
5	Plant false evidence on a noble or other important NPC that marks them for treason.
6	Sabotage the armor or weapons of a rival knight before a grand tournament.
7	Scuttle or sink a ship of a despised rival while anchored in the city harbor.
8	Set fire to a deadly siege weapon.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- PCs missed something they needed and must alter their plans, perhaps requiring more time or resources.
- PCs need to hire a specialist for assistance.

Scouting. The next step requires scouting the target to determine access points, guard positions and changes, other guardians or traps, dead spots in security, and any other obstacles or vulnerabilities. To do this, perhaps the PCs case the location from hiding or as a customer or magically and from a distance. There might also be a time constraint, forcing this to be done quickly, perhaps taking place in real time once the PCs commit. Successful scouting reveals the steps needed to pull off the mission. Consider requiring each participating PC to complete at least one task, either independently or in tandem with others, so everyone has a part to play.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- PCs alerted the guards, perhaps leading to a fight or capture.
- PCs left evidence behind.
- PCs missed something important.

SAMPLE TASKS

d8	Task
1	Cast a spell, such as an illusion or enchantment.
2	Destroy, disable, or rig a booby trap into some machinery, weaponry, or structure.
3	Distract or disable security guards, watchdogs, or arcane scrying devices.
4	Find and steal a small object, such as a key.
5	Impersonate an important NPC.
6	Place or disable a trap on a door or hatch.
7	Plant or recover a piece of evidence on an NPC.
8	Scout and secure an alternate escape route.

Sabotage. Once everything's in place, the mission comes to a head, and all the meticulous planning is put to the test. The party must work together for this to succeed, and each PC should assume a specific task, one that they are particularly suited for and can take charge of. They might also want to figure out whether they'll be able to coordinate or not once they begin, such as with magic, or if they must rely on their timetable and skills to win the day, trusting to avoid complications.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- PCs alerted guards who called reinforcements.
- PCs caused greater collateral damage than intended.
- PCs missed the opportunity to escape, perhaps leading to capture or getting caught in the explosion.
- PCs were identified while escaping.

SIEGE EVENTS

War comes to the prepared and unprepared alike. Defending against a siege requires the PCs and their allies to prevent enemy forces from overrunning and conquering a defensible location, such as a castle, fortress, or city. The siege builds in drama and urgency, interspersed by intense battles. The PCs are forced to make strategic decisions to stave off the attacking forces trying to breach their defenses. As defenders, the PCs' primary objective might be to hold out until reinforcements arrive, to protect an artifact, or to safeguard a high-ranking NPC. (If the PCs are the aggressors, their primary objective will likely be simply to break through the location's defenses.) Determine the siege's outcome by weighing the composition and strength of the attacking force against the defenses and resources of the besieged (the defenders).

Location. The location plays a primary role in a siege (see **Chapter 3** for several locations suitable for a siege). Though technically a large-scale battle in which many individuals participate, the reality of a siege is that it is also physically isolating, so the PCs are still able to effectively perform as a party, facing off against opponents or performing other activities, even within the context of open warfare. Combining warfare rules (see **Warfare**) with standard rules for running encounters makes sieges a truly unique encounter.

It's the defenses of the location that are truly vital. The PCs should be made aware of all the defenses already available to them, such as walls, towers, battlements, traps, and magical wards. Individual encounters can then be used to highlight each defense, providing the PCs with unique concerns to focus on with each type of defense. Then using the warfare rules, determine how long the structure remains intact.

Allow a PC to instruct or command a group of NPCs to perform specific offensive or defensive maneuvers, using their PB as if they were a war leader. If a command structure is already in place, leaders killed during the siege provide the PCs with opportunities to step into leadership roles and make critical decisions.

Below are some samples maneuvers, available to PCs acting as war leaders, that can provide tactical advantage during the siege:

- ***Ambush.*** Troops concealing themselves can launch a surprise attack on passing enemies. Many factors can affect an ambush, including target selection, initial strike position, confusion, retreat routes, terrain advantage, coordinated execution, scouting, psychological impact, communication, and deception. An ambush requires planning, patience, and stealth. Success can give a significant advantage to the attacking force.
- ***Feint.*** Feinting uses deceptive troop movements to distract and mislead the enemy, creating an advantage for the attacking force. Timing is essential. A feinting army only deploys a few units to avoid unnecessary losses. Accurate intelligence and scouting are important for successful feints in that they identify an opponent's vulnerabilities and likely responses. Feinting also exposes weaknesses in the enemy's defenses and causes confusion and uncertainty among their ranks.
- ***Flanking.*** Troops flank opponents by attacking the enemy from their sides or rear. This tactic disrupts their formation, forcing the enemy to divide their attention. Flanking relies on precise coordination and timing and threatens enemy supply lines and communication. Combining units enhances the effectiveness of this tactic, but splitting forces also creates new vulnerabilities.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- ***Breach in the Defenses.*** PCs must attack or defend one of the structure's most vulnerable access points, such as the gatehouse or main entrance. Alternatively, the breach comes from a secret catacomb or a tall tower accessible by magical flight, flying creatures, or a war balloon.
- ***Collateral Damage.*** If civilians shelter within the sieged location, PCs might focus on preventing casualties, or they might need to make tough choices in resource allocation.
- ***Enemy Commanders.*** The sudden appearance of a powerful enemy commander might force PCs to radically change their strategy.
- ***Espionage & Sabotage.*** PCs might attempt to spy on the enemy's position or sabotage their structures or equipment. They might instead capture and interrogate enemy spies or saboteurs.
- ***Hazardous Conditions.*** Collapsing structures, oil spills, or magical disturbances can cause complications that both PCs and their enemies might use to their advantage.
- ***Siege Weapons.*** PCs might need to operate or defend against siege weapons, such as trebuchets, ballistae, or battering rams, that the attackers might employ to breach the defenses (see also **Siege Equipment** below).

Time. If the PCs are defending against a siege, consider limiting the time before the structure falls. Time constraints add a sense of urgency, forcing defenders to manage their actions efficiently while prolonged battles lead to exhaustion and weakening defenses. Time constraints also force the PCs to manage resources, including ammunition, healing supplies, and reinforcements.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments showcase physical prowess and skill, whether through mock combat, acrobatic feats, singing, or any number of possibilities.

In this scenario, the PCs are invited to participate in a grand tournament hosted by a prestigious noble family. They might proceed to discover a dark agenda behind the glittering facade of honor and chivalry as they compete in jousts, melee battles, and archery contests. They must unveil the hidden machinations, expose the corrupt practices, and ensure that justice is served within the confines of the noble tournament.

Wagered Contests. To engage in a wagered contest, the PCs submit an entry fee, and those accumulated entry fees set the base prize pot. Talented contestants might enter under the sponsorship of a wealthy patron, and a typical entry fee is 5–10 gp. The total starting prize pot equals the entry fee multiplied by the number of contestants. For example, a contest with 10 contestants and an entry fee of 5 gp would have a starting prize pot of 50 gp. Each round, after tallying the result, any contestant can raise the wager. Contestants that wish to continue the contest must raise their bets or fold. A wager can only be raised once per competition round. Wagers can never exceed an amount that reduces the number of contestants below two individuals. Contestants opting to wager out either lose their wagers or can place them on one of the remaining contestants in hopes of being paid out at the end of the competition. Similarly, wealthy patrons observing a skilled contestant might cover the costs of their bids in exchange for a greater percentage of the payout.

Cheating. Dishonorable contestants might attempt to cheat at a contest, perhaps by using a DEX check to sabotage an opponent's equipment or a CHA check to distract them. This check is made prior to the opponent's contest action, and the cheater makes their roll as an appropriate skill check: if the cheat roll is higher than the opponent's contest roll, then the cheating is successful. After one successful cheat, the audience becomes suspicious, and all subsequent attempts to cheat are at disadvantage. If the cheating contestant fails, then they are observed cheating, and the penalty is immediate ejection from the contest, loss of honor or respect, possible criminal charges, or being challenged to a duel by the opponent. If the two rolls tie, the cheat goes unnoticed by the crowd but the opponent notices (the ramifications of which are at GM's discretion).

Archery Contest. Most tournament grounds maintain a designated area for archery contests. An archery range lies adjacent to the lists and in clear view of the grand pavilion. Targets face downfield, away from the pavilion. Armed guards and other safety precautions assure the protection of important guests. Contests allow archers from all walks of life to display their marksmanship skills. The PCs might participate, and winners take home the purse.

The contestants attempt to hit a target by using the most impressive shots. The archery target has a base AC of 12. Contestants have three shots, and each successful hit is worth 1 point. The individual with the most points after three shots wins. Contestants can attempt trick shots to score more points, which increases the target's AC but adds the shot bonus to their score (see the Trick Shot Modifiers table). These points are cumulative per shot. For example, a contestant that attempts a hard trick shot (+4) on a long-range target (+5) increases the target AC by +9. If the contestant hits, they then have 10 points for the shot: 1 point for the hit and 9 additional points for the long-range, hard trick shot.

TRICK SHOT MODIFIERS

Bonus	Description	Bonus	Description
+2	Basic Trick	+5	Long Range
+3	Smaller Target	+6	Bullseye
+4	Hard Trick		

Any contestant that scores a natural 20 on an opponent's bullseye splits the opponent's arrow and automatically wins the match. Any contestant that rolls a 1 fires a "wild arrow," and the crowd scatters, jeers wildly, and throws rotten fruit at the contestant. The contestant is then ejected from the contest and suffers ridicule for the awful turn for at least a week after the contest, and they might have disadvantage on any Charisma checks to interact with their patron (GM's discretion).

Mounted Jousting. In a joust, armored contestants on mounts charge at each other, wielding wooden lances, and attempt to violently dismount their opponent. (A mount cannot use the Dodge action during the contest.) If struck, the contestant must make a STR (Athletics) check to remain mounted (DC 10 + damage dealt). The competition repeats until one of the contestants is knocked from their horse.

As jousting is a public spectacle, contestants can grandstand to win the crowd's support with a successful DC 15 CHA (Performance) check. If the contestant wins the crowd's favor, the crowd jeers and hisses at their opponent, wrecking their concentration and demoralizing them, so they attack at disadvantage for that round. A contestant that wins a bout while at disadvantage or scores a natural 20 on the attack automatically wins the crowd's favor and causes their opponent to make their next attack at disadvantage.

Field of Honor. Beyond the jousting lists, tournament organizers might designate a field of honor to host additional martial competitions, such as mock battles or displays of skill. Any such contests use either nonlethal damage or end after a certain number of rounds (minimum 3) with the winner determined based on the highest successful attack rolls for the total number of rounds. If using the latter method, consider a roll of 20 as an automatic victory due to submission or knockout.

TREATIES

Beyond courtly feasts and active warfare, there is a wide variety of more mundane scenarios that can highlight the finer points of statecraft.

In this scenario, PCs are focused on negotiating an agreement as a third party and must rely on their social skills to establish a formal agreement or alliance between other prominent individuals or factions. The resulting treaty or compact can cover many topics, including territorial boundaries, trade agreements, military alliances, and shared resources.

Negotiating the Treaty. The PCs must effectively communicate with all NPC representatives involved, uncovering the motivations and interests of all parties. Determine the results using appropriate skills to facilitate open communication and build trust. The PCs should expect disputes during the negotiations, which might arise over cultural differences or past grievances. Encourage a roleplaying element to the negotiations by

SAMPLE COMPROMISE AND CONCESSIONS

d8	Compromise/Concession
1	***Artifact Access.*** Granting limited access to powerful magical artifacts or enchanted items that hold significance to the opposing faction.
2	***Beast Taming Secrets.*** Sharing methods for taming and training magical beasts or creatures.
3	***Demilitarization.*** Proposing the establishment of demilitarized zones along disputed borders to reduce tensions and prevent skirmishes.
4	***Diplomatic Immunity.*** Providing diplomatic immunity to envoys and ambassadors to ensure open communication channels.
5	***Hostage Exchange.*** The exchange of valuable captives—as a sign of good faith and commitment to peace.
6	***Religious Tolerance.*** Promising to respect and tolerate the religious practices of the opposed faction within certain boundaries.
7	***Territorial Boundaries.*** Offering to redraw or adjust the territorial boundaries between the factions, giving up certain lands in exchange for gaining others.
8	***Trade Agreements.*** Extending preferential trade terms, such as reduced tariffs or exclusive trading rights, to the opposed faction.

having PCs give compelling arguments before making a skill check.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- A conflict arises between members of two or more parties with the potential to explode into a physical altercation.
- Strained relations make further negotiations difficult. For the next 1d4 months, any further attempts at negotiation are made at disadvantage.
- Two parties develop a rivalry. Further negotiations between them are impossible without a concession or monetary reparation.

PCs can move to the next step of the negotiations once they successfully determine what each side hopes to achieve from the treaty.

Formalization. Parties will need to come to a compromise of terms by making concessions to finalize their agreement, to secure the other party's cooperation (see also **Sample Compromise and Concessions** table). The PCs complete this challenge by meeting each party's needs.

SAMPLE TREATIES

d8	Treaties
1	***Accord of Peaceful Seas.*** A compact signed by coastal towns and pirate crews that delineates maritime boundaries, establishes cessation of piracy against local ships, and facilitates trade.
2	***Compact of the Caravans.*** An agreement between nomadic merchant caravans and settled towns that defines trade routes, tariffs, and guidelines for safe passage.
3	***Dragon-Rider Accord.*** A pact between dragon-riders and dragons that outlines terms of cooperation, including protection, mutual aid, and shared hunting grounds.
4	***Fiefdoms' Mutual Treaty.*** A pact among nearby fiefdoms that promises mutual assistance during natural disasters, bandit raids, and external invasions.
5	***Pact of the Five Kingdoms.*** Resuscitation of an ancient, expired treaty between five powerful kingdoms that establishes a mutual defense pact against external threats and regulates trade and resources among them.
6	***Treaty of the Arcane Council.*** A compact among different magical orders that creates rules for the use of magic, establishes neutral territories for magical research, and sets guidelines for resolving disputes.
7	***Treaty of the Frozen Peaks.*** An accord between dwarven miners and frost giants that delineates mining rights and sets guidelines for resource extraction and management to avoid armed conflicts.
8	***Woodland Accord.*** A treaty between the fey and local human settlements that preserves the balance of nature and protects the ancient forests.

The PCs must formalize the outcome of the treaty with a written agreement or contract. This document serves as a record of the terms and conditions agreed upon by all parties. The scenario concludes when the PCs successfully get all parties to sign and publicly acknowledge the treaty.

Complications might arise if the PCs aren't completely successful or simply by chance:

- An assassin kills one of the participants before they can sign the agreement.
- One of the more disagreeable participants falsely signs the agreement, using a fake signature, altered name, or disappearing ink.

PCs that successfully negotiate a signed treaty or compact reinforce alliances, gain access to valuable resources, and enhance their reputation.

WARFARE

War is seemingly inevitable. And it can play a vital role in any courtly campaign—whether it appears only as an ever-looming shadow of conflict, coloring everyone's actions, or it sweeps up the characters in an inescapable tide. PCs might be forced to react during military operations, perhaps participating or even leading, and might be required to choose sides. This section presents optional rules for running largescale combat and includes various siege weapons that castles might employ against PCs or that PCs might employ while sieging a castle.

WAR SCENARIO

A war scenario is typically made up of several battles as each side sends its forces against the other, gaining or losing territory as the war progresses. War scenarios can last from weeks to years, and each side usually has a desired end goal, such as the complete defeat of its opponent's forces or the claiming of a particular location. Before using these rules, determine the end goal for each side and what events (if any) might cause a side to end a war scenario before the end goal is met.

War Leaders. Each side in the war scenario must designate a war leader that is responsible for making all strategic decisions during the conflict. The war leader uses their PB to represent their ability to command and influence battles. If more than one leader leads a military faction, use the bonus of the war leader with the highest PB. A war leader's PB also determines the maximum strength of the unit they can command.

Flow of a War Scenario. A war scenario is measured in weeks. Each war leader can decide how to spend each week, using the options presented in this section—with the war leaders battling each other being the most

HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

The rules presented here assume a single war scenario encompasses the entirety of a war or prolonged siege of a location, that a battle and its preparation last a week, and that a war between two forces lasts no more than a few months or years, for war is expensive, exhausting, and taxing on people, resources, and nations. These rules can easily be adjusted to represent a prolonged war that lasts decades or even generations. For such wars, you can run multiple war scenarios to represent major blocks of skirmishes between brief periods of truces, or you can extend battles, reconnaissance, and recruiting from one week each to one month each. In the case of recruiting, you might even extend it to a year, where the opposing forces each break from battle for a time to focus on rebuilding their forces.

VARIANT: COMBINED LEADERSHIP

In some cases, a side in a war scenario might be co-led by a council of war leaders, especially when commanding a large number of troops. The council's PB is equal to the PB of the member with the highest PB + 1 for each member of the council when determining the maximum strength of the unit the council can command. Councils of war leaders are typically only used when units number in the thousands, making them ideal for leading brigades and armies. Councils are prone to divisions, both internally and among the troops, with some segments of the unit siding with certain council members over others. Because of this, every time the council loses a battle, it must make a morale check to avoid losing some troops to desertion or in-fighting, regardless of whether a morale check would ordinarily be triggered.

common use of a week since the outcome of battles determines whether a war leader progresses toward an end goal. Each week then ends with a chance of the war leader's troops losing morale as the war continues to take its toll on them.

Battling. Each battle in a war scenario lasts for approximately one week as the two sides spend days maneuvering, interacting in small skirmishes, and spying on each other before the one-to-three-days' long confrontation. To determine the outcome of a battle, each warring side decides if it is operating offensively or defensively and then makes a battle check, which is modified by unit strength, the equipment levels of those units, and any of a variety of tactical advantages a side might have.

BATTLE CHECK

To resolve a battle, each side's war leader decides to use either offensive or defensive tactics and then each makes a battle check (1d20 + war leader's PB). A war leader also adds the unit's total strength (modified by any equipment used by the unit), any tactical advantages the war leader uses, and any other modifiers, such as from troop morale, past wins and losses, or the status of resources, all of which are detailed later in this section. The war leader with the highest total wins that battle, as detailed under **Outcome of Battle**.

UNIT STRENGTH

At the start of a war scenario, a war leader can command a unit of troops with a base strength equal to or less than the leader's PB, as shown in the **Unit Strength** table. The value in the table is the base strength of that unit and doesn't include the unit's equipment or access to magic, which are described under **Unit Equipment**. A war leader can attempt to command a unit with a higher base strength than the war leader can normally command by succeeding on a CHA check (DC 10 + the unit's base strength) at the start of the war scenario. A war leader with proficiency in CHA (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) can add their proficiency bonus to this check.

A unit's total strength increases and decreases as the war scenario continues from battle to battle, as described in the remainder of this section.

Unit Equipment. Equipment levels represent the unit's access to weapons and armor, to defenses, and to siege weapons. At the start of a war scenario, the war leader can spend gold to outfit the unit with equipment, gaining a bonus to the unit's total strength when making battle checks. The amount of gold required and the bonus the equipment gives is determined by the type of equipment:

- ***Basic Equipment.*** The units wear leather and hide armor, carry wooden and metal shields, and wield clubs, maces, spears, axes, and bows. Defenses include wooden and earthen fortifications, hill forts, and palisades. Siege weapons are limited to battering logs and rolled boulders. Basic equipment for a unit costs 50 gp per base unit strength. A unit with this equipment increases its total strength by 1.
- ***Intermediate Equipment.*** The units wear ring mail and scale armor and carry metal shields. A few elite warriors wear chainmail. Troops are trained and wield swords, spears, axes, and bows. As defenders, they build wooden and earthen fortifications, motte-and-bailey castles, hill forts, and palisades. They also employ siege weapons, such as battering rams and catapults. Intermediate equipment for a unit costs 100 gp per base unit strength. A unit with this equipment increases its total strength by 2.
- ***Advanced Equipment.*** The common soldiers wear chainmail, scale armor, and metal shields. Elite warriors and nobles wear breastplates and half-plate armor. They wield swords, spears, axes, longbows, and crossbows. They defend from stone castles with fortified walls lined with defensive features like arrow slits and murder holes. They use wheeled battering rams, catapults, trebuchets, and siege towers when attacking. Advanced equipment for a unit costs 500 gp per base unit strength. A unit with this equipment increases its total strength by 3.
- ***Expert Equipment.*** Common soldiers wear expensive chainmail, scale armor, breastplates, and half-plate armor while knights and other elite warriors wear full-plate armor. Troops fight with high-quality swords, spears, axes, crossbows, and longbows, some with enchantments. Their stone castles boast thicker reinforced walls and employ improved defensive structures. On offense, their engineers build massive ballistae, black powder artillery (such as arquebuses and cannons), trebuchets, siege towers, and giant armored war machines. Expert equipment for a unit costs 1,000 gp per base unit strength. A unit with this equipment increases its total strength by 4.

Starting Strength. A unit's starting strength is the unit's base strength plus any equipment it has at the start of the war scenario. The unit's strength can never rise higher than this value throughout the course of the war scenario.

TACTICAL ADVANTAGE

Some effects cause a war leader to gain an offensive or defensive tactical advantage. The war leader can choose to expend a tactical advantage when making a battle check. To do so, the leader chooses whether to use an offensive or defensive tactical advantage. If choosing an offensive advantage, the leader rolls a d4 and adds the result to the battle check. If choosing a defensive advantage, the leader rolls a d4, and the opposing leader subtracts that result from their battle check. The war leader can opt to apply the die after each leader makes the battle check, representing the leader's ability to apply the tactical advantage to the situation. The war leader can't use an offensive tactical advantage when operating defensively in a battle and similarly can't use a defensive tactical advantage when operating offensively in a battle. Otherwise, a war leader can expend any number of tactical advantage dice to influence a battle check.

A war leader can gain a tactical advantage from winning battles (see **Outcome of Battle** later in this section), from succeeding on morale checks (found later in this section), and from reconnaissance. At the GM's discretion, nearby terrain features, weather, or random planar happenings can provide a tactical advantage to one or both sides of the war scenario. The **Sample Tactical Advantages** table lists some types of tactical advantages a war leader might discover through reconnaissance or gain at the GM's discretion.

Reconnaissance. A war leader can forgo a week of battling for reconnaissance of the nearby terrain. A week of reconnaissance expends the war leader's resources (see **Resources and Supplies**) as normal, but the war leader gains 1 tactical advantage.

RECRUITING

A war leader commanding a unit with a total strength lower than the unit's starting strength can forgo a week of battle to work on recruiting more troops. The war leader must make a recruiting check (1d20 + the war leader's PB). The DC is 8 + the number of battles the war leader has lost – the number of battles the war leader has won. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the unit's strength increases by 1d4. Otherwise, the unit's strength increases by 1 on a success. On a failure, a war leader recruits no new troops. Recruiting can't make the unit's strength higher than the unit's starting strength.

Regardless of the outcome of the recruiting efforts, the war leader must still expend resources to maintain the current unit for the week (see **Resources and Supplies**) as normal.

Political and Regional Support. A war leader might be participating in the war scenario on behalf of a political power or to protect a region from an invading force. Similarly, a war leader might be rising up against the current political power and leading a unit of oppressed people against their oppressors. War leaders can use such favorable conditions to their advantage when recruiting more troops or might suffer such unfavorable conditions when rebuilding their forces.

Each unfavorable condition imposes a –1 penalty to the war leader's recruiting check, and each favorable condition adds a +1 bonus to the recruiting check. The total bonus from such conditions can never be greater than +5 or less than –5.

For example, a war leader fighting against a tyrannical king might have a +2 bonus from having the support of the oppressed people, but that war leader might also suffer a –1 penalty as the king's political influence and power prevent people from joining the war leader's efforts, earning a total of a +1 bonus to the recruiting

check. After a few successful battles, that same war leader might try more recruiting and gain the support of a neighboring nation that wants to see a more agreeable person on the throne, earning the war leader another +2 on the recruiting check as that nation encourages their people to aid the war leader.

At the GM's discretion, a war leader's political machinations or history of victories might inherently earn the war leader an increase in unit strength, regardless of the result of the recruiting check. In the aforementioned example, the opposing nation might send the war leader support in the form of troops, increasing the unit's strength by 1, instead of giving the war leader a bonus to the recruiting check.

RESOURCES AND SUPPLIES

The monthly cost of maintaining active military units is an amount of gold equal to half the number of soldiers. For example, a large army with 8,000 soldiers consumes 1,000 gp of food, water, weapons, medicine, and other supplies weekly (or 4,000 gp/month). Conversely, a warband of 20 warriors only uses 2.5 gp of supplies per week (or 10 gp/month). The war leader must pay this cost for each week the war scenario is active, even if a unit doesn't battle that week.

A war leader can forgo a week of battle to focus on gathering resources to support the unit. This gathering might be in the form of the war leader petitioning locals for food and medicine or the war leader sending the troops to pillage nearby villages for supplies. The war leader must make a resources check (1d20 + the war leader's PB) against a DC of 5 + the unit's strength. If the check succeeds, the war leader acquires enough resources for the current week and for one additional week of supporting the unit. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the war leader acquires enough resources for the current week and for 1d4 additional weeks of supporting the unit. On a failure, the war leader doesn't acquire enough resources to maintain the unit for the current week or any additional weeks, and the chance of the unit losing morale increases by 5 percent + 1 percent for each week the war leader fails to maintain the unit's resources.

If a war leader fails to provide enough resources to maintain a unit for four weeks, the unit's strength is reduced by 1, as the war leader loses troops to starvation and disease. Then, the unit's strength is reduced by 1 for each week thereafter that the war leader doesn't provide enough resources to maintain the unit.

OUTCOME OF BATTLE

Determine the outcome of a battle by comparing the battle checks of both war leaders, with the highest result winning the battle. If the winning force's battle check exceeds the opponent's battle check by 5 or more, the battle is a decisive victory. If the difference is 2–4, the battle is a minor victory. If the difference is 1 or less, the battle is a marginal victory. After a battle is resolved, each war leader's unit strength is reduced by 1 regardless of the outcome, which represents casualties due to battle, damage to equipment, and the gradual weakening of each force as the war scenario continues. Then, each war leader's unit strength and tactical advantages are adjusted as detailed by the outcome, and each war leader must determine if a morale check (see **Morale** later in this section) is necessary:

- ***Decisive Victory.*** The winning war leader gains 1d4 tactical advantages, at least one of which must be of the type of tactics the war leader used in the battle. For example, a war leader that wins a decisive victory when using defensive tactics gains at least 1 defensive tactical advantage. In addition, the winning war leader has advantage on the check, if a morale check is triggered. The losing war leader's unit strength is reduced by 2, and the chance of the unit losing morale increases by 15 percent.
- ***Minor Victory.*** The winning war leader drives back their opponent, but the win is less significant than a decisive victory. The winning war leader gains 1d2 tactical advantages, at least one of which must be of the type of tactics the war leader used in battle. The losing war leader's unit strength is reduced by 1, and the chance of the unit losing morale increases by 10 percent.
- ***Marginal Victory.*** The winning war leader gains 1 tactical advantage of the type the war leader used in the battle. The losing war leader loses 1 tactical advantage, if it has any, and the chance of the unit losing morale increases by 5 percent.
- ***Stalemate.*** Neither side managed to gain an advantage over the other during the battle.

Retreating and Regrouping. After resolving a battle, war leaders suffering losses might attempt to remediate damages by retreating and regrouping. Retreating involves forfeiting a position or territory to the enemy and moving the remaining forces to a new position while regrouping involves reassembling disorganized or scattered forces after a battle. A losing war leader can expend 1 tactical advantage to retreat and regroup. If the war leader does so, the reduction to the leader's unit total strength is reduced by 1 but can't be reduced below 1.

Truce. A truce is a partial surrender to the opposing side. Either war leader can call for a truce after a battle. Both sides must agree to end the war scenario, after which they must form councils and draft a treaty to set the terms of the truce (see also **Treaties** earlier in this chapter).

Surrender. A surrender is a total submission to the opposing force. Either war leader can call for a surrender after suffering at least one loss, but both war leaders must agree. The winning war leader gains authority and control over all resources and territories belonging to the surrendering war leader. At the GM's discretion, additional consequences might arise from the surrender.

MORALE

At the end of each week of the war scenario, there is a 10 percent chance that the unit loses morale, since even the most bloodthirsty or faithful troops can suffer doubts or become weary from countless battles or weeks on the warpath. This chance increases by 1 percent for each battle fought in the war scenario. Other factors, such as losing a battle (see **Outcome of Battle**) or failing to procure resources (see **Resources and Supplies**), can also affect morale.

When a unit loses morale, the war leader must make a morale check (1d20 + the war leader's PB + the war leader's CHA modifier) against a DC of 10 + the number of battles the war leader has lost + the difference between the current unit strength and the starting unit strength. On a failure, the unit's strength is reduced by 1 as the war leader loses troops to desertion. On a success, the war leader maintains the unit's morale and gains 1 tactical advantage. At the GM's discretion, a roll of 1 on a morale check might cause the unit to completely disband, ending the war scenario.

SIEGE EQUIPMENT

Siege equipment consists of any weaponry or defense structures used to attack or defend a castle or similarly large structure during a siege. A siege weapon is massive, costly, and requires a small crew of trained individuals to

UNIT STRENGTH

Unit	Base Strength	Description
Warband	1	A small group of 10–30 warriors led by a moderately trained leader or chieftain. Warbands are deployed to deal with minor conflicts, such as raids, skirmishes, and local defense.
Squad	2	The base tactical unit for an army is a squad consisting of 20–50 soldiers. Squads are used for coordinated movements and basic formations in battle.
Company	3	A company consists of 100–300 soldiers led by a captain or knight. These versatile units handle tactical actions, such as skirmishes, flanking maneuvers, and reinforcement of the main force.
Battalion	4	Battalions are groups of two or more companies that total around 500–800 soldiers. Battalions operate independently or as part of a more significant force.
Regiment	5	Grouped battalions of 1,000–2,000 soldiers form regiments. These are typically commanded by a noble or high-ranking officer.
Brigade	6–7	A brigade consists of several regiments, totaling around 2,500–5,000 soldiers, and is commonly used in large-scale military campaigns and battles.
Army	8–10	Armies are formed by combining dozens of brigades, and a large army might contain tens of thousands of soldiers under the command of powerful generals who receive commands from an emperor or king advised by a war council. Armies are only deployed for major campaigns and massive battles.

maneuver and operate. A well-fortified castle might own several siege weapons and have them strategically placed. A smaller castle might only own one or two pieces and keep them safely stored until they need to mobilize. This section includes examples of melee, ranged, and arcane siege weapons. For details on creating your own siege weapons, see the *Game Master's Guide*.

Using a Siege Weapon. A siege weapon typically requires a crew of at least two creatures to operate it efficiently. The siege weapon has its own turn in the initiative order, and the crew takes its turn at the same time as the siege weapon, using their turns to operate it.

Moving a Siege Weapon. Most siege weapons are stationary, but some have wheels that allow them to be moved. Stationary siege weapons usually include mechanisms that allow them to be rotated and aimed to an extent. A siege weapon with wheels or similar movement mechanism can be moved by one or more members of its crew on its turn. It can be moved up to 5 feet for each creature moving it, up to a maximum distance on a turn equal to the speed of the slowest creature moving it. To move a siege weapon, a creature must spend its normal movement, moving with the siege weapon.

Types of Siege Weapons. The three major types of siege weapons are melee siege weapons, ranged siege weapons, and arcane siege weapons:

- ***Melee Siege Weapons.*** Melee siege weapons consist of objects that are rolled, driven, or slammed into structures or troops of opposing forces, such as wagons packed with vials of alchemical fire, weighted spiked logs, battering rams, or mill wheels. Many also require specific environments, such as those that need to be rolled downhill.
- ***Ranged Siege Weapons.*** Ranged siege weapons launch projectiles at opponents, such as catapults, ballistae, mangonels, fire lances, trebuchets, and cannons.
- ***Arcane Siege Weapons.*** Arcane siege weapons combine standard siege weapons with potent magical powers drawn from eldritch sources, bound elementals, or drained from artifacts and spells stored in crystalline foci.

SAMPLE TACTICAL ADVANTAGES

Condition/ Maneuver	Type	Description
Ambush	Offensive	Forests, swamps, and thick vegetation offer opportunities for ambushes and concealed movement. Surprise attacks from concealed positions could disrupt enemy formations and morale.
Chokepoint	Offensive	Narrow passages, canyons, and bridges create chokepoints where enemy forces funnel into tight spaces. Defenders can use these bottlenecks to maximize the effectiveness of their attacks.
Darkness	Offensive	Battles fought in the dark reduce visibility and coordination. Attackers can use darkness to launch surprise attacks or infiltrate enemy camps.
Defensive Positioning	Defensive	Natural features like hills, mountains, and forests provide excellent defensive positions. Holding higher ground makes it easier for soldiers to spot and repel enemy advances.
Difficult Terrain	Defensive	Unfamiliar or rugged terrain can disorient or slow the advancement of enemy forces, making them vulnerable to counterattacks or encirclement.
Flanking	Offensive	Open fields and rolling terrain offer opportunities for flanking maneuvers. Cavalry and infantry units can exploit gaps in enemy lines, attacking from the sides or rear, to cause confusion and disruption.
Fortifications	Defensive	Castles, city walls, and fortified positions provide a tactical advantage for defenders, allowing them to withstand sieges and repel attacks more effectively. Similarly, a defender that spends the time and effort to create artificial obstacles like spiked trenches or caltrops can impede enemy movements and disrupt formations.
Rivers and Marshes	Defensive	Defending a vital river crossing prevents the enemy from advancing, and attacking an enemy during a river crossing exploits their vulnerability. Similarly, marshy terrain or muddy fields bog down soldiers and horses, hampering mobility and making them susceptible to attacks from more agile opponents.
Weather Conditions	Offensive	Weather, such as heavy rain, snow, or fog, hinders visibility and movement, affecting ranged accuracy and making it difficult to maintain formations. Attackers can use weather conditions to advance on forces that rely on archers and artillery for defense. Similarly, dust clouds and smoke from fires or spells can obscure vision, making it harder for soldiers to spot enemies.

Clockwork Catapult

Large Object

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 100

Immune poison, psychic

This strange catapult is composed of whirring, steam-driven gears and kept active by a small coal furnace. The gears work a conveyer belt that automatically cranks back the weapon's arm to the loading position after each shot. Because of this, loading the catapult takes only a bonus action instead of an action, giving the operators more time to aim and maneuver the device. The mechanized gears also provide the weapon with extra tension, improving its range.

To fire a clockwork catapult, one action must be used to load it, and a second action must be spent to use its Clockwork Shot attack. The clockwork catapult can't target creatures, objects, or structures within 60 feet of it.

Clockwork Shot. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 240/960 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

Fire Lance

Large Object

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 125

Immune poison, psychic

This weapon consists of a wheeled battle cart loaded with dozens of long, slender metal tubes pointed in the same direction, which are each packed with javelins and

black powder and sealed with wax. Operators light a fuse, causing a chain reaction of explosions within each of the tubes, simultaneously launching all the javelins at advancing forces.

To fire a fire lance, one action must be used to aim it, and a second action must be spent to use its Javelin Barrage action. Once a fire lance is launched, the weapon needs to be reassembled, which typically requires 1 hour for five creatures or less or 1 minute for more than five creatures.

Javelin Barrage. The fire lance launches javelins at a point the aiming creature chooses within 2,400 feet. Each creature within 50 feet of that point must make a DC 14 DEX save, taking 11 (2d10) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Fire Spitter

Large Object

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 100
Immune poison, psychic

This siege weapon consists of an armored wagon loaded with a collection of metal barrels covered in strange runes and bound fast with thick iron bands. A metal carving that resembles the head of screaming dragon rises from the center of the barrels, and a stout metal pipe protrudes from its gaping maw.

To fire a fire spitter, one action must be used to aim the swiveling dragon head, and a second action must be spent to use its Fire Spit attack.

Fire Spit. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 240/960 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) fire damage, and the target and each creature within 15 feet of the target must succeed on a DC 14 DEX save or catch on fire. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, a creature on fire takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Spiked Log Tower

Huge Object

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 200
Immune poison, psychic

The spiked log tower consists of a 20-foot-tall tower with a long ramp facing the battlefield. High atop the tower, a metal loading bin holds several 10-foot logs, which are smoothed and fitted with rows of foot-long iron spikes. The logs are also cored and filled with stones (or other ballast), making them very heavy. Operators cue up logs at the top of the ramp, using a lever, and send the logs careening down into enemy structures or advancing troop.

One action must be spent to use the spiked log tower's Spiked Log action. A typical tower holds 10 logs. Once expended, the logs need to be reloaded, which typically requires a team of at least five creatures working together for 8 hours.

Spiked Log. The log rolls up to 100 feet in a straight line that is 10 feet wide directly away from the spiked log tower. Each creature in that line must make a DC 15 DEX save. On a failure, a creature takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage and 11 (2d10) piercing damage and is knocked prone. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't knocked prone.

Sun Disk

Large Object

Armor Class 17
Hit Points 100
Immune poison, psychic

This curious weapon consists of a 15-foot-circumference silver disk mounted atop a lofty position, such as a siege tower or castle wall. Within the concave disk, numerous crystalline lenses of descending size extend in a line from a central point, suspended like a strange orrery from lead-coated threads. Light caught in the disk reflects harshly, clearly calling attention to its position and making it difficult, even painful, to look upon.

To fire a sun disk, one action must be used to aim it, and a second action must be spent to use its Blinding Ray attack. The sun disk's Blinding Ray can't be used when the sun disk is in darkness.

Blinding Ray. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 240/960 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) radiant damage, and each creature within 30 feet of the target (including the target) must succeed on a DC 14 CON save or be blinded for 1 minute. A blinded creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

3 SITES AND SETTINGS

A priest quietly prays before a massive altar in an empty cathedral hall.

The NPCs might be essential for keeping the story moving, but courtly campaigns also need appropriate settings—even an actual court! What's called for aren't the everyday homes an adventurer is used to, no hovels, shacks, or animal dens. Rather, what's needed are massive structures suited to a sovereign: luxurious trappings, dense fortifications, and the space and resources, including staff, to accommodate all the needs of family, state, and status. Within this chapter are examples of architecture, layouts, assets, staff, and other resources one might associate with medieval structures: castles, manor houses, military strongholds, and monasteries. In addition, it offers ideas on their use during adventures and campaigns.

Using this Chapter. This chapter is divided into four sections, each focusing on a specific structure. Sections start by providing an overview of each stately residence, including general architecture, purpose, and how a GM might effectively use it in a game. The sections then delve into the anatomy of each, describing foundational layouts, rooms, outlying buildings and property, and grounds. Structure descriptions aren't keyed to any specific map, allowing GMs to use individual elements independently, assembling unique structures, populating them to their needs, and implementing whatever adventure hooks are desired. Numerous tables and sidebars provide further helpful details. Implement the examples as desired, or simply use them all for inspiration in designing something new, as each campaign requires.

CASTLES

Castles are centers of power, governance, and social life. From within their fortified walls, monarchs and nobles exercise control over their lands, make proclamations, and administer justice. Castles also serve as a place of residences for nobles, lords (typically addressed as Lord or Lady), and others in positions of power or authority. While often constructed in strategic locations, their primary function is to provide a comfortable and secure living space for the ruling class.

CASTLES IN A CAMPAIGN

Using a castle as the primary location for an adventure or campaign provides GMs with many opportunities for storytelling and exploration. Those living within a castle quickly become embroiled in complex relationships that force them to forge alliances and navigate a web of factions, leveraging nobility, birthright, and obscene wealth to gain power and influence. PCs can engage in political intrigue, attend grand feasts, gain favor with key figures, and untangle patterns of reciprocity and coercion that define courtly relationships.

There are several possible roles a castle might play in a campaign:

- ***Enemy of the Crown.*** Those defiant of the local nobility or rule of law might perceive the castle as a symbol of oppression and entitlement. Such adventures focus on opposition to the castle's occupant. PCs might seek to disrupt political stability by infiltrating the castle disguised as servants, guards, or guests. Plots might involve gathering critical information or rescuing an important captive. These missions emphasize stealth and deception. Alternatively, the castle might mark the epicenter of a rebellion or political upheaval, such as overthrowing a corrupt ruler and forcing people to choose sides.
- ***Homebase.*** For low-level characters, the castle might act as a hub where PCs receive quests from the ruling lord, influential nobles, or an appointed representative. Plots might include defending the castle from invaders, investigating mysteries within the castle's walls, or going on diplomatic missions. Additionally, the castle provides a haven for PCs, offering a secure place to rest, heal, and plan their adventures. As they advance, they might gain favor with the aristocracy or even be granted rank and privilege, perhaps being gifted with land or a room within the castle. PCs that acquire a castle of their own can upgrade it, recruit followers, and use it as their headquarters.
- ***Tournament and Festivities.*** The castle hosts grand tournaments, festivals, and celebrations. PCs might participate in jousting, archery contests, and other competitions, gaining recognition and rewards. Alternatively, the castle might host a high court attended by royal family members, aristocrats, wealthy merchants, nobles, or other eminent dignitaries. PCs attending these events interact with important and influential members of society and participate in high-stakes diplomacy or feasts.

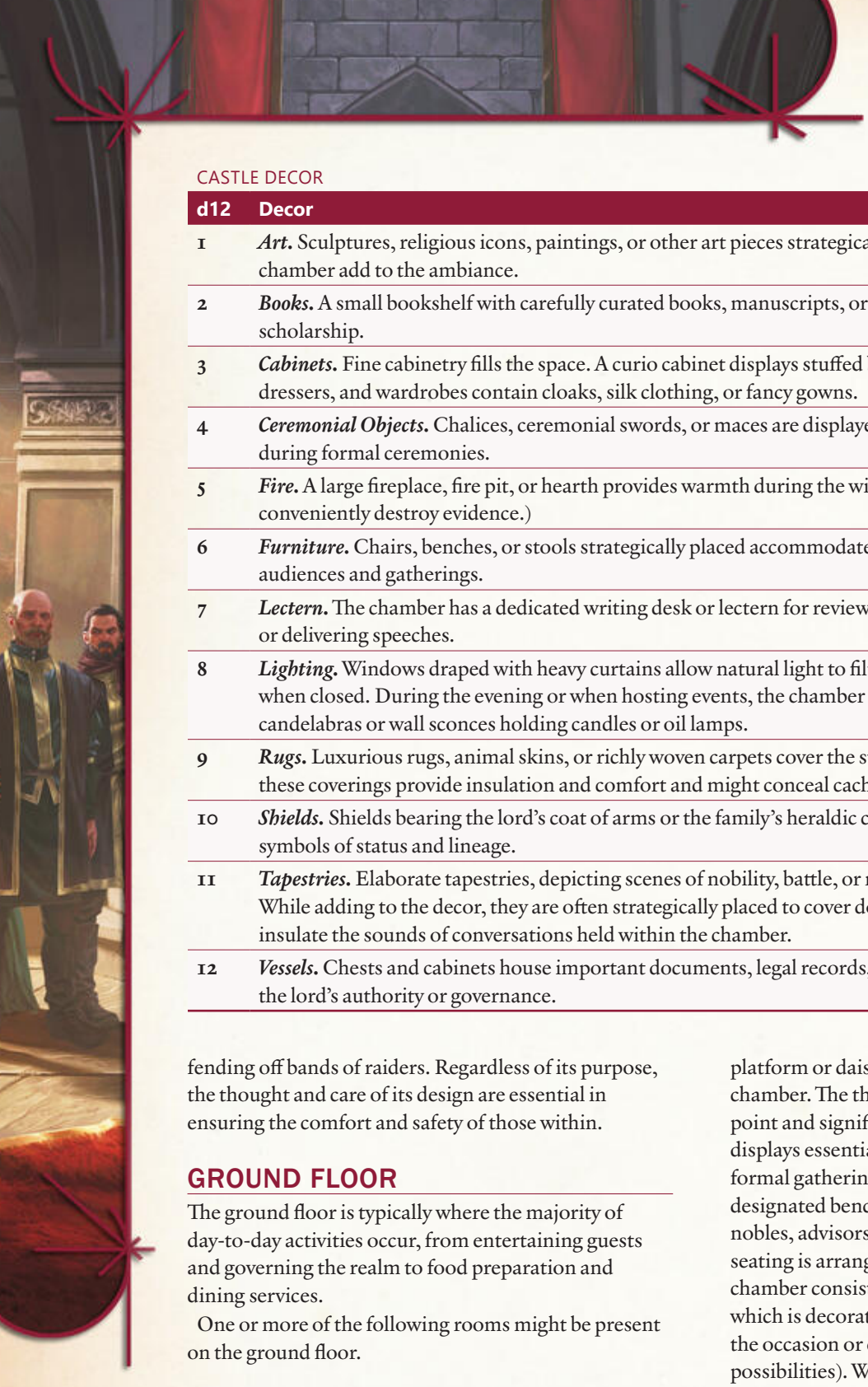
ANATOMY OF A CASTLE

Castles serve two purposes: symbolism and protection. Architecturally, castles boast grand and ornate structures with an aesthetic that emphasizes wealth and power, including carved columns and statuary, spires and gargoyles, courtyards and gardens. The impressive structure, though, is also designed to be impregnable, keeping its occupants safe from enemy forces.

Castles generally share common architectural elements and tend to follow a similar layout. Walls and towers run the outer perimeter, forming a defensive barricade around an inner courtyard. The castle itself and its outer walls and fortifications can occupy a considerable area. The main entrance features a fortified gatehouse with additional defenses, such as portcullises or gates. The gatehouses of larger, more impressive fortresses might also house a drawbridge that can be raised or lowered across a moat or natural obstacle, such as a river or canyon. Beyond the gatehouse lies a small courtyard called the bailey, within which are outbuildings such as stables and barracks, which provide essential support for castle life.

Within a castle's walls are grand halls, chapels, kitchens, and living quarters for the ruler and their household. Within the heart of the courtyard rises a lofty and commanding central tower that reaches toward the sky as a symbol of authority and dominance. The central tower represents the heart and soul of the castle, serving as a focal point of authority, observation, and defense, and contains numerous accommodations for the castle's most influential occupants, such as living quarters and audience chambers.

A castle's layout and design reflect the culture of its architects, as well as its geographic location and purpose. No two castles are precisely alike. For example, a castle constructed as a grand affair for royalty might have large courtyards, ballrooms, towering turrets, majestic gardens, and dozens of secret passageways. Conversely, smaller keeps might serve more practical purposes like protecting trade routes or



CASTLE DECOR

d12	Decor
1	***Art.*** Sculptures, religious icons, paintings, or other art pieces strategically placed around the audience chamber add to the ambiance.
2	***Books.*** A small bookshelf with carefully curated books, manuscripts, or scrolls reflects interest in learning and scholarship.
3	***Cabinets.*** Fine cabinetry fills the space. A curio cabinet displays stuffed birds or little trinkets. Armoires, dressers, and wardrobes contain cloaks, silk clothing, or fancy gowns.
4	***Ceremonial Objects.*** Chalices, ceremonial swords, or maces are displayed as symbols of authority or used during formal ceremonies.
5	***Fire.*** A large fireplace, fire pit, or hearth provides warmth during the winter months. (Fire can also conveniently destroy evidence.)
6	***Furniture.*** Chairs, benches, or stools strategically placed accommodate visitors and courtiers during audiences and gatherings.
7	***Lectern.*** The chamber has a dedicated writing desk or lectern for reviewing documents, signing official letters, or delivering speeches.
8	***Lighting.*** Windows draped with heavy curtains allow natural light to filter in when opened or provide privacy when closed. During the evening or when hosting events, the chamber is illuminated by large and ornate candelabras or wall sconces holding candles or oil lamps.
9	***Rugs.*** Luxurious rugs, animal skins, or richly woven carpets cover the stone or wooden floors. Like tapestries, these coverings provide insulation and comfort and might conceal caches or trapdoors.
10	***Shields.*** Shields bearing the lord's coat of arms or the family's heraldic crest are prominently displayed as symbols of status and lineage.
11	***Tapestries.*** Elaborate tapestries, depicting scenes of nobility, battle, or religious ceremony, adorn the walls. While adding to the decor, they are often strategically placed to cover doors or to hide servants or spies and insulate the sounds of conversations held within the chamber.
12	***Vessels.*** Chests and cabinets house important documents, legal records, or other valuable items necessary to the lord's authority or governance.

fending off bands of raiders. Regardless of its purpose, the thought and care of its design are essential in ensuring the comfort and safety of those within.

GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor is typically where the majority of day-to-day activities occur, from entertaining guests and governing the realm to food preparation and dining services.

One or more of the following rooms might be present on the ground floor.

AUDIENCE CHAMBER

The audience chamber is the formal space where the castle's lord receives visitors, holds court, and governs. It is located at the castle's center, beneath the central tower. The remainder of the castle substructures are constructed around this broad, colossal chamber. A grand and imposing throne stands upon a raised platform or dais positioned to overlook the entire chamber. The throne serves as the chamber's focal point and signifies authority. An enormous table displays essential documents, gifts, or libations during formal gatherings. Larger castles might also have designated benches to accommodate lower-ranking nobles, advisors, or courtiers in attendance—and seating is arranged according to rank. The rest of the chamber consists of a reception area for the audience, which is decorated with furniture appropriate to the occasion or event (see **Castle Decor** table for possibilities). When not hosting an event, the audience hall is typically unfurnished.

CONCOURSE

The main entrance leads to a long stone hallway or concourse, which serves as a strategic chokepoint to allow guards to intercept those entering the castle. Typically, they have high ceilings that amplify even the

slightest noises, making sneaking more challenging. Like the main entrance, the concourse is heavily decorated with heraldic banners, statues, and other impressive accouterments to impress guests.

DINING HALL

Dining halls provide formal locations for castle residents to sit and eat meals. Unless there is a special occasion, daily meals are served and eaten communally. They typically consist of stews or porridges and are served from a large pot. Cooks keep daily meals plain to ensure easy preparation while feasts and holidays might contain many elaborately prepared courses. In campaigns that feature political or social intrigue, gatherings that occur in dining halls provide opportunities for PCs to encounter many castle occupants under mundane circumstances. They are good locations for informal introductions, small talk, or scouting out and identifying various NPCs. Conversely, private eating areas can provide opportunities for PCs to partake in more intimate council with the castle lord or other influential NPCs.

Dining Room. A dining room is only used by the lord, the royal family, and the occasional guest. The room's centerpiece is a magnificent hardwood table surrounded by matching chairs plus a grand, elegantly carved chair at the head of the table for the lord. The table rests before a great, glowing hearth with a broad mantel decorated with trinkets, according to the season, holiday, or other festivities. Most dining areas also have side tables for holding food, drink, and flatware.

Feast Halls. Larger castles occupied by dozens of residents or maintaining a significant number of guards might have a separate feasting hall. In comparison, smaller castles might host feasts in the audience chamber or outdoors when the weather accommodates. Servants furnish the feast hall with long wooden tables and benches. They use pushcarts to aid them in serving and clearing tables.

GRAND STAIRCASE

A grand staircase is a large, semi-public flight of stairs that serves as the primary access point to other levels of the castle. It is typically located somewhere between the

main entrance and the audience chamber and within reasonable proximity to guard rooms. They are typically structural and wide enough to allow traffic to proceed simultaneously in either direction. During typical hours, the staircase is lit by candles or torches. After hours, guards are posted at the stairs, and use is restricted to the lord and other important castle residents.

GUARD ROOM

Castle guards require living quarters and operational centers. Guard rooms promote the security and defense of the castle by providing these essential spaces for its defenders to prepare for duty and rest between shifts.

Barracks. Barracks are communal quarters where guards might rest or relax during off-duty hours. Strategically place barracks near entrances or other important areas so guards can mobilize quickly in an emergency such as a breach or fire. Furnish barracks sparsely with simple straw pallet bunks, storage cabinets, and foot lockers to secure personal belongings, spare equipment, and supplies. Unlike watch rooms, barracks should have a sense of being lived in (see **Random Items in a Guard Room** table for possibilities). The tidiness of the rooms might reflect the commander's temperament and the commitment or seriousness of the guards.

Watch Rooms. Place watch rooms near the main entrance or the castle walls. This positioning allows the guards easy access to their posts and swift response in case of attack. Furnish guard rooms with sturdy wooden tables and benches. They might also have wall racks, stands, and hooks to store or display weapons. A prominently placed command desk allows the guard captain to oversee operations, review reports, and coordinate duties. Between the racks, guards hang cloth maps of the castle, its surroundings, and nearby territories for strategic planning, defense coordination, and familiarizing themselves with the castle's layout and potential vulnerabilities. A watch room also holds communication tools, such as signal horns, bells, or flags, that are used by the guards to relay messages from one guard post to another or to alert castle occupants of potential threats.

RANDOM ITEMS IN A GUARD ROOM

d6	Items
1	Bowl of stale walnuts.
2	Broken broom handle partially whittled into a whistle.
3	Dented tin cup.
4	Dice or playing cards.
5	Sketchbook filled with crude charcoal sketches of castle residents.
6	Threadbare coin purse with a few copper pieces.

KITCHEN

Kitchens are informal rooms equipped to store and prepare food for the castle residents and are typically located adjacent to dining areas. A kitchen should have separate entrances and access to pantries, root cellars, and larders where victuals and beverages are stored. The kitchen might also have a small and informal eating area where the staff take their meals apart from the lord or other residents. A kitchen staff includes one or more cooks, servers, and often an official food taster to ensure the food isn't poisoned.

Larder. The larder is a storage area specifically designated for storing food and provisions. Items found in a castle's larder vary depending on the region, season, and availability of food sources.

Kitchens can be the source of many disasters. Roll 1d10 and consult the **Kitchen Disasters** table or choose an appropriate disaster. Use them to create drama and incite emotion in castle NPCs. Conversely, a spy or assassin might deliberately cause a kitchen disaster to create a distraction or sow chaos.

LIBRARY

A lord who values education or history might maintain a library within the castle, curated by a royal sage or trusted advisor. The position of librarian is frequently hereditary since such individuals must be trusted to care for rare and valuable collections. Such books typically focus on studies in politics, geography, history, war strategy, philosophy, and other subjects vital to governance. Only the lord and specific advisors or authority figures, such as a high priest or military official, will have library access. It should also have set hours and be securely locked or guarded when not in use. A permanent guardian, such as a ghost, familiar, or golem, might also reside in the library and act as a consultant, spy, or protector. The librarian might also employ alarms, traps, or other precautions to protect the valuable books. The PCs will need to get permission to use the library.

Predetermine the general subject matter available in the library. This might coincide with a specific knowledge skill such as History or Religion. A PC that takes at least 20 minutes to use the library to perform research in an associated field gains advantage on the check. Depending on their level of access and supervision, the

KITCHEN DISASTERS

d10	Disaster
1	***Burnt Food.*** Someone left food unattended on high heat. The ruined dish gives off an unpleasant burnt smell that permeates adjacent chambers.
2	***Cut.*** An NPC accidentally cuts themselves while preparing a meal.
3	***Expired Food.*** The kitchen staff accidentally prepares a dish using expired or moldy ingredients. The food tastes terrible, and those consuming it must make a CON save to avoid gaining the poisoned condition.
4	***Forgotten Item.*** A kitchen worker accidentally misplaces food, a cooking tray, or an oven cloth, starting a fire in the oven that fills adjacent areas with smoke. Creatures in the smoke-filled area cannot see and risk suffocation.
5	***Grease Fire.*** Cooking oil left on high heat ignites a dangerous grease fire. If not immediately extinguished, flames quickly engulf the kitchen and spread into the rest of the castle.
6	***Measurements.*** Incorrectly measured ingredients throw off the balance of flavors and textures of the dish, which offends an influential NPC, negatively affecting their attitude during an upcoming negotiation.
7	***Overcooked Food.*** Overcooking vegetables, meat, or baked goods results in a lackluster meal. NPCs consuming it can gain only half of any hit points recovered during their next short rest.
8	***Overseasoned Food.*** Someone added too much salt or spice to a dish, making it nearly inedible, plus it might trigger a reaction from sensitive individuals, causing them to gain the poisoned condition.
9	***Spilled Food.*** A clumsy kitchen worker spills a large pot of food or drops a jug of wine. The floor becomes dangerously slippery, and clearing it takes several minutes. The slippery area is considered difficult terrain.
10	***Undercooked Food.*** One or more diners consumes contaminated food and must make a CON save or catch a disease (GM's discretion).

PCs might unwittingly reveal the nature of their research to other individuals with library access.

MAIN ENTRANCE

A castle's main entrance is designed to make an impression while also providing defense. It should express the culture and values of its creator and of its occupants. A typical main entrance is grandiose with high arches and heavy doors, signifying its importance, and is decorated with carvings, statues, or banners that should give PCs a clear idea of who lives in the castle. The display should reflect the lord's stature, demeanor, and relative level of power. For example, a totalitarian lord might display the heads of their enemies on spikes at the main entrance while a religious lord might display the symbols of their faith and demand offerings for the church upon the PCs' arrival.

Arches. A castle's doors are set within a facade or archway. The arch reflects the structural integrity of the castle and is decorated with elements that convey information about the lord, including lineage, heritage, political viewpoints, alignment, wealth, and power. An ability check to study and decipher such elements of style might determine more about the castle's history and about those who reside within, whether past or present (GM's discretion).

Doors. A castle entrance's doors are also a status symbol, and whether single or double, they are typically heavy, thick, and occasionally armored. There might also be an additional gate, portcullis, or alarms that can be triggered during an attack, outbreak, or siege.

Guards. The main entrance is typically guarded by members of a martial faction loyal to the castle's lord. Such guards might request paperwork, require that weapons be checked, or search those who attempt to enter the castle.

Determine the loyalty of castle guards prior to the arrival of the PCs. Not all guards are equally loyal to the castle's lord, and some might be more easily swayed or bribed. Determine also the number of guards, their general disposition, plus the loyalty and disposition of the guard commander. Set DCs for ability checks for dealing with guards based on this disposition and loyalty: a typical guard has a base DC 12 (see **Guard Conditions** table for modifiers). There might also be extenuating circumstances involved in any interaction with guards, particularly if they are recurring NPCs with prior relations to one or more of the PCs, such as siblings, or individuals that can be easily extorted.

GUARD CONDITIONS

Conditions	Check Made With . . .
Disloyal	Advantage for bribes and coercion.
Loyal	Disadvantage for bribes and coercion.
Underpaid	–2 to DC for bribes or intimidation.
Well Paid	+2 to DC for bribes or intimidation.
Adversely Aligned to Lord	–2 to DC for bribes, coercion, or intimidation.
Similarly Aligned to Lord	+2 to DC for bribes, coercion, or intimidation.
Untrained	–2 to DC for coercion or intimidation.
Highly Trained	+2 to DC for coercion or intimidation.
Weak Commander	–2 to DC for all adverse influence.
Strong Commander	+2 to DC for all adverse influence.

PRIVY

Privies are essential facilities for dealing with the biological needs of castle residents. Place them in discrete areas that project from the outer walls. This small room might contain stalls or troughs for individuals to relieve themselves or might serve as a washroom for emptying and cleaning chamber pots. A privy should have barrels of water, soap, and rags—and possibly a collection of ceramic or metal chamber pots. High fantasy settings might have magical toilets that do not smell or that effectively handle sanitation issues associated with excrement.

As uncouth as it might seem to have a privy in an adventure, they are areas of privacy and vulnerability. Strategically, individuals can use the privy to corner or isolate an opponent or hide and exchange secret or cryptic messages or small items without attracting attention. They are also helpful for the convenient disposal of evidence. GMs should never underestimate the value of a privy:

- ***Garderobe.*** This private room has a stone seat and a waste hole that leads to the outside. It is positioned away from the main living areas for privacy and hygiene. Servants occasionally come with buckets of used bathwater or dishwater to dump in, cleaning it out.
- ***Outhouse.*** This wooden shack contains a wooden seat over a deep pit. The outhouse is located outside the main structure and at a distance that is always a bit too close during the summer and a bit too far away in the winter.
- ***Trough Latrine.*** This privy consists of a long trough of stone or metal that drains out into a cesspit.

SECRET PASSAGE

Large castles might have secret or lost passages. These allow important individuals, such as the lord and their family, to safely navigate the castle, unseen by enemies or assassins. Such passages allow quick egress from sensitive areas like the throne room or the lord's private chambers.

Alternatively, the passages might be primarily used by servants to pass in the course of their duties, unseen by residents and guests.

Depending on how long the castle has stood, the walls might hide forgotten and lost passages whose existence remains unknown to most residents. Likely few if any remember them, nor what they were once used for. These might include ancient escape routes or private passages used by former residents for anything from secret trysts to the transportation of contraband.

Some castles might have forbidden passages, corridors, and rooms that were blocked off decades ago, perhaps bearing a curse, containing a hateful legacy, or imprisoning a celestial, fiend, or ghost.

SERVANTS' QUARTERS

The servants' quarters are situated on the ground floor and in a side tower away from the main living areas of the lord and noble guests. Servants must use separate entrances, and they don't enter the noble living areas (and possibly other areas) unless specifically summoned or required to in the performance of their duties. Quarters are typically near the workrooms, such as the kitchen, laundry room, or stable. This minimizes the time and effort required to travel between their living quarters and work duties.

Small and sparsely furnished, servants' quarters prioritize functionality over comfort. Shared rooms accommodate multiple individuals or small families and only achieve privacy using curtains as makeshift dividers to create small private spaces within the shared rooms. A central hearth provides warmth and a gathering spot for socializing, cooking meals, and sharing stories after completing their duties. The rooms contain simple furnishings—straw pallet beds, crude wooden tables, and stools. Often servants must share

beds, taking turns and using them in shifts. Servants are only allotted basic, utilitarian amenities, such as a communal washing area, shared privies, and limited bathing facilities. They keep personal belongings and meager possessions in small chests or wooden crates.

Roll 1d12 and consult the **Castle Staff** table or choose something appropriate.

WAR ROOM

The lord's battle standard hangs upon the door to this chamber, marking it as the war room—the central command center for military strategies, planning, and decision-making during conflicts. They are typically near the audience chamber to ensure the lord has easy accessibility to information and communication. A grand stone table serves as the war room's centerpiece and is large enough to accommodate maps, strategic documents, and various tools used in planning military campaigns. Shelves or cabinets filled with books, scrolls, and historical records line its walls and provide valuable knowledge on military tactics, past battles, and the

SERVANTS IN THE CASTLE

A strict hierarchy governs castle servants and bestows specific duties and responsibilities upon each. At the top of the hierarchy sits the lord of the castle and their spouse, followed by higher-ranking officials, such as stewards, chamberlains, and knights. Subordinate servants include household staff, domestic servants, and manual laborers. Those with lower social status are expected to show deference and respect to the lord and higher-ranking officials. Strict protocols govern formal interactions between servants and the nobility (see also **Castle Staff** table).

Servants are quartered on the lower floors, away from the lord and essential vassals. Higher-ranking servants might have comfortable accommodations while lower-ranking servants share cramped quarters.

CASTLE STAFF

d10	Staff
1	***Butler (Mid Rank).*** This individual maintains the dining area and oversees the table setting and the serving of meals. The butler has access to most of the castle's lower levels.
2	***Chamberlain (High Rank).*** This individual supervises the cleaning and maintenance of private chambers and bedrooms and ensures that all are furnished and prepared for guests. A chamberlain might carry a set of keys that allow them access to restricted areas, such as storage closets or private hallways of the upper floors.
3	***Cook (Mid Rank).*** The cook prepares meals for the lord and guests, supervises the kitchen staff, and manages the castle's food stores. They have access to the kitchen, dining areas, and storage areas in the cellars.
4	***Court Herald (Low Rank).*** They announce important events and proclaim the lord's messages.
5	***Gardener (Low Rank).*** Gardeners tend the gardens and grounds in general, ensuring they are well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing. Gardeners might have access and keys to lesser-used side or back doors between the castle and the courtyard. They also have access to tool storage.
6	***Maid and Housekeeper (Low Rank).*** These individuals perform domestic tasks, such as cleaning rooms, making beds, restoring linens, and washing clothes. They have access to chambers with which they are tasked.
7	***Master-at-Arms (Mid Rank).*** An expert in weaponry and combat, they oversee the armory and train soldiers.
8	***Royal Huntsman (Mid Rank).*** They oversee the hunting for food and the managing the castle's game reserves.
9	***Stable Hand (Low Rank).*** They assist in caring for the horses. A mid-ranking master of the horses manages the stables and the care of the horses and carriages.
10	***Steward (Mid to High Rank).*** This position oversees the household and organizes various events and activities. They are responsible for bookkeeping, scheduling, and accommodating visiting dignitaries or nobles and have access to most areas within the ground floor and possibly keys to other areas associated with their duties. A high-ranking steward (or seneschal) often speaks on behalf of the lord and maintains castle finances, having greater access to the castle and keys to most rooms. They might also have knowledge of secret passages.

castle's history. War rooms are restricted and kept locked and guarded when not in use, and anyone caught inside without permission or accompaniment is immediately accused of treason.

A war room uses its massive table to display detailed maps of the castle, surrounding lands, and potential conflict areas. Map markings represent troop movements, fortifications, supply routes, and enemy positions. Strategists might also use miniature figurines, representing soldiers, siege weapons, and key landmarks, to simulate battles and visualize various scenarios, aiding in strategic decision-making. Individuals can interpret the maps with a successful Investigation check to gain a general idea of what the strategists might be planning and the overall position of their military stance (such as offensive, defensive, or retreat).

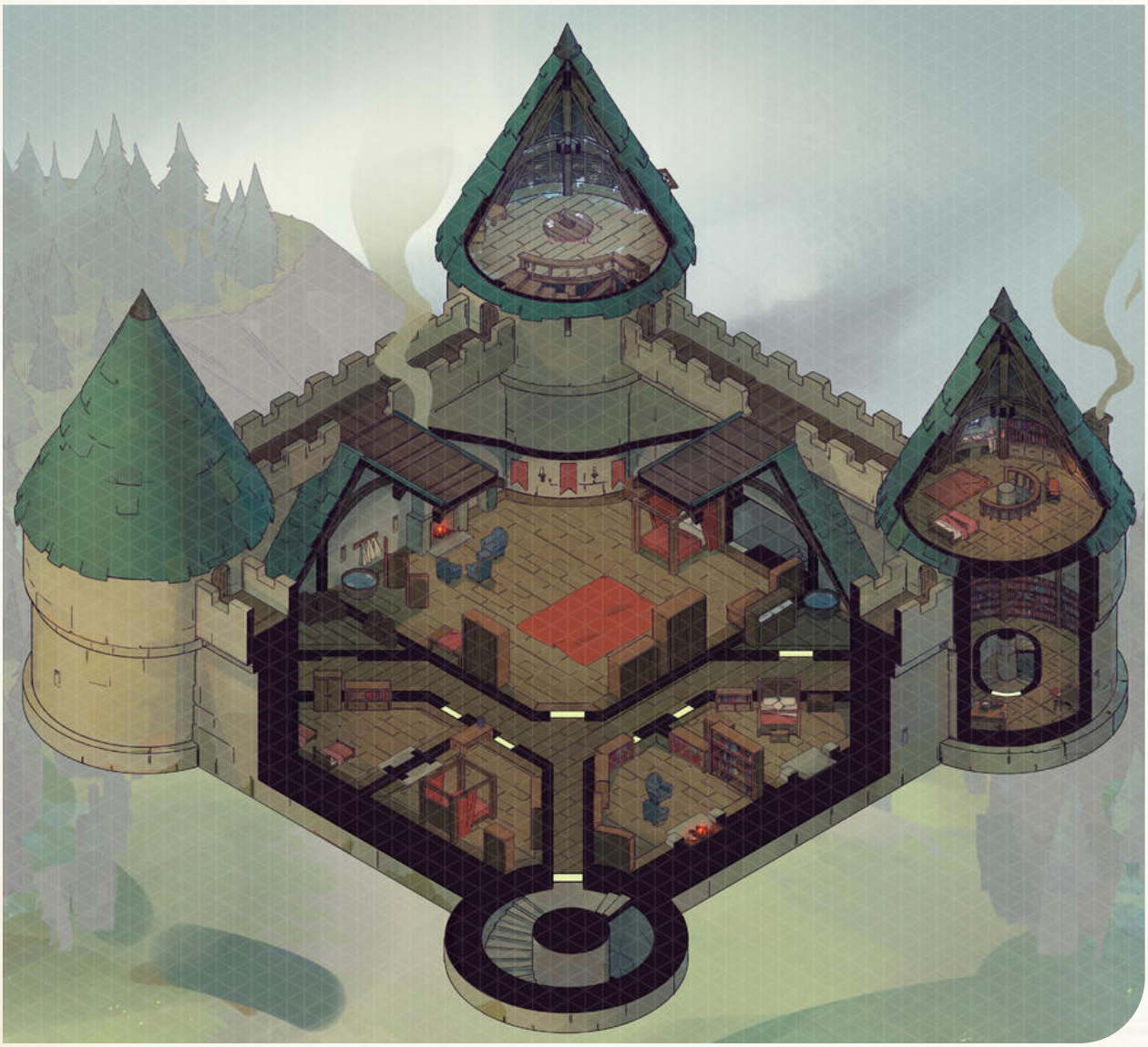
SECOND FLOOR

Castles typically have a second story—if not more—and this is where the more out-of-the-way spaces are maintained, such as private quarters.

One or more of the following rooms might be present on the second floor.

ARCANIST'S CHAMBERS

Many castles employ the services of a practitioner of the arcane arts, such as an alchemist, seer, or wizard. This individual is typically enigmatic, engaging in potentially questionable activities and practicing their arcane arts behind closed doors. The arcanist is given private chambers, such as an alchemist's laboratory or wizard's tower, which reflect their aesthetic and are filled with objects used in their magical pursuits and



ARMORY FEATURES

d6	Features
1	***Ammunition.*** The armory stores arrows, bolts, crossbow bolts, and other ammunition in chests or barrels.
2	***Armor Repair.*** A designated area within the armory is used to repair armor. It contains a workbench with tools like riveting hammers, pliers, and leatherworking equipment. Adjacent to the bench, there burns a small fire pit used to heat and shape metal. Separate workbenches are equipped with hammers, anvils, files, and grindstones to maintain, repair, and sharpen weapons.
3	***Armor Stands.*** Stands or mannequins display full suits of armor, including helmets, breastplates, gauntlets, greaves, and shields. The stands adjust to accommodate different sizes and allow knights to try on their gear.
4	***Chainmail Storage.*** A series of great metal hooks hang chainmail suits and coifs, mail gloves, and other smaller armor pieces.
5	***Display Cabinets.*** The armory might display masterworks or ornamental weapons, such as ceremonial swords, in ornate glass cabinets to showcase their craftsmanship or significance.
6	***Weapon Racks.*** Wooden or iron racks or stands store and display swords, axes, maces, spears, and polearms. Hooks affixed to the walls hold smaller weapons like daggers, knives, and throwing axes.

interests. These chambers are typically located in an isolated or private section of the castle and are under the charge of the arcanist and generally off-limits to or avoided by other castle residents. The caster might protect the area with magical alarms, traps, or wards or with summoned guardians.

ARMORY

The armory is a dimly lit stone room, the air heavy with the smell of oiled metal, leather, and wood. With thick walls and stout doors, reinforced with metal bands or ironwork, this serves as the hub for the storage, maintenance, and distribution of weaponry, armor, and other military equipment (see also **Armory Features** table). It is also where castle defenders arm themselves for battle. An armory can range from a small chamber to a large hall, depending on the size and purpose of the castle. Most are strategically positioned near entrances or along important defensive corridors for easy access during conflicts.

A blacksmith or similar craftsperson who specializes in the care and maintenance of weapons and armor oversees the armory. Depending on the size of the castle, this individual might have one or more apprentices who work under their tutelage. Access to the armory is restricted and requires proper work status or permission from the lord.

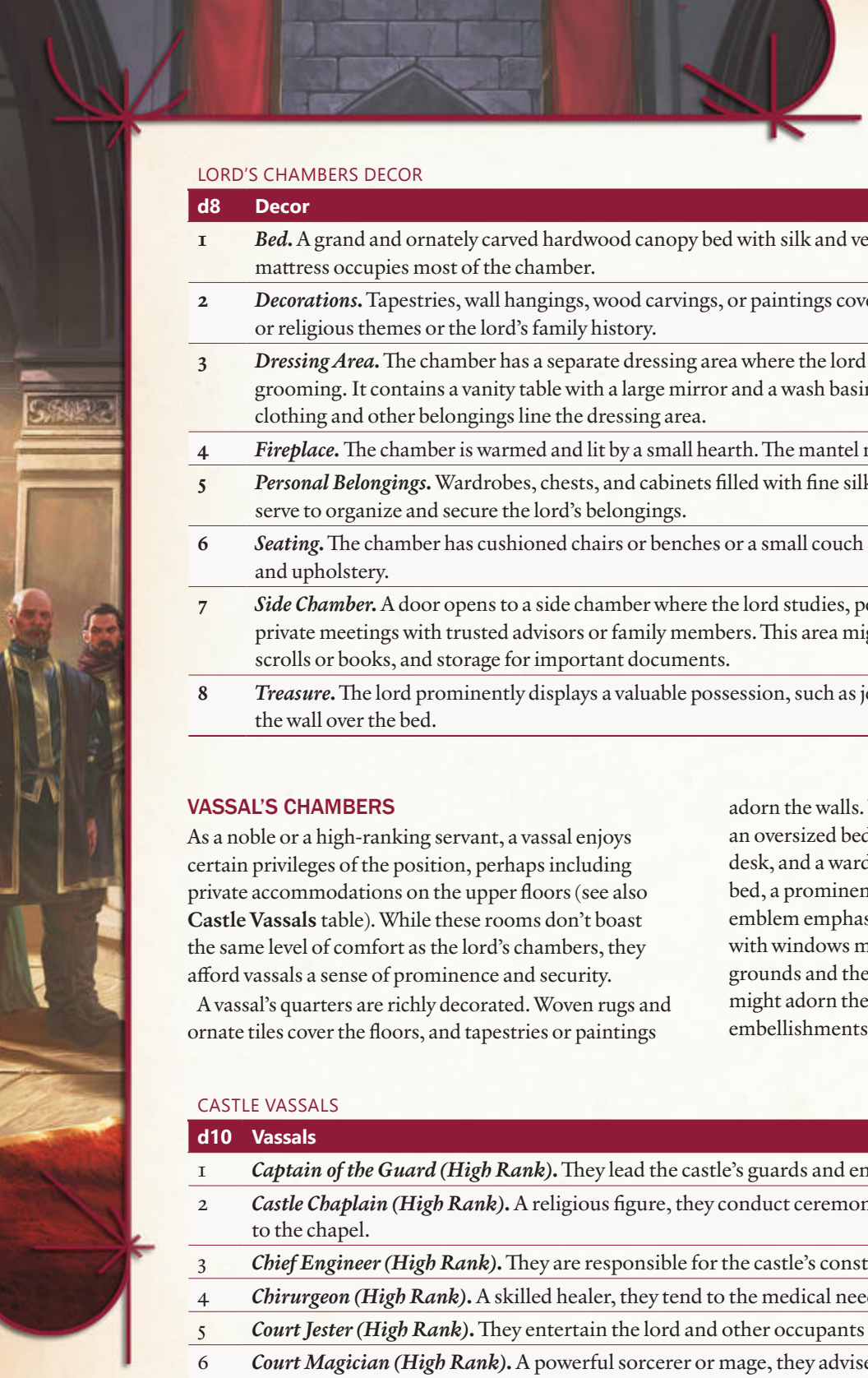
CHAPEL

A lord might show devotion by designating a small chamber as a chapel and assigning it to a trusted monk, priest, or deacon to oversee—along with permanent room and board. The chapel offers a private place for the lord to pray or to attend small services and might have a modest shrine where one leaves offerings, burns incense, or performs small rituals. It might also have a pulpit or side table with religious texts, prayers, beads, holy symbols, candles, or a bowl of holy water. Seating might include a few chairs, a bench, or a prayer mat.

LORD'S CHAMBERS

The lords' chambers are typically in a secure and somewhat isolated section of the second or third floor of the castle and might have a separate entrance or hallway. The lord keeps these areas locked and secure, using the chambers to rest, tend to personal matters, and conduct private meetings. Only those with permission or specific duties (such as immediate family, personal advisors, and trusted servants) are granted access. In addition to keeping the lord safe, these chambers hold valuable personal possessions like artifacts and heirlooms (see also **Lord's Chambers Decor** table). Security measures in and around the chambers are typically greater than that elsewhere in the castle and include locked doors, guards, traps, and a hidden escape route.

Personal Guards (Mid Rank). Depending on the lord's status and security concerns, they might keep one or more personal guards. These individuals are well-trained, highly trusted, and better paid than ordinary castle guards, and they are given rooms and allowed access to restricted areas, including the upper floors and the lord's private quarters. A castle might devote one or more rooms to housing personal guards, which only have a bed and simple furnishings. A chest or locker serves as a wardrobe and holds personal belongings and valuables, allowing them to easily move their belongings from post to post.



LORD'S CHAMBERS DECOR

d8	Decor
1	***Bed.*** A grand and ornately carved hardwood canopy bed with silk and velvet sheets and pillows and a feather mattress occupies most of the chamber.
2	***Decorations.*** Tapestries, wall hangings, wood carvings, or paintings cover the walls, depicting mythological or religious themes or the lord's family history.
3	***Dressing Area.*** The chamber has a separate dressing area where the lord dresses and attends to personal grooming. It contains a vanity table with a large mirror and a wash basin. Wardrobes or chests that store clothing and other belongings line the dressing area.
4	***Fireplace.*** The chamber is warmed and lit by a small hearth. The mantel might hold decorative or personal items.
5	***Personal Belongings.*** Wardrobes, chests, and cabinets filled with fine silk clothing, jewelry, and weaponry serve to organize and secure the lord's belongings.
6	***Seating.*** The chamber has cushioned chairs or benches or a small couch adorned with decorative carvings and upholstery.
7	***Side Chamber.*** A door opens to a side chamber where the lord studies, performs administrative tasks, or hosts private meetings with trusted advisors or family members. This area might include a desk, writing implements, scrolls or books, and storage for important documents.
8	***Treasure.*** The lord prominently displays a valuable possession, such as jewelry, fine art, or a family heirloom, on the wall over the bed.

VASSAL'S CHAMBERS

As a noble or a high-ranking servant, a vassal enjoys certain privileges of the position, perhaps including private accommodations on the upper floors (see also **Castle Vassals** table). While these rooms don't boast the same level of comfort as the lord's chambers, they afford vassals a sense of prominence and security.

A vassal's quarters are richly decorated. Woven rugs and ornate tiles cover the floors, and tapestries or paintings adorn the walls. Well-crafted wooden furniture includes an oversized bed with embroidered linens, a writing desk, and a wardrobe for delicate garments. Above the bed, a prominently placed coat-of-arms or personal emblem emphasizes the vassal's noble status. Rooms with windows might offer a panoramic view of the castle grounds and the surrounding countryside. A vassal might adorn the door with intricate carvings or metal embellishments to denote their status.

CASTLE VASSALS

d10	Vassals
1	***Captain of the Guard (High Rank).*** They lead the castle's guards and ensure security within its walls.
2	***Castle Chaplain (High Rank).*** A religious figure, they conduct ceremonies, offer spiritual guidance, and tend to the chapel.
3	***Chief Engineer (High Rank).*** They are responsible for the castle's construction, maintenance, and defense.
4	***Chirurgeon (High Rank).*** A skilled healer, they tend to the medical needs of the castle's residents.
5	***Court Jester (High Rank).*** They entertain the lord and other occupants with jokes, stories, and performances.
6	***Court Magician (High Rank).*** A powerful sorcerer or mage, they advise the lord and protect the castle with magic.
7	***Lady-in-Waiting (Mid Rank).*** They attend to the needs and requests of the lady of the castle.
8	***Lord's Advisor (Mid Rank).*** A trusted counselor, they offer guidance on politics, diplomacy, and strategy.
9	***Royal Scribe (Low Rank).*** They handle the castle's administrative tasks, including correspondence and recordkeeping.
10	***Spymaster (High Rank).*** A secretive individual, they gather intelligence and conduct covert operations on behalf of the castle.

Attendant's Chamber. Adjacent to the main living area, a private chamber designated for the vassal's attendants or close advisors ensures they are nearby to assist with any needs or matters that arise. The chamber might also have a small seating area with plush chairs and a table for meetings or bookshelves filled with valuable tomes, maps, and historical scrolls.

BASEMENT

Beneath the castle's foundation lies the basement level, consisting primarily of unfurnished chambers with rough stone walls and either flagstone or hard-packed earthen floors. Most of the hallways and rooms are unlit, and those unable to see in the dark require torches or other light sources. Similarly, lack of fresh air and sunlight taint everything with the distinct smell of mildew and decay. Water drips down the walls, forming small puddles. Every sound within the long empty hallways seems to echo—creating an unsettling cacophony of whispers and footfalls, punctuated by the occasional chittering and scurrying of unknown vermin.

Any of the following rooms might also be present.

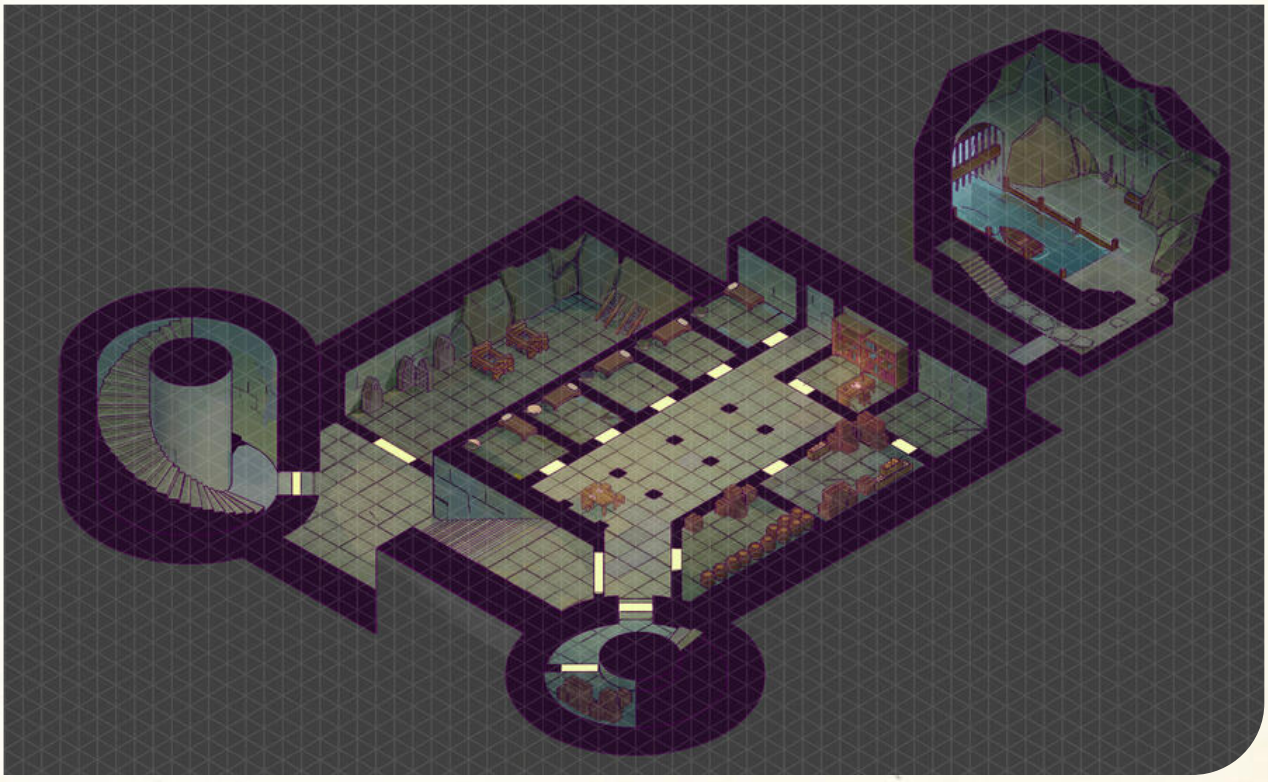
BOATHOUSE

A castle near a waterway might have a secret boathouse or even docks hidden within its cellars. The exterior is hidden in a remote inlet and blocked by a heavy wooden portcullis, raised and lowered by a set of mechanical gears activated by a lever. The boathouse might also be used for freely transporting supplies in and out of the castle without disruption. The lord, their family, and their allies might also use the boat to covertly enter or to flee in times of trouble. Conversely, the boathouse might have been long abandoned and forgotten by all except for the sinister members of a secret cabal or for the great descendent of one of the ancient rivals of the lord's family.

DUNGEON

A dungeon consists of one or more rooms located in the castle's depths, kept isolated and sealed from the rest of the castle by locked doors and cages of thick metal bars. Dungeons are used to detain and interrogate prisoners. Security and sentencing are determined by the severity of the crime and the potential threat of the prisoner (see also **Dungeon Prisoners** table). Sometimes prisoners languish in the dungeon for many years or even life.

Cells. Cells are caged structures used to detain prisoners. Some can be large and hold multiple prisoners while others are small and only accommodate a single prisoner—all the better to keep them isolated. Cage bars are typically made from iron or steel, but they might also be crafted from wood or bone, stronger metals, crystal, or even magically harnessed energy.



DUNGEON PRISONERS

d6	Prisoners
1	***Fallen Knight.*** Once a respected knight, enemies framed Sir Galistan for treason against the kingdom. He has languished in his cell for over a decade, growing old and bitter. He still seeks redemption and the truth behind his betrayal, and he lights up at the sight of potential saviors.
2	***Heretic.*** Sulena is a seemingly nondescript middle-aged woman, but despite appearances, she is a skilled sorceress accused of dabbling in dark magic. She possesses a wealth of arcane knowledge but struggles to control her powers. The first time she casts a spell that targets someone in the castle, it does maximum lethal damage.
3	***Huntress.*** Elara is a young, athletic woman, dressed in simple brown sackcloth. Her hands are bound with a coarse, frayed cord. The king's guards caught her poaching game from the royal forest. Although she admits her guilt, she claims she hunted to feed her impoverished family. If the PCs free her, she offers them a safe harbor in her small village.
4	***Revolutionary.*** A disgruntled former blacksmith with a penchant for explosives, authorities imprisoned Rurik Blackrock for causing chaos during a protest against oppressive taxes. If freed, he immediately seeks vengeance by setting fire to the first library he encounters.
5	***Scholar.*** The aged man with a long snowy beard is the knowledgeable historian Elixoth the Scholar. He was imprisoned for possessing forbidden texts and is a skilled cipher who claims to know secret passages in the castle. He offers to share his knowledge with anyone that grants him the means of escape. While he readily reveals the entrance to the passage, the old scholar trusts no one truly and slips off at the first opportunity.
6	***Spy.*** A brooding and mysterious elf with a dark past, Kael the Faceless keeps his secrets close to his chest. Skilled in infiltration and espionage, he was apprehended for clandestine activities that threatened the kingdom's stability. But what he tells visitors is that he serves a sentence for accidentally killing a man in a bar fight.

Dungeonkeeper (Mid Rank). A dungeonkeeper oversees activities in the dungeon. The position requires a particular sort of individual who is able to tolerate life in the sour pits beneath the castle and handle much of its unpleasantries. It's not a hard job, but it does require a certain disposition that most well-adjusted individuals find repellant, so it can be a difficult position to fill.

Roll 1d6 and consult the **Dungeonkeeper Quirks** table or choose some appropriate flavor for the NPC.

Torture Chamber. A cruel lord might employ a torturer to punish enemies and extract information from traitors. If the dungeon has a torture chamber, it is typically run by the dungeonkeeper.

DUNGEONKEEPER QUIRKS

d6	Quirks
1	***Cataracts.*** The dungeonkeeper's cloudy eyes bulge with cataracts. They make a point of informing guests of their terrible eyesight.
2	***Filthy.*** The dungeonkeeper wears a filthy, old tunic, and their fingernails are caked in unidentifiable grime. Brownish smudges spot their pale skin as they grin with loose, yellowed teeth.
3	***Sniffer.*** The dungeonkeeper distrusts all outsiders and attempts to discern their personalities or backgrounds by sniffing them head-to-toe. Except to the castle's lord, the dungeonkeeper behaves in an insultingly condescending manner to anyone wearing a perfumed scent.
4	***Vermin Speaker.*** The dungeonkeeper feeds the local mice and rats and frequently converses with them, claiming to understand their chittering and believing them friends.
5	***Vile Snacking.*** The dungeonkeeper picks small insects and lizards from the wall and eats them as a source of protein.
6	***Whisperer.*** The dungeonkeeper compulsively mumbles a strange litany of soft, unidentifiable whispers that combine mundane descriptions mixed with weird alien syllables.

STORAGE CELLAR

Castle residents primarily use cellars to store food, equipment, and other goods, and a castle's basement might have dozens of these. Here are a few examples of common types of storage cellars:

- ***Cold Storage Cellar.*** Blocks of ice packed along the sides of this room keep the space very cold. It stores meat and sides of smoked dried beef, goat, mutton, and pork, all hanging from the ceiling or arranged on racks.
- ***Dry Goods Cellar.*** Wooden support beams prop the low ceiling of this dark, cramped stone chamber. The stagnant air carries an earthy aroma with hints of dampness and the subtle fragrance of stored goods. The cellar has fallen into chaos with items precariously stacked, barrels randomly rolled into place, and crates haphazardly arranged. Typically, non-perishable goods are stored here, like cloth, tools, and other mundane items. Warped shelves and racks line the walls, buckling from the weight they endure.
- ***Engineering Cellar.*** This room is filled with crates of rusted tools and dented tins filled with bolts, screws, nails, and other metal fasteners. Racks hold piles of chipped and partially warped cog wheels, broken gears, bits of chain and rope, and dozens of differently sized shears. Another box holds a collection of dusty scroll tubes stuffed with moldering blueprints.

VAULT

A treasure vault is a secure, often hidden chamber used to safeguard items of great worth, such as ancient artifacts, precious metals, gemstones, historical relics, currency, important documents, and other culturally significant items of great value. Engineers construct treasure vaults to provide maximum protection against theft, natural disasters, and other potential risks that could compromise the safety of the contents. A vault's walls are thick and lined with lead to protect against scrying and other spells. An impenetrable metal

VAULT PUZZLE DOORS

d8	Puzzles
1	***Celestial Key.*** To open this vault, the PCs must align celestial symbols, planets, and constellations.
2	***Color Puzzle.*** A series of interlocking chambers leads to the vault. The PCs must search the chambers for colored crystals that they must use as keys to reveal hidden paths to unlock the final chamber.
3	***Melodic Sequence.*** A melodic puzzle seals this vault. PCs must replicate musical sequences using enchanted instruments or ancient mechanical devices that emit musical notes.
4	***Reflection Pool.*** To open this vault, the PCs must manipulate a magical pool's reflections until they align perfectly with symbols on the walls or ceiling.
5	***Runestones.*** Ancient runes and symbols cover the vault. The PCs must decipher the runic language, translate hidden messages, and arrange runestones correctly to access the core of the vault.
6	***Shifter's Secret.*** The vault doors are enchanted to only allow individuals in specific forms to pass through.
7	***Time-Locked.*** Ancient magic seals the vault, and to access it, the PCs must find and activate time-traveling artifacts to move back and forth between the past and present.
8	***Weight and Balance.*** The PCs must carefully balance weights on scales and manipulate levers and cogs to open the vault.

door, reinforced with advanced locking mechanisms, seals the space. Added protection might incorporate magical surveillance systems, alarms, and deadly traps. Individuals who require access to such a vault might use puzzles as keys or to disarm or bypass magical traps placed on passages leading to it or to unlock vault doors.

Roll 1d8 and consult the **Vault Puzzle Doors** table or choose some flavor suitable to the vault.

OUTBUILDINGS

An outbuilding refers to any structure beyond the castle walls that still falls under the jurisdiction and protection of the local lord. Outbuildings might include massive structures requiring an excess of land or buildings that house individuals or serve as workspaces for tasks inappropriate for life within the castle walls. Vassals comprise most of the population living on the castle grounds. Still, the courtyard attracts numerous travelers, migrants, refugees, pilgrims, merchants, and other outsiders. Despite the lord's property ownership, not everyone in the outbuildings are loyal vassals.

Any of the following structures might also be present.

BARRACKS

Castles maintaining active military forces build their barracks beyond the castle walls. Troops require grounds for training and formations and, in times of war especially, for additional supplies and support personnel. Barracks built outside the wall will raise their own additional fortifications and walls for added defense. Unlike castle guards, soldiers take orders from a high-ranking military officer that answers directly to a king or emperor. Determine the soldiers' relationship to the local lord and how much (if any) influence that lord can exert over the soldiers. Regardless of their relationship, such barracks depend on the castle and its lord for essential resources. A lord's wealth typically determines the number of troops a castle can maintain.

Soldiers in a Castle. Active soldiers, especially conscripts and mercenaries, live a violent and bloody life that is relatively incompatible with the average vassal. Personal conduct has less formality, and local laws aren't always interpreted in the same manner as expected within the lord's courts. Minor disputes are settled quickly, with rights going to a soldier's rank. Major disputes can lead to infighting, brawls, mutiny, and desertion. Strong command and good pay are necessary to keep soldiers in line.

When building a castle that maintains a standing army, consider the following questions:

- How easily can a typical soldier be swayed or bought?
- How many soldiers are present (based on the lord's wealth and power)?
- What is the typical soldier's relationship with the castle's lord?
- What is the typical soldier's relationship with the vassals or their nation's commonfolk?
- What is the typical soldier's relationship with their commanding officer?
- What kind of risk, repercussions, or conflict might one face if interactions with soldiers take a negative turn?

Answering the above questions helps determine the outcome of conversations and altercations between PCs and common soldiers at the castle. See also **Guard Conditions** table above to help answer questions on a soldier's loyalty and ethics.

HUNTING LODGE

The lord might own a lodge to host formal hunting events. Hunts are often for sport between the lord and other members of the aristocracy—and the occasional visiting dignitary or exalted hero. The lodge provides a base of operations for these hunts but also a discreet location for everyone to gossip and to discuss business and politics. It is moderately sized and built around a large central chamber, typically used for meetings and feasts, that features a tremendous stone hearth adorned with hunting trophies. Mounted antlers and furs decorate the walls, and a large table displays the weapons of choice for hunting expeditions. Smaller side rooms extend from the main chamber and might include a mud porch, kitchen, storage closet, or cloak room. The main chamber might also have a balcony or mezzanine level with additional smaller rooms coming off it for more private activities, such as napping, card games, or intimate conversations.

INNER COURTYARD

Just outside the castle gates lies an inner courtyard. The inner courtyard typically comprises an open-air topiary garden, possibly also containing statuary or fountains. Its design reflects the lord's tastes and the style of the dominant culture.

KENNELS

Many castles maintain a kennel—a structure or enclosure designed to house, breed, and care for the lord's guard dogs or hunting dogs. A kennel master is responsible for the wellbeing of the dogs and ensures they are fed, groomed, and adequately trained for guarding, hunting, or tracking.

The kennel is a sturdy, enclosed building made of wood or stone with a thatched or shingled roof, often located near the stable or hunting lodge. A kennel's size depends on the number of dogs it houses. The building has small windows or vents, and wooden partitions or low walls divide the interior into stalls to separate individual dogs and prevent them from fighting or mating. Kennel attendants lay out straw for bedding. Adjacent to the stalls is a designated area with troughs or bowls for food and water, regularly filled by attendants. Larger kennels also have enclosed adjacent areas for dogs to run freely. Most kennels have a sturdy door or gate that servants lock to prevent unauthorized access and to keep the dogs safe from theft or escape.

STABLE

The stable consists of several buildings centered around a long wooden stable house dedicated to housing and caring for draft animals and mounts. A stablemaster, staff, and apprentices run the stable, manage transportation needs, repair wagons and carts, and sell horses and other equipment to merchants and travelers. A stable usually stands near a main road or access point to the castle. Additional structures might include the shops of a cartwright, blacksmith, leatherworker, and other craftspeople that specialize in making saddles, tack and harnesses, and horseshoes. The stable also maintains barns to store animal feed and a barrel tower for collecting rainwater.

Using the Stable. Before PCs attempt to stable mounts at the castle, some questions should be answered:

- Aside from the stablemaster, are there any other important figures that operate out of the stable?
- Do castle guards police the stable grounds, or are they more loosely operated?
- Does the castle lord permit travelers to bring mounts within the castle walls?
- How secure or trustworthy are the individuals working the stable? Is there any risk involved with interacting with them?
- Is the stablemaster an indentured or free vassal? What is the stablemaster's relationship with the castle lord?
- Who predominantly requires the use of the stable? Are they public or private?

TOURNAMENT GROUNDS

Lords often maintain expansive fields and grand pavilions for tournaments and other events. Tournament grounds provide venues for knights, nobles, and spectators to witness and participate in thrilling displays of skill, valor, and pageantry. Colorful tents and pavilions dot the grounds, housing the participants and their attendants.

At the center of the tournament grounds stretches the jousting lists, a vast oval field of hard-packed earth meticulously prepared and marked for contests. Adjacent to them, participants gather at a small pavilion to receive final instructions before entering the field. A tall, wooden scaffold encircles the lists, providing seating for the common folk. Conversely, raised viewing boxes provide private seating for nobles, aristocrats, and others with the coin to afford it. During important tournaments, competitors and their patrons adorn the grandstands with banners and heraldic symbols.

A grand pavilion is erected at a stretch of the grounds most suitable for viewing competitions. Servants decorate the pavilion with the banners and coat-of-arms of the hosting nobility. This area provides honored guests (such as visiting royalty or other high-ranking dignitaries) a prominent vantage with a commanding view of the events. Across from the grand pavilion rises the heraldic stand, a dedicated platform from where a master-of-ceremonies announces the participants and rules of each contest and ultimately declares the winners.

For more on how to run tournaments, see **Tournaments** in **Chapter 2**.

MERCHANTS AND VENDORS

Competitions draw people from all walks of life who gather to engage in trade, entertainment, and festivities. The more popular events draw eager merchants from near and far, and the fairgrounds transform into a vibrant and bustling marketplace, offering a wide array of goods, food, and entertainment for the attendees' enjoyment. Alongside the thoroughfare, vendors erect stalls, tents, and booths, and criers with pushcarts wander the grounds hawking food, drinks, souvenirs, and other trinkets. Well-traveled merchants showcase a variety of goods, including crafts, jewelry, leather, pottery, spices, and textiles, giving PCs the opportunity to purchase items and animals that might otherwise be unavailable. If a contestant holds the favor of the crowd, a merchant might reduce prices—and they might raise prices for unfavorable contestants.

Roll 1d8 and consult the **Fairgrounds Sights** table or choose something appropriate.

OPEN FAIRGROUNDS

Tournaments are grand displays to celebrate holidays, commemorations, births, and other important events, but when not hosting a tournament, fairgrounds can be used as meeting places for locals and visitors, fostering community and camaraderie. The castle lord might give vassals permission to hold gatherings, feasts, and dances upon the vacant fairgrounds. This is an opportunity to call on NPCs from all walks of life to engage in trade, entertainment, and celebration and provides a perfect place to run specialized social

FAIRGROUNDS SIGHTS

d8	Sights
1	***Ale Tents.*** To quench the thirst of visitors, ale tents scattered around the fairgrounds offer a selection of drinks, including ale, mead, and cider, providing a place for people to relax and socialize.
2	***Animal Displays.*** Livestock and animal displays are a common sight at fairgrounds. Farmers bring their livestock, such as cows, sheep, and chickens, for trade or exhibition. Occasionally, rangers or huntsmen place exotic animals, such as falcons or hunting dogs, on display.
3	***Craftspeople.*** Skilled craftspeople and artisans display their talents and offer demonstrations. Blacksmiths, potters, weavers, and other tradespeople showcase their skills and create handcrafted items on-site.
4	***Entertainers.*** Throughout the fairgrounds, small stages allow minstrels, musicians, and performers to showcase their talents. In contrast, acrobats, jugglers, and other street performers navigate the thoroughfares, attempting to captivate the crowds.
5	***Food Vendors.*** Aromas waft as food vendors prepare and serve various culinary delights, such as roasted meats, freshly baked bread, pies, pastries, and other mouthwatering treats to satisfy hungry fairgoers.
6	***Fortune-Telling.*** Mystics and other mysterious individuals set up booths for fortune-telling, palmistry, and other divinations. Visitors can have their futures read or seek specific guidance from them. More often than not, fairground fortune-tellers are sly charlatans seeking to part the gullible from their coin. Revealing their duplicitous intentions to dupe fairgoers can trigger significant drama that draws the attention of local authorities.
7	***Games and Contests.*** Fair organizers might provide games and contests to amuse fairgoers. Participants might test their luck and prowess at archery contests, jousting displays, wrestling matches, and other skill-based competitions that draw both contestants and amateurs seeking to win fame or notoriety. There might also be booths featuring gambling or simple contests of dexterity, such as dart throwing or ring tosses, where contestants can make small wagers to win prizes.
8	***Musical Performances.*** A bard or group of entertainers performs a set piece for the fair, as commissioned by a wealthy patron to amuse the crowd goers. Complications might arise if the words were altered or otherwise commissioned to insult the host or important guests.

encounters, such as a coronation or marriage (see also **Courtly Life** in **Chapter 2**):

- ***Costume Displays and Masquerades.*** On fairer evenings, during warmer seasons, those with appropriate resources might use the fairgrounds to host costume displays or masquerade events. During such events, attendees dress in elaborate attire and participate in festivities that celebrate the region's fashion and culture.
- ***Crime and Punishment.*** Some societies have harsh laws and brutal punishments, which might be performed as public spectacle (see also **Public Executions** table). Some rulers use such spectacle as a deterrent, but an evil society might inflict such punishments as entertainment.
- ***Traveling Performers.*** On occasion, traveling troupes of actors, dancers, and entertainers stage events at fairgrounds. Acting troupes perform plays and reenactments, seeking to delight audiences with their storytelling and artistry. Similarly, a band of musicians might perform longer and more elaborate orchestral works. Traveling circuses filled with acrobats, jugglers, and jesters seek to amuse fairgoers with their antics and comedic performances. Some circuses might even erect amusement rides and attractions like swing boats, carousels, and other simple mechanical rides, and thrilling rides spark the excitement of eager fairgoers, especially the younger ones. Carnivals and performances provide excellent adventure hooks, such as the performers having an ulterior motive or a faction using an event as a distraction for something nefarious.

Parade Grounds. More elaborate tournaments have separate parade grounds or processional routes. Knights, nobles, and their retinues gather at a starting point and parade around the grounds, grandstanding for the audience. The grand procession allows knights to display their heraldry while crowds throw flowers or scarves to favored contestants, whether to bring them luck or attract attention. Allow PCs participating in parades to grandstand for the attention of nobles, suitors, or potential patrons. Any grandstanding PC must make a CHA (Performance) check for the benefit of everyone in the audience within 60 feet that can see them. The result attracts the attention of 5 HD worth of spectators per every point above 8, so a roll of 13 would attract the attention of 25 HD worth of spectators. Thereafter, these individuals react favorably to the PC during competitions and support them until they lose a contest.

At the start of subsequent matches, such favorable spectators might boo or throw rotten fruit at their favored contestant's opponents, and the opponent then has disadvantage on their first ability check of the match.

MANOR HOUSES

A manor house is a large, stately residence typically located in the countryside. It oversees the feudal estates of an influential member of the land-owning class, such as a lord, noble, or other wealthy member of the aristocracy. The manor and its estate, or surrounding properties, provide a central location for governance and is an impressive, imposing structure with

PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

d6	Execution
1	***Executioner's Block.*** A thick wooden block or stump stained dark from blood. Great gashes scar its surface. At its base rests a large wicker basket.
2	***Gallows.*** A sturdy wooden scaffold from which hangs a thick hemp rope knotted into a noose. The scaffold stands on a platform, from which the bottom drops when a lever is thrown.
3	***Guillotine.*** A giant blade, suspended in a wooden frame, is dropped, lopping off the head of any victim locked into place below it.
4	***Stocks.*** Interlocking wooden or metal plates are used to restrain prisoners by clamping them shut around the arms and neck.
5	***Stoning Pit.*** A rickety staircase winds into a vast pit. Sacks of stones line the pit's edge, supplying ammunition to the punishers, those who throw them at prisoners.
6	***Violent Trial.*** A violent trial consists of a near-impossible survival contest, such as being burned at a stake, weighted and drowned, or thrown into gladiatorial combat against a wild or monstrous animal.

MANOR SECRETS

d6	Secrets
1	***Attic.*** A secret staircase climbs to a cramped and dusty opening in the corner of the attic, leading to a forgotten room in the shadows beneath the creaking eves.
2	***Clock.*** A sizeable pendulum clock slides aside to reveal a door to a hidden library that contains forgotten or covert family records, including mysterious accounts of undocumented kin.
3	***Closet.*** A closet's back wall hides a sliding panel that leads to an adjacent bedroom.
4	***Pantry.*** The false floor in the pantry leads to a cold, earthen chamber, which might have once been a root cellar.
5	***Shed.*** This underground passage winds over a mile along a dank and muddy riverbank until it emerges from beneath an old shed elsewhere on the estate.
6	***Wall.*** A jar of marbles sits on a table near the carving of a shepherd with a pack. If the marbles are placed in the pack, the carving swivels mechanically and points out the location of a sealed room hidden behind a false wall.

architectural features that reflect the wealth and status of the owner. The land might include fields, forests, gardens, farmland, mills, mines, and other valuable properties and, if bordering wild or uncharted lands or the territory of a hostile enemy, might also have fortifications similar to a castle or military stronghold.

MANOR HOUSES IN A CAMPAIGN

A manor house often represents the opulent decadence of the aristocracy, frequently heavily accentuating form over function. Entire rooms are often dedicated to pastimes such as art, music, dance, epicurean delights, games, and general socializing. These luxuries might be rare or even unknown to the common folk of the region.

A manor house can serve as a central location for various plotlines and quests that involve those who live, work, or interact with the estate. Below are some of the possible roles a manor house might play in a campaign:

- ***Haunting.*** The PCs learn about mysterious occurrences plaguing the estate, hearing repeatedly that it's haunted. They must investigate and uncover the manor's history, dealing with the fallout, whether supernatural intrusion, occult scheme, or clever hoax.
- ***Homebase.*** The PCs might inherit the manor, earn it as a reward, purchase it, or be granted use of the estate by a mentor or faction. As such, it serves as a homebase, offering a haven for the PCs to rest, heal, and plan adventures. NPCs familiar with the residence might occasionally drop by to request aid or deliver valuable information. At different stages of the campaign, adventures might revolve around defending against an attack on the manor, or maybe dealing with arson, a break-in, or vandalism, with a property dispute, or perhaps harboring refugees or wanted criminals.

MYSTERIOUS SIGNS

d6	Moments
1	***Diary.*** In the bottom drawer of an old bureau, the PCs discover the badly burnt diary of one of the manor's former ladies, who mysteriously vanished several decades ago.
2	***Jars.*** An exquisitely carved curio cabinet contains a collection of sealed glass jars filled with dark, unknown objects suspended in a cloudy gray liquid.
3	***Locket.*** In the corner of a dusty closet, the PCs find a badly tarnished locket that contains a moldering portrait of an unknown child.
4	***Sigils.*** The backs of several paintings are mysteriously marked with arcane symbols that might open a magical gate.
5	***Spy.*** A book has a hollow where someone has placed a magical sending stone, presumably for listening to private conversations.
6	***Vermin.*** An intelligent rodent or spider travels through the manor house walls, collecting and bartering information. It approaches the PCs and longs to know more about the outside world, offering to trade information.

- ***Local Legend.*** The manor house has long been abandoned. Several conflicting local stories speak of its once-wealthy owners and hint at hidden riches. Investigating, the PCs learn the former owner was a prominent merchant-priest devoted to a trickster god. As his legacy, the deceased owner left clues and challenging puzzles that lead to the treasure's recovery.
- ***Socialite.*** The manor house is in the middle of a large city. The wealthy socialite owner uses it to host lavish parties, feasts, and other social events. Invitations to these events are highly sought after, and attendance at an event puts the PCs within reach of the ears and purses of the city's most influential NPCs. There are even rumors that some of them belong to a dark cabal and hold secret meetings during the parties.
- ***Treaty.*** The manor house is located in a region of political turmoil or active conflict. It belongs to a mysterious but wealthy noble caught in the middle. The PCs and representatives of opposing factions are called to the manse to negotiate a peace treaty where they must forge alliances, navigate the machinations already in play, and determine their mysterious host's true motivations and intentions.

Anatomy of a Manor House. Manor houses are vast, multi-level dwellings of grand design and decadent architecture. They typically contain dozens of rooms, many of which go unused when guests are not in attendance. A manor house requires significant maintenance, so it also provides living accommodations for a large staff as well as the requisite storage for food, linens, and service equipment. An estate passed down through several generations might have hidden passages, forgotten chambers, and other secrets within its aged walls (see also **Manor Secrets** and **Mysterious Signs** tables). Similarly, it might have ancient or vile secrets buried in the basement or elsewhere on estate grounds.

INTERIOR

Manor houses have several rooms with functions similar to those of a castle, military stronghold, or monastery. These include halls, guardrooms, kitchens, and living accommodations for residents and staff, which are likely similar but not necessarily identical (see **General Manor Rooms** table). Those rooms that are potentially more unique to manor houses are detailed below, though they need not be restricted from use elsewhere, such as in a castle or military outpost. Similarly, the elegance of a manor house might be stripped away, depending on the owner and surrounding culture, to be more severe and utilitarian.

One or more of the following rooms might be present in the manor house.

ARMORY

This room displays a small but impressive collection of masterwork or ceremonial weapons and armor. Banners with the family crest and coat-of-arms hang overhead, highlighting the family's military prowess. Shields and swords, spears, axes, and bows are prominently mounted on oak display plaques. A pair of mannequins outfitted in complete suits of ornamental plate armor stand like statues in each corner. Unlike the armory of a castle or military fortification, this display is for show, and most of the collection has never seen combat.

ART GALLERY

An elegant room with priceless paintings and sculptures showcases the family's appreciation for fine arts and culture. Soft lighting highlights each piece.

BOUDOIR

An intimate space, the boudoir features delicate pastel tapestries, soft cushions, and silk curtains. Along the wall sits a vanity with a large mirror adorned with intricately designed bottles of perfumes and cosmetics. Near the vanity is a small writing desk where one can pen letters or compose poetry in solitude.

BUTLER'S PANTRY

A small, functional room adjoining the great hall serves as the butler's pantry, and its shelves are kept well-stocked with fine porcelain, silverware, and crystal goblets. The butler uses this room to oversee the preparation and serving of all meals and to ensure an impeccably set table.

CAPTAIN'S TOWER

A circular room at the top of the manor's tower offers panoramic views of the entire estate and surrounding countryside. The room centers on a great brass telescope that swivels on an iron stand mounted to the floor. The manor lord uses the tower for stargazing.

CARTOGRAPHY ROOM

This room is lined, floor-to-ceiling, with bookshelves filled with scrolls, maps, and scholarly tomes. Maps of distant lands adorn the walls, inspiring exploration. An imposing lacquered desk takes center stage, surrounded by plush leather chairs. Spread across the table lie more maps and navigational tools that aid in managing the manor's lands.

GENERAL MANOR ROOMS

d6	Room
1	***Great Hall.*** The great hall is a grand and spacious room with intricately carved wooden beams that rise to narrow stained-glass windows and vaulted ceilings. Heraldic motifs embellish the walls, showcasing the manor lord's lineage and achievements. In the center of the room sits an enormous oak dining table surrounded by carved wooden benches and ornate, upholstered chairs. A massive, candle-filled chandelier provides the room's illumination. Doors exit the room in almost every direction except the far wall, where a large hearth crackles with warmth during cold evenings.
2	***Kitchen.*** The kitchen is a bustling hub of activity. Pots and pans hang from iron racks above a stone fireplace, and the aroma of freshly baked bread and simmering stews fill the air. Wooden tables covered with flour and dough provide a workspace for the cooks. Herbs hang from the ceiling, and a stone well occupies one corner. Here, the kitchen staff works diligently to prepare meals for the entire household.
3	***Library.*** The manor library contains a humble trove of leatherbound books stored in neat rows on polished wooden shelves. Their contents cover a range of subjects from philosophy to history. Comfortable reading chairs are strategically placed by the large, arched windows, allowing readers to take advantage of the natural light.
4	***Lord's Chamber.*** This luxurious and opulently furnished room is reserved for the lord of the manor. It's adorned with elegant furnishings, including a sumptuous four-poster bed with rich velvet drapes. Intricately patterned rugs cover the polished hardwood floor, and a finely crafted writing desk sits beside a leaded-glass window, providing a view of the surrounding countryside. A fireplace keeps the room cozy, and shelves display a collection of rare books and treasured artifacts.
5	***Servants' Quarters.*** Tucked away in a separate wing of the manor is a series of small rooms allotted as the servants' quarters. Wooden bunk beds with straw mattresses line the walls, at the foot of which sit small chests to hold their meager possessions. A communal hearth offers warmth and a place to cook simple meals. These plain but functional rooms provide a comfortable space for the household staff to rest after a long workday.
6	***Solar.*** An ascending spiral staircase climbs to the manor's uppermost level, providing a breathtaking view of the surrounding lands. Cushioned window seats allow one to sit and enjoy the scenery or read by natural light.

CONSERVATORY

A conservatory features large, glass-paned windows that overlook the manor's gardens. Potted plants and flowers thrive in this sunlit sanctuary, creating a peaceful spot for contemplation and leisurely conversation.

GAME ROOM

The game room is a space for relaxation and leisure with several tables for playing strategic board games. Shelves line the walls, holding gameboards, cards, polished counting stones, dice, and intricately carved wooden game pieces.

GARDEN ROOM

This sunlit room houses an indoor garden filled with aromatic and exotic plants. Fragrant blooms burst from their trellises, and the trickle of a small fountain adds a soothing ambiance. A seating area with plush cushions allows for moments of relaxation and reflection.

GUEST CHAMBER

The lord frequently invites many guests to partake in special events, and the manor house boasts numerous lavishly furnished guest chambers to accommodate them. Canopied beds, sumptuous drapes, and finely crafted writing desks grace the spacious rooms. Tapestries and paintings that depict pastoral scenes adorn the walls, providing added elegance.

HALL OF TAPESTRIES

This hall displays a breathtaking collection of vibrant tapestries that depict historical events and epic battle scenes. The massive works of art adorn the walls from floor to ceiling, and their intricate designs reveal stories of valor and chivalry.

MUSIC ROOM

A door carved in a musical motif opens to a broad chamber with polished wooden floors and brocade rugs. Upon the rugs sit matched sets of wrought-iron chairs and curved, wooden side tables. A collection of

lutes hangs from hooks adorning the walls. Between the lutes drop beautifully woven tapestries used to dampen sound. Near a bookcase filled with scrolls of musical notation, several stands hold percussion instruments, flutes, and a harp. There are also wire music stands set with sheets of music. The room provides a space for entertainment, gatherings, dancing, and hosting small concerts.

TROPHY GALLERY

Reserved for displaying trophies and awards received from the king or other officials, this gallery is a source of great pride for the manor's inhabitants. Ceremonial swords and shields and other prestigious honors adorn the walls.

WINE CELLAR

A narrow, spiral staircase descends deep into a cool and dimly lit wine cellar that houses barrels of the finest wines and spirits. Rows of neatly stacked racks hold bottles of various vintages. Cobwebs cling to the corners of the wooden supports that hold back the hard-packed clay ceiling, and the air is filled with an earthy musk—or with mildew.

WINE TASTING ROOM

The manor has a cozy wine-tasting room for intimate gatherings and private wine tastings. Richly furnished with plush chairs and a mahogany table, the lord uses the room to sample the finest wines from the cellar.

EXTERIOR

A country manor might include large plots of land from which the lord draws their wealth. Commonfolk living on the property work the land, fishing the waterways, farming the fertile valleys, raising livestock, and making wine in the rolling hills. PCs with humble backgrounds might have ties to one or more of these places, giving them a reason to interact with the manor's lord.

Any of the following structures might be present.

HORSE STABLE

Adjacent to the manor house sits a large wooden building with double doors and a hay loft. The stable accommodates the horses and carriages of the household. Within, the lord keeps prized steeds, and a neatly etched nameplate adorns each stall. The steeds are worth a considerable amount of gold, which keeps the master of the horse on edge and in constant fear that the horses might fall sick or be stolen.

Tack Room. Adjacent to the stables, the tack room houses a collection of saddles, bridles, and riding gear arranged on wooden racks to keep everything organized and accessible.

OLD CHAPEL

Just down the road from the manor, in a small clearing, stands a tiny chapel. The spiritual health of those residing in the estate's lands are seen to here by a priest, possibly a relation of the family. It features elegant woodwork, ornamental statues, and beautiful stained-glass windows that depict auspicious religious events in kaleidoscopic colors. Upon the pulpit sits a carved altar adorned with flickering candles and religious relics. Three rows of wooden pews face the altar. The soft glow of candlelight illuminates the chapel during evening prayer.

Crypt. A solemn stone crypt lies beneath the chapel where the lord's ancestors rest. Stone sarcophaguses, bearing effigies of the deceased, provide a record of their noble lineage.

SMITHY

A broad, timber-framed building with an earthen floor is dedicated to maintaining and repairing the household, crafting items, and servicing the stables, kitchens, and vineyards. In a dusty work yard in front of the building stands a great iron forge, kiln, grindstone, and tanning rack for processing different materials. Workbenches, anvils, looms, and various tools line the walls.

The manor employs a skilled blacksmith and two apprentices. The blacksmith lives behind the workshop in a modest timber shack with their family, and the apprentices share a back room in the workshop.

VINEYARD & WINERY

In idyllic regions that support grapes (or similar fruits), estates often specialize in their cultivation and in winemaking. Sprawling vineyards, meticulously organized into neat rows, stretch as far as the eye can see—miles of lush green leaves and ripe grape clusters swaying on the vines.

An old winery stands at the center of the vineyard. Built from rustic stone cobbles, it bears a thickly thatched roof. Inside, walls are lined with great wooden barrels, and the distinct smell of fermenting grapes permeates the space. A skilled vintner and several dozen workers operate the winery and work diligently to ensure they remain true to tradition.

Near the winery stands the vintner's family home, a charming cottage with a thatched roof, wooden shutters, and a small garden adorned with fragrant herbs.

Grape-Picking Festival. Each autumn, as the leaves change colors, the vineyard comes alive with an annual festival. Locals and visitors gather to celebrate the harvest. Festivities include lively music, dancing, feasts, and the time-honored tradition of picking grapes by hand and stomping them to pulp in great wooden tubs.

WEATHERED FARMHOUSE

An old stone farmhouse stands on the estate, some distance from the manor house. Its weathered walls are built of large, hand-hewn stones, now nearly buried in ivy and wildflowers, and its roof of moss-covered terracotta tiles slopes gently. It has a door carved from dark hardwood and quaint windows with wooden shutters painted in a soft, faded hue. A covered porch extends from the front, on which rests a simple wooden bench and a pair of antique clay pots filled with aromatic herbs. Before the farmhouse extends a cobbled farmyard. In the yard, hens scratch for insects and a few contented sheep graze lazily. A stone well in the center of the yard offers fresh water.

The interior is cramped but cozy. Wooden beams crisscross the low ceiling and worn floorboards creak softly underfoot. Its furnishings are simple but practical, and a cobblestone fireplace occupies one wall.

Vassals living on the farm raise crops (see **Farmhouse Crops** table), which they give to the lord in exchange for meager supplies and the right to live and work the land. They might also maintain small subsistence gardens.

FARMHOUSE CROPS

d6	Crops
1	***Fibrous Plants.*** Cotton, hemp, and flax.
2	***Fruits.*** Apples, apricots, berries, cherries, figs, pears, and plums.
3	***Grains.*** Barley, millet, oats, spelt, and wheat.
4	***Greens.*** Cabbage, kale, lettuce, mustard, and spinach.
5	***Legumes.*** Beans, lentils, and peas.
6	***Roots.*** Beets, carrots, garlic, onions, parsnips, potatoes, and turnips.

VARIANT MANOR HOUSES

Manor houses can vary significantly based on their function and on the cultural norms of those who built them. The following examples highlight ways in which such a structure might differ from others like it.

DWARVEN MANOR

Nestled deep within the rugged hills and adorned with intricate stonework, the dwarven manor stands as a testament to the grandeur and craftsmanship of its creators. An architectural marvel, it harmoniously combines the natural beauty of its surroundings with the sturdy elegance of dwarven design.

The stout manor house itself is constructed primarily from durable stone and metal, and it emanates an aura of strength and permanence. Its exterior showcases meticulous carvings that depict scenes from dwarven lore, ancestral lineage, and symbols of prosperity. Glimmering veins of precious gems and gold punctuate the stonework, adding a touch of opulence to the overall aesthetic.

The layout reflects both functionality and an appreciation for beauty. Wide corridors lead to various chambers, each meticulously decorated with handcrafted furniture, ornate tapestries, and carved wooden paneling. Dwarven craftsmanship is evident in every detail, from the sturdy yet intricately designed tables and chairs to the robust stone fireplaces that provide warmth during colder months.

These rooms represent a selection of spaces commonly found in a dwarven manor house. However, this list is not exhaustive, and the specific design and number of rooms can vary based on the preferences, wealth, and cultural practices of the dwarven clan or family residing within.

Armory. A room housing an impressive collection of weapons, armor, and defensive equipment, showcasing the martial prowess and preparedness of the dwarves. Racks, weapon stands, and display cases exhibit an array of arms.

Bathing Chambers. Luxurious bathing areas, featuring large pools, decorative mosaics, and soothing lighting. Dwarves appreciate the therapeutic qualities of water and ensure their bathing chambers are elegant and comfortable.

Bedrooms. Luxuriously appointed private quarters for the inhabitants of the manor house. Dwarven bedrooms often boast ornate wooden bed frames, plush mattresses adorned with exquisite tapestries, and dressers or wardrobes intricately carved with symbols of prosperity and protection.

1 SQ. = 5 FEET
Forge
Barracks
Level Two
Lord's Chmbers
Private Rooms
Level Three
G
Brewery
Armory
Mead Hall
Kitchen
Workshop
Larder
Gardens
Yard
Stable
Ground Level
Vaults
Level Four
(G) Guard Room
Dwarven Manor

Chapel. A place of worship for dwarven families, adorned with sacred altars, symbols, and intricately carved prayer benches. It serves as a space for private reflection, ceremonies, and religious gatherings.

Courtyards and Gardens. Outdoor spaces surrounding the manor house, meticulously tended with lush foliage, stone pathways, and decorative fountains. These areas provide opportunities for relaxation and the enjoyment of nature.

Dining Room. A smaller, more intimate space for everyday meals. It might feature a long, sturdy table, decorative tableware, and intricately designed cabinets or buffets to store dining essentials.

Drawing Room. A more intimate gathering space for socializing, conversations, or enjoying a drink. The room is adorned with plush seating, low tables, and perhaps a small bar or liquor cabinet.

Entrance. The main entrance to the manor house is guarded by massive wooden doors that are reinforced with bands of wrought iron and embellished with intricate engravings. The doors swing open to reveal a spacious foyer.

Foyer. The grand entrance area that welcomes guests into the manor house. It often features tall ceilings, polished stone floors, ornate chandeliers, and tapestries that showcase the family's history.

Grand Hall. The grand hall serves as the centerpiece of the manor, a place where dwarven lords and dignitaries gather for feasts and celebrations. Long, polished tables stretch the length of the hall, surrounded by elaborately carved chairs. Large stained-glass windows allow sunlight to filter through, casting vibrant colors on the polished surfaces and illuminating the hall in a kaleidoscope of hues. An ascending stone staircase leads to private quarters located on the upper floor.

Kitchen. A bustling space where skilled dwarven cooks prepare delicious feasts. It features large hearths, stone ovens, spacious countertops, and an array of cooking utensils.

Library. A room filled with shelves of ancient tomes, historical records, and scholarly works. Dwarves value knowledge, and their libraries are well-organized, complete with sturdy wooden desks and reading nooks where they can delve into their studies.

Pantry. A storage room adjacent to the kitchen, stocked with a variety of preserved foods, ingredients, and supplies necessary for daily sustenance.

Sitting Room. A cozy and comfortable space for relaxation and conversation. It is often furnished with plush sofas, armchairs, and coffee tables, all crafted with dwarven precision. The room might include a fireplace and shelves that display decorative items or family heirlooms.

Study. A quiet room dedicated to focused work or intellectual pursuits. It might house a large desk, bookshelves, writing materials, and maps or charts. Dwarven scholars and lords often retreat to their studies for contemplation or to manage their affairs.

Trophy Room. A space dedicated to displaying the spoils of dwarven adventurers and the achievements of the manor's inhabitants. It showcases mounted monster heads, weapons, armor, and other prized possessions, often accompanied by plaques detailing the stories behind each.

Vault. A secure room used to safeguard precious treasures, valuable resources, and family heirlooms. It might feature robust doors, intricate locking mechanisms, and hidden compartments.

Wine Cellar. A cool, underground chamber dedicated to storing an impressive collection of fine dwarven brews and wines. The cellar might feature rows of wine racks, barrels, and a tasting area where guests can sample the cellar's treasures.

Workshop. A dedicated space for craftsmen where skilled artisans and engineers create masterpieces. It is equipped with various tools, workbenches, forges, and other specialized equipment.

PLEASURE RESORT

The estate lies on the edge of a lake, marsh, river, or sea. Instead of stables, a collection of docks and boathouses lines a small harbor, and local vassals living along the waterway pay tribute in water plants, fish, and shellfish. They also provide services, such as transportation by boat, raft, or merchant barge. The manor's construction features tall spires of white stone and copper rooftops. The lord and residents live on the upper floors since proximity to the water causes the tower's lower levels to occasionally flood. Its location on a central trade route makes it a popular stop for merchants and other travelers. Throughout the year, the lord and staff provide exquisitely catered services to meet the needs of hundreds of notable and wealthy guests.

Baths. The manor boasts a luxurious bathhouse featuring a massive, sunken marble tub surrounded by decorative columns. Water heated by a nearby coal or wood furnace provides decadent, soothing baths. Staff skilled in performing massage with hot stones, oils, and long slender needles run the bathhouse.

NPCs. The manor is owned by a curious reptilian creature who seeks to observe the activities of the various humanoids that pass through. The lord's

motives are strictly entrepreneurial, hoping to better serve their clientele, and their understanding of humanoid desire is gleaned solely by the requests of visitors or by advisors. They don't tolerate abusive behavior and seek to establish a respite that emulates the realm they hope to ascend to in their next life.

Free vassals that live and work in the manor are permitted to run their own services and maintain their own best practices, provided they pay tribute. To keep entertained, the lord contracts all vassals, which expire after a few years, and after discharging a vassal, the lord offers opportunity to newcomers. They rarely renew contracts and rather (to expand their knowledge and satiate their curiosity) seek individuals that provide services or trades unfamiliar to them.

SUMMER FEY PALACE

Nestled deep within an ancient woodland, the fey palace emerges like a mirage, its beauty captivating all who glimpse it. The palace's architecture is a harmonious fusion of natural elements and delicate craftsmanship. Its walls are made of shimmering crystal reflecting the colors of the surrounding flora. Intricate vines blooming with flowers climb the palace's pillars, intertwining with the delicate filigree that adorns its grand entrance.

Ancient Tree. A tremendous tree stands at the center of the sanctum. The palace seems grown around it. Long, gnarled roots dangle, spilling into the watery chasm. Above, its trunk splits, spreading into broad branches that blossom with multi-hued leaves and flowers.

Chamber of Dreams. These rooms are designed to induce restful slumber and vivid dreams. Feather beds with silk sheets, walls adorned with murals of fantastical landscapes, and gentle melodies lull occupants into a realm of whimsical dreams.

Conservatory. Lush foliage and blooming flowers fill this quiet sanctuary. Sunlight filters through stained-glass windows, casting vibrant patterns of color across the room. Twinkling fireflies dance amid the leaves, lending their ethereal glow to the space. Whispers of the wind carry the soothing melodies of birdsong, creating a serene atmosphere for contemplation and rejuvenation.

Elemental Baths. A series of interconnected rooms dedicated to the elements. Each chamber represents one of the four elemental forces—earth, air, fire, and water. The earth room features a stone bath filled with warm, mineral-rich mud baths. The air room has swirling mists and gentle breezes that invigorate and refresh. The fire room showcases a pool of liquid flames that provide soothing and transformative heat. The water room offers a tranquil oasis where visitors immerse themselves in shimmering pools, feeling the embrace of aquatic magic.

Elemental Sanctums. These towers are dedicated to the elements. The fey harness the powers of earth, air, fire, and water, creating shimmering crystals, fires that burn without consuming, cascades of suspended water, and breezes that carry the sweet scent of blooming flowers.

Grand Concourse. The entrance to the palace is adorned with ornate archways, dazzling chandeliers, and intricate carvings. This room serves as a gathering space for important events and welcomes visitors with splendor.

Grand Observatory. High atop a slender tower balances a circular room with a domed ceiling, providing breathtaking views of the surrounding realms. Here, fey study celestial movements, stargaze, and seek guidance from the patterns of the night sky.

Hall of Mirrors. This mesmerizing chamber is adorned with countless mirrors that stretch from floor to ceiling. Each possesses a touch of enchantment, reflecting

Summer Fey Palace

the physical appearance of those who gaze upon them along with their innermost hopes and dreams. Visitors who move through the hall catch glimpses of alternate realities and hidden truths, a captivating and introspective experience.

Hall of Mirth. A grand circular stair winds up a tower, emptying into a spherical room where gravity becomes relative to the will of whoever enters the space. The hall is a playground of illusion magic. The walls shimmer and shift, depicting ever-changing scenes, and the floor gives the impression of walking on clouds. Visitors might encounter playful apparitions, trickster sprites, and illusions that challenge the senses, providing entertainment for all.

Hall of Timelessness. This room transcends the constraints of time. Its walls depict scenes from various eras, blending history with fantasy. Time seems to stand still within this chamber, allowing visitors to reflect on the fleeting nature of mortal existence and contemplate the eternal essence of the fey.

Hedge Maze. The entire palace lies within a labyrinthine hedge maze filled with secret alcoves and hidden gardens. The hedge maze is a masterpiece of natural splendor. Meticulously manicured topiaries resemble mythical creatures while exotic flowers release intoxicating scents that drift on the gentle breeze. Enchanted fountains gurgle playfully, their waters sparkling with myriad colors, inviting visitors to linger and dream. When mortals wander the maze, time seems to lose grip, and reality melds with the realms of fantasy. Wanderers find solace, inspiration, and a profound connection to the mystical.

High Throne. A majestic chamber where the ruler holds court. The exquisite throne is crafted from shimmering crystal entwined with branches, symbolizing the connection between the fey and nature.

Library of Solace and Whispers. A sanctuary of knowledge, the library holds an extensive collection of magical tomes and ancient scrolls. Whispers emanate from the books, and enchanted lanterns provide a gentle glow, illuminating the secrets penned within.

Oracle's Chamber. A space dedicated to divination and prophecy, the chamber is adorned with mystical symbols and ancient artifacts. A crystal ball rests atop a pedestal in the center, emanating a soft, ethereal glow. Visitors seek counsel from seers and wise fey who possess the ability to glimpse the past, present, and possible futures. The room is filled with an air of mystery and anticipation.

Sky's Gate. Twin towers, formed of crystal and wrapped with living vines and branches, flank a cobbled walkway edged by clouds and mist. Birds and butterflies flutter and weave through the clouds and about the spires. Gates fashioned from an ice-like substance glimmer with strange phosphorescence. Their slender panels stretch upward, forming high, pointed arches.

Summer Ballroom. A spacious and opulent hall with a polished dance floor, adorned with delicate patterns and surrounded by mirrored walls. This room comes alive during grand celebrations and masquerades where the fey revel and dance with ethereal grace.

Waterfall. The palace hovers, magically suspended above a chasm. Clouds swirl about the towers, and the entirety seems to flicker in and out of reality. Below, wild rushing waters tear along the chasm floor and spill off the edge of an impossibly high cliff. The torrent froths angrily, sending foaming spittle streaking through the sky as it weaves through the jagged rocks at the cliff's edge.

WILDERNESS LODGE

The estate is situated in a place where outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing, boating, or winter sports, are popular with the society's aristocratic elite. A typical such lodge rests within a forested area or similar

environment and is owned by a wealthy merchant or baron—or a collective of nobles. They keep membership private, limited to a select few who share similar goals and values. Hunts and other activities allow members to display their skills in archery, riding, and the like. The secluded location also allows members to discuss and share ideas beyond the eyes and ears of the court.

Trophy Room. Mounted game trophies, like stags, boars, or bears, are showcased here. Beneath each is an etched brass plaque that displays the hunter's name and proudly testifies to their prowess. Alongside the trophies, polished wooden racks display expertly crafted hunting gear.

NPCs. The hunting lodge is owned by a retired general that earned his fortune as the commander of the emperor's troops during a long and unpopular campaign of expansion. The emperor's reign was cut short by assassination, and the general was forced from his position. Some still suspect the general might have had a hand in the untimely death.

The general lives in the manor with his wife and her two cousins. Both cousins have older children. All of them tend to the lodge and provide cooking and housekeeping services for the guests. The general doesn't trust anyone outside his family to run the lodge. At any given time, 2d6 members of the aristocracy are visiting the lodge to engage in trophy hunting or private social affairs. These individuals might also bring personal assistants, hunting guides, or lovers.

MILITARY STRONGHOLDS

A military stronghold, or fortress, is a utilitarian installation designed to be sturdy, practical, and efficient in defense. Strongholds aren't typically used for long-term residential purposes or social events but instead as operational locations for military oversight or war. While invaders might build strongholds in foreign lands and use them to launch offensive strikes, a stronghold's construction focuses on defensive structures, such as towers, walls, and battlements. Few strongholds have residential or non-military buildings.

Structures commonly have thick walls, few windows, and a compact layout, prioritizing protection over aesthetics—function over form. Strongholds erected in strategic locations, such as hilltops, cliffs, or riversides, provide natural advantages for defense. Effective use of terrain makes it difficult for attackers to approach or breach the fortress. Additional accommodations, such as storage facilities for provisions, wells or cisterns, and other supplies, are necessary to sustain inhabitants during lengthy sieges. Most strongholds also have secret passages or tunnels used for supplies, retreat, or surprise offensives.

MILITARY STRONGHOLDS IN A CAMPAIGN

Strongholds assume inevitable conflict. They make excellent starting locations for PCs with martial backgrounds, and those residing in a military stronghold might all belong to the same military unit or have been raised in the fortress during wartime. As PCs advance, they might position themselves to take leadership positions in the stronghold.

Here are some of the possible roles a stronghold might play in a campaign:

- ***Catacombs.*** The stronghold could be located above a vast dungeon or be near expansive catacombs that are filled with dangerous creatures, traps, and hidden treasures. Perhaps ancient warriors built the stronghold to protect the catacombs or to stand against threats lurking in their lightless depths. PCs reside in the stronghold and use it as a strategic base for launching explorations into the depths.
- ***Sieges.*** Military strongholds provide a perfect location to run a siege. The stronghold could be under siege by an enemy army, bandits, or monsters, and the PCs must strategize on how best to utilize defensive features like walls, towers, and siege engines to defend the keep, repel invaders, and ensure survival. Alternatively, PCs might act as the besieging force, planning an assault on the fortress of a rival lord.

KEEP

An imposing stone tower dominates the inner courtyard. The central keep within the stronghold stands as the last line of defense during a siege and is accordingly the most heavily fortified. The keep serves as the residence and administrative center of the lord commander and provides for hosting gatherings and private council alike. Dozens of well-trained soldiers stand guard around the clock.

One or more of the following rooms might be present in the keep.

ARMORY

The keep maintains an advanced armory—run by a quartermaster and overseen by a small council of master blacksmiths. The armory utilizes several active forges

worked by dozens of apprentices. It has broad storage halls filled with racks of both armor and weaponry that are all catalogued, and the quartermaster is accountable for it all, carefully assigning equipment to the soldiers. (It is not uncommon for influential patrons to view the armor as worth more than the soldiers who wear it.) Adjacent to the main workrooms are several fitting rooms where apprentice smiths can adjust armor and fit suits of plate to higher-ranking soldiers. There is also a repair room where, during conflicts, smiths work non-stop to manage the overflowing cartloads of broken and damaged equipment.

COUNCIL CHAMBER

The council chamber is a private room dedicated to important meetings between the stronghold's lord and their advisors. It serves as a space for strategic planning, decision-making, and discussing matters of governance. It is kept locked and vigilantly guarded.

DRAFT ROOM

Some strongholds have small research libraries used by the lord commander's advisors and aids. The library might also have a writing area with several desks attended by scribes who take dictation from the commander, draft legal documents and treaties, or journal accounts of the keep's involvement in political movements, wars, and other significant events.

DUNGEON

The stronghold devotes a significant portion of its basement to the secure detainment of captives and prisoners of war. A keep might have several dungeons run by a jailkeeper and a staff of competent and trusted soldiers that serve as guards. Large communal pens imprison ordinary captives, and the more threatening individuals are placed in stocks or shackled with heavy irons to prevent fighting. The most violent and dangerous criminals are held in a separate chamber

STRONGHOLD ADVENTURE HOOKS

d10	Hooks
1	***Ancient Prophecy.*** A long-forgotten prophecy is unearthed, foretelling the rise of dark corruption. When the lord commander dies of a mysterious illness, their heir assumes their landholdings. The PCs must race against time to unravel the prophecy's meaning and find a way to avert the predicted disaster.
2	***Curse of Eternal Night.*** A powerful enchantment has fallen upon the fortress, causing perpetual darkness and bringing forth creatures of the night. The PCs are tasked with finding a way to break the curse and restore daylight to the realm.
3	***Eldritch Prisoner.*** A long-imprisoned and powerful entity is accidentally released from its captivity within the fortress. The PCs must find a way to subdue or recapture the entity before it wreaks havoc and unleashes chaos upon the realm.
4	***Fallen Star.*** A celestial object falls from the sky and crashes into the fortress, causing a great mystical disturbance and attracting the attention of various factions. The PCs must secure and prevent the object from falling into the wrong hands.
5	***Famine.*** Crop failure and raiding parties threaten severe food shortages. The PCs must venture beyond the fortress walls to secure food and drive off raiders to ensure everyone's survival.
6	***Plague Outbreak.*** A deadly and mysterious plague spreads among the fortress's inhabitants. The lord commander pleads with the PCs to find a cure, and as they investigate, they uncover a sinister plot to unleash a deadly contagion on the realm.
7	***Secret Tunnels.*** A hidden tunnel network is discovered beneath the fortress, leading to unknown depths. The PCs must explore the tunnels, facing subterranean dangers and uncovering a forgotten secret that could change the fate of the fortress.
8	***Siege Threat.*** Rumors of an impending invasion reach the fortress, and its defenders must prepare for a potential siege and gather allies to bolster their forces. The lord commander recruits the PCs to travel to neighboring towns and kingdoms to forge alliances.
9	***Treachery.*** Merchant suppliers fall victim to a series of attacks too organized to be coincidental. In truth, a trusted advisor or high-ranking official conspires with external forces to attack the caravans. The PCs must uncover the traitor's identity, gather evidence, and foil the plot before it is too late.
10	***Vanishing Water Supply.*** The fortress's water supply suddenly disappears, leaving the inhabitants without a vital resource. The PCs must uncover the cause of the disappearance and find a solution to restore the water flow before the fortress becomes uninhabitable.

or sealed in dark and claustrophobic pits. Similarly, important captives, such as opposing commanders, military officers, or other noteworthy individuals, are not imprisoned with commoners but sent to isolation blocks.

Pits. These earthen pits are 5-feet wide and 20-feet-deep. To prevent prisoners from escaping, guards bind them in leather straightjackets and lower them into the pits by ropes attached to a winch and pulley system. Guards use the same system to lower the thick, weighted iron grids that cover the pits, sealing in their occupants. Once a day, guards drop food for the prisoners, usually dough cake made from water and flour mixed with food scraps. Later, guards douse the prisoners with buckets of water. Prisoners drink what they can catch, and the rest washes down the cell before running out a central drain hole in the floor. Drains frequently clog and back up, filling the bottom of the pit with an inch or two of standing water.

Isolation Block. This section of dungeon consists of 10-foot-square concrete cells in a maze of interconnected hallways. Reinforced metal doors seal the cells, and guards communicate with captives through small, barred windows that shutter from the outside. The cells contain only a palette bed, a wool blanket, and a bucket. A hatch at the foot of the door allows guards to slide meals into the cell. Communication between prisoners is made intentionally challenging. Because these cells hold powerful enemies with ties to the nobility, the jailer never reveals a prisoner's identity to the guards.

Instead, these prisoners are all given false or coded names. Regardless, prisoners in isolation expect somewhat more decent meals and treatment as they have higher value than others as bargaining chips or sources of information.

GREAT HALL

The keep centers upon a great hall, a massive chamber that provides communal space for dining and both formal and informal gatherings. The lord commander also uses it to hold court and receive guests, performing their duties from a high table, perhaps with advisors, mages, ranking officers, and favored knights seated next to them. During feasts and celebrations, the commander and any guests have separate serving staff, which includes a food taster who samples the guests' meals and drinks for poison. Those not dining at the high table are seated on benches at long tables that face the high table, allowing the commander a position of prominence to address attendees.

Despite its formal function, the great hall's decor is simple and utilitarian. The furniture is of plain design, and the decorative wall hangings are of dyed wool and simply stitched. A wooden shield that bears the commander's coat-of-arms or the heraldic crest of the monarch or emperor they serve might be on display. A row of stone plaques holds battle-worn weapons engraved with the names and sacrifices of fallen champions. Heat comes from a central, vented fire pit or stone fireplace, and sconces, table candles, or a broad, wrought-iron chandelier provide the light.

KITCHEN

This large chamber is situated near the back of the keep. It has doors leading into the courtyard and seems perpetually busy, with staff and servants darting everywhere. The room is stiflingly hot with little airflow and a vague aroma of overcooked meat. Food is prepared in large iron pots above a row of firepits set into a central stone trough. From the ceiling hang iron racks that hold pots and various cooking utensils. Beneath those is a sizeable wooden prep table covered with dark stains and gouges. Atop the table rest various jars and bowls, clay pots filled with spices, and a block of cork stuck with half a dozen broad-bladed cooking knives. An alcove in the back serves as a scullery. It houses two large wooden barrels filled with filthy dishwater, a row of pegs strung with long-handled scrub brushes, and several worn cloth towels. Near the barrels is a wooden pail filled with a mixture of pig's fat and lye.

Pantry. Adjacent to the kitchen is a large pantry filled with crates and barrels of non-perishable food items, such as grains, flour, preserved meats, and other staples needed to sustain the fortress's occupants.

PRIVATE CHAMBER

The keep has very few private chambers, all located in the central keep tower on the upper floors. Only the lord commander, their immediate family, important guests, and high-ranking officials have access to private chambers, which include a private kitchen and dining area, a washroom, and bedrooms. Accommodations are kept practical, including only beds, minimal furnishings, and chests for storage. In addition to the commander's chambers, there is an additional great chamber for important guests or nobles visiting the stronghold, the decor of which is more lavish than the regular sleeping quarters and includes finer furnishings, decorations, and a separate seating area.

Unless the commander is in their private chambers, this section of the keep remains locked, and a small squad of elite guards is assigned to protect them. The

guards take short shifts and rotate duties every four hours to ensure they are always vigilant. Unauthorized persons should be wary in the upper halls as guards act first and leave the questioning to their superiors.

SERVANTS' QUARTERS

A large, communal dormitory provides living accommodations for the staff. It includes sleeping quarters and a shared kitchen and dining area. The keep only retains a handful of servants (and most are former soldiers whose age or debilitating injuries forced them to retire from military service).

SOLAR

Only the lord commander has access to the solar, possessing its only key on a chain around their neck. This space allows them a view of the entire fortress and its grounds. The commander comes here privately to plot, conduct personal affairs, or rest on a small cot in the corner. The solar has a seating area set with a few chairs, a table with charts and maps, and a bookcase that holds a few tomes on military strategy and history. They sometimes bring guests or advisors here to discuss important or private issues. A liquor cabinet is kept for these meetings with a few bottles of fine spirits and some crystal glasses.

STORAGE ROOM

The keep maintains several locked storage rooms that hold various supplies, including provisions, weapons, wine, grain, oil, clothing, building materials, cloth, medicines, and other necessities. The supplies in these rooms are intended only for the personal use of the lord commander and their family and for important dignitaries, nobles, or similarly important diplomatic or royal guests.

INNER COURTYARD

Surrounding the keep is a spacious inner courtyard, still shielded from direct attack by the stronghold walls and towers. This courtyard serves as a mustering point for troops and a space for training and other activities. Scattered about the grounds are many tents or other makeshift structures, holding supplies or providing space where commanders hold council, soldiers nap, and healers tend to the injured. Prisoners are also sometimes kept bound in tents before being transferred to more secure dungeon cells.

Any of the following structures might also be present.

BARRACKS

The barracks consist of thick, oiled-leather tarpaulins stretched over a series of timber frames, which provides basic accommodations for the soldiers. Tents are filled with double bunks strung with communal hammocks. Occupants sleep in shifts, and the occasional fight breaks out over hammocks in choice positions or as a response to a disrupting snore. Personal items, such as blankets, boots, and soap, are stored in small, locked chests stuffed into a four-tiered wall rack in a shed adjacent to the tents. Behind the barracks lies a field that serves as a training ground for sparring matches and platoon formations.

SIGNALS OF WAR

d6	Signal
1	***Drums.*** A row of goat-skin drums is mounted to the railing that runs the tower's perimeter, allowing messengers to beat out detailed codes to their allies.
2	***Flags.*** A barrel holds over a dozen flags of different shapes and colors. The signaler communicates to field agents by displaying flags coded to specific formation commands.
3	***Gong.*** A great bronze gong hangs from the center of the signal tower. The signal master strikes the gong differently to initiate attacks or warn troops of danger.
4	***Lanterns.*** On dark nights, the signal master uses the lantern to flash out codes to troops or to create a beacon so they can figure out each other's positions.
5	***Torch.*** Atop the tower, guards light torches and small fires and use smoke signals to relay messages to allies over long distances. The tower is kept a reasonable distance from the tents and is surrounded by rain barrels, for it has caught fire more than once.
6	***War Horns.*** Atop the tower hangs an immense trumpet carved from the horn of an ancient black dragon that once terrorized the kingdom. Signalers communicate with troops by playing blasts of various lengths and pitches.

FIELD SHELTER

These small, open-air wooden structures shelter horses and store animal feed and other non-essential supplies, which are kept in burlap sacks stuffed into large crates or sealed barrels. Hay is stacked in bales in the center of the shelters so it can be kept dry. The roofs are shingled, and buckets of rainwater are kept nearby in case of fire.

FOOD GARDEN

A military stronghold requires a significant amount of food to feed standing armies. They devote several plots of land to growing simple root vegetables like potatoes, which are easily grown, harvested, and stored. Squash and pumpkins, beans, and orchards of nut or apple trees are also solid choices for producing large amounts of storable food. Soldiers can choose to work in the gardens as part of their duties. Most of the harvest supplements the standing army's food supplies while a portion of it is salted, dried, and placed into the emergency food stores in root cellars beneath the keep.

ORATORY

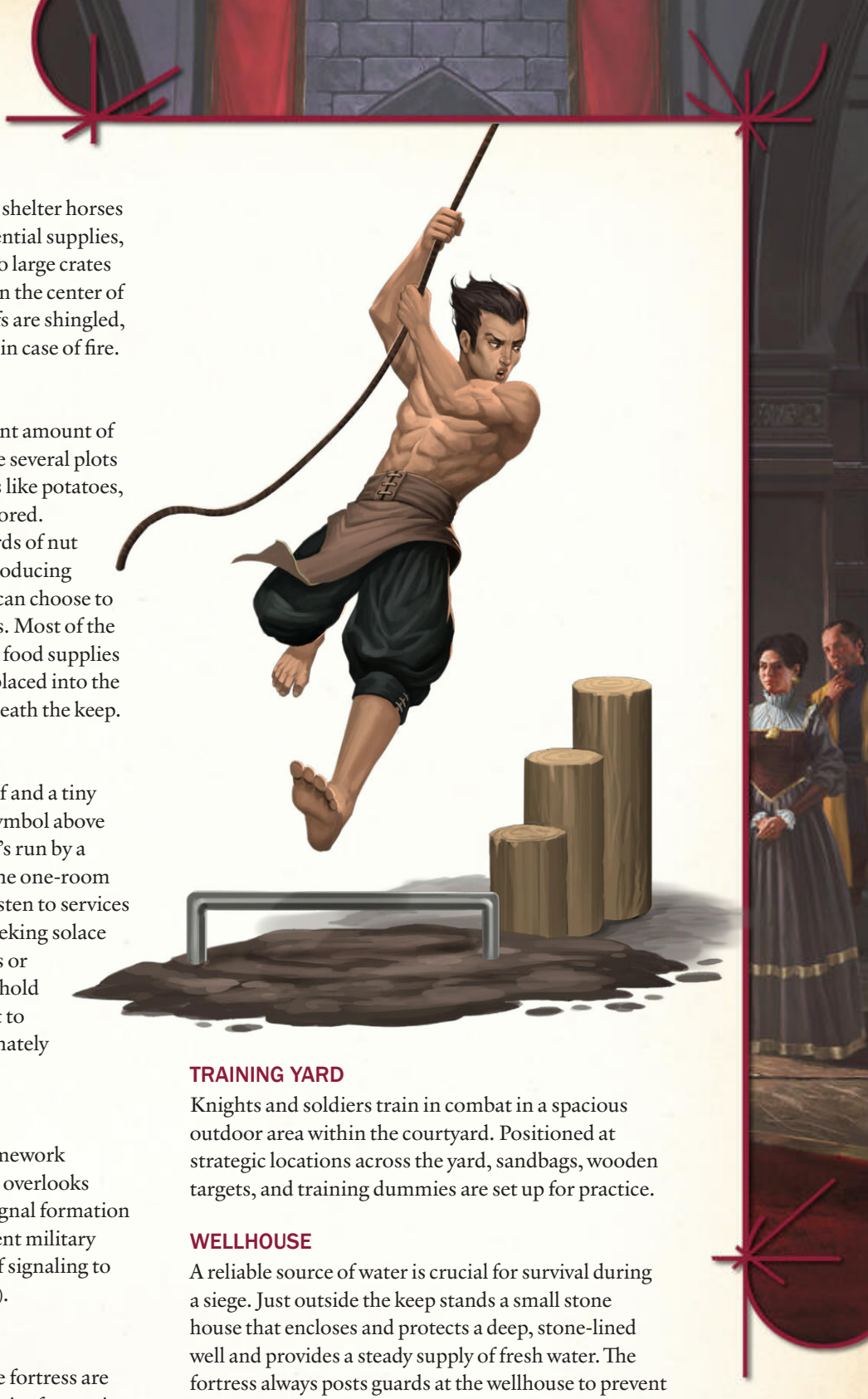
A small wooden building with a slate roof and a tiny spire stands alongside the keep. A holy symbol above the door identifies it as an oratory, and it's run by a single cleric who holds daily services in the one-room building. Congregants sit on mats and listen to services read by the priest from a pulpit. Those seeking solace light incense and candles and paste notes or hang trinkets on the walls for those they hold in their prayers. The cleric does their best to provide healing but has become unfortunately well-versed in performing last rites.

SIGNAL TOWER

A signal tower's tall, skeletal wooden framework sits on a high, earthen mound. The tower overlooks battlefields, and from its crest, soldiers signal formation commands and relay intelligence. Different military camps might rely on different methods of signaling to their allies (see also **Signals of War** table).

STORAGE BUILDING

Various buildings or structures within the fortress are dedicated to storage. These include granaries for storing grain, cellars for food and drink, armories for weapons and armor, and warehouses for other supplies and provisions. Because these housed items are essential to the survival of the troops, they are well-guarded against threats such as arson or poisoning.



TRAINING YARD

Knights and soldiers train in combat in a spacious outdoor area within the courtyard. Positioned at strategic locations across the yard, sandbags, wooden targets, and training dummies are set up for practice.

WELLHOUSE

A reliable source of water is crucial for survival during a siege. Just outside the keep stands a small stone house that encloses and protects a deep, stone-lined well and provides a steady supply of fresh water. The fortress always posts guards at the wellhouse to prevent contamination during an attack.

WORKSHOP

The fortress grounds support several workshops where armorers, blacksmiths, and other artisans can ply their trades. These workshops produce and maintain weapons, armor, and other necessary equipment.

Siege Workshop. The stronghold maintains a specialized facility for constructing large-scale weapons and machinery during sieges. Storage compound and workshop, it is typically located near one of the fortress walls' main access points for easy transportation of completed siege weapons (see also **Siege Equipment** in **Chapter 2**). The workshop is a vast, partially open-air space. Workers use scaffolding fitted with winches and cranes to lift heavy components during assembly. The enclosed sections contain carpentry workbenches for fabricating and assembling parts, and cabinets stocked with saws, chisels, wood planes, and leveling tools. The fabrication of large metal components also requires smithing furnaces, bellows, hammers, tongs, and anvils for heating and shaping raw materials.

In addition to building and storing towering war machines, a partitioned area of the space is devoted to storing raw materials, such as large metal components, lumber, kindling and logs for forge fires, iron, rope, ammunition, and other materials. The workshop employs over a dozen highly skilled blacksmiths, carpenters, engineers, and laborers with specialized knowledge of siege weaponry. Running and maintaining a siege workshop is extraordinarily costly and requires the support of wealthy patrons.

OUTER WALLS AND RAMPARTS

Soaring walls of thick stone fortified with timber and earthworks surround the fortress, blocking all direct access to the inner courtyard and keep. Archers within the battlements fire their weapons through arrow slits that run the walls' lengths. Atop the walls, defensive features like crenellations or machicolations (openings from which stones or burning objects can be dropped) protect defenders, and raised walkways connect the towers, allowing defenders to patrol the fortress. At various intervals, raised ramparts are armed with archers, ballistae, or catapults.

Any of the following structures might also be present.

GATEHOUSE

The gatehouse often features a large, sturdy gate that can be closed and barred during an attack. It often has a drawbridge or portcullis that can be raised and lowered to control access. Should enemies breach the gatehouse, murder holes in the ceiling allow defenders to fire projectiles or drop heavy or burning objects on attackers.

MOAT

A trench, filled with water or perhaps something more interesting, completely surrounds the outer walls, making direct attacks on the fortress difficult. A fortified moat house rests at the edge of the trench, flanked by a pair of stout defensive barbicans, and inside is a massive winch fitted with a crank that turns cogs and gears that control the massive drawbridge, which is fashioned from thick planks fastened across long timbers and reinforced with steel and iron. Operators can raise or lower the bridge to control access to the fortress.

Roll 1d6 and consult the **What's in the Moat?** table or choose something appropriate. Damage and DCs should scale appropriately to challenge the PCs. In most instances, the moat can be avoided with an appropriate ability check (DC 12).

WHAT'S IN THE MOAT?

d6	Hazard
1	***Acid.*** A thin layer of alchemical acid floats on the water's surface. The sticky substance coats anyone falling into the moat, clinging to flesh despite being submerged in water.
2	***Burn and Sink.*** Liquified mud or quicksand fills the moat, and puddles of flammable oil slick its surface. Defenders can ignite the oil during a siege to better view their attackers. Invaders attempting to rush through the flames get trapped by the quicksand and immolate as they try to free themselves.
3	***Flesh Eating Fish.*** Voracious fish swarm any living creature entering the water. Stronghold guards must feed them regularly, which leaves the moat bottom covered with the stripped bones of goats and sheep.
4	***Moat Monsters.*** The moat is home to a monster.
5	***Soporific.*** The moat bottom is coated with a pale-green powder that defenders can ignite with a flaming arrow during a siege. When the powder burns, it releases noxious vapors that cause enemies to weaken and fall asleep.
6	***Spikes.*** The moat is dry, but jagged rocks and sharpened wooden spikes line the bottom. Upon the spikes lie the skewered corpses of individuals that have fallen in. Flies swarm the fetid remains, and the stench of rot sickens anyone nearing the moat.

TOWER

Towers provide a vantage for defenders surveying the surrounding area and serve as defensive positions for archers. These structures stand at intervals along the walls, interconnected by walkways that allow defenders to move quickly between them. Typically, several are strategically placed along the walls and within the inner courtyard. Some towers might also serve as additional living quarters or storage rooms.

MONASTERIES

A monastery is a structure built to house a spiritual community, perhaps under the guidance of devout leaders, such as clerics or monks, or perhaps answering only to their own beliefs. They provide a haven for those seeking a life of devotion, asceticism, or intellectual pursuits, away from the secular world. A monastic community's primary goal typically revolves around a life dedicated to prayer, contemplation, or toil. Those assuming a monastic life seek to avoid overexposure to the ideals and values of those living in the world beyond its walls. In order to keep their ideals and practices free from outside influence, monasteries are often built in isolated, rural areas or on the outskirts of towns and villages. Locations might be chosen for their primal beauty, geographic anomalies, or monumental events relevant to the tenets of the devoted. The architectural style reflects the spiritual beliefs, and perhaps the deity, to which the devoted are dedicated.

By necessity, self-sufficiency governs a monastery's design. Residents grow food, raise livestock, assemble tools, construct and repair buildings, weave cloth, and sew clothing. The self-contained community typically adheres to a strict daily prayer, work, and study schedule.

MONASTERIES IN A CAMPAIGN

A monastery might serve as a center of learning, a repository of knowledge, or a source of spiritual guidance. It might serve the greater region, providing tutelage in the arts and sciences, protection of the historical record, or adjudication of moral issues. Some might have a particular purpose and take on children or orphans as new initiates, or they might rehabilitate criminals. Or they might focus their lives on the production of a particular foodstuff or craft that serves the greater community and supports the monastery, such as beer or cheese or tapestries.

Monasteries are typically organized on one of two general principles: either seclusion or community. Those seeking seclusion (hermits) tend to live alone but might confederate with like-minded souls while

RELIGIOUS VOWS

d12	Vows
1	***Balance.*** The monks seek to maintain balance in the natural world, living in harmony with nature.
2	***Creation.*** Individuals join the monastery to study the act of creation and the marvels a creator deity has brought forth into existence.
3	***Death.*** The monks attempt to master the transition to the afterlife, training their body and minds to help guide souls to their final destinations.
4	***Guardianship.*** The monks erected the monastery to observe and safeguard against a dangerous locale, alien realms, powerful artifacts, or dark agents threatening the world.
5	***Harvest.*** The monks are dedicated farmers who teach others how to raise bountiful crops and help provide sustenance for local communities through agricultural abundance.
6	***Healing.*** Residents practice the arts of healing and seek to free others from physical, emotional, or spiritual ailments.
7	***Judgment.*** The monastery dedicates itself to ensuring justice and fairness, and outsiders employ its monks' wisdom to make moral judgments or decisions.
8	***Liberation.*** The monks dedicate themselves to freeing individuals or groups from oppression or bondage.
9	***Messenger.*** The monks seek to connect to the supernatural world, decipher the gods' actions, and deliver divine messages or revelations to mortals.
10	***Prophecy.*** The monks read signs that foretell significant events.
11	***Protection.*** The monastery devotes itself to defending specific populations from harm.
12	***Redemption.*** The monastery provides its initiates with salvation or a path to redemption.

still maintaining an individual observance that focuses on a solitary way of life. More commonly perhaps, monasteries will be built around a deliberate communal observance.

Monks typically dedicate themselves to a core set of ideals or tenets. One might associate a monk's tenets with a specific deity—still, not all monks belonging to the same monastery need to worship the same god, nor any god at all (see also **Religious Vows** table).

Anatomy of a Monastery. A monastery consists of one or more buildings arranged around a central courtyard—an open area with covered walkways, typically lined with columns or arches, which provides a space for the monks to meditate, study, and walk in solitude. Surrounding structures include a church, dormitory, refectory, chapter house, scriptorium, infirmary, and various workshops.

The monastery's church provides its spiritual center and the most significant architectural feature. The nature of any deities to which the monks dedicate themselves influences the church's design and the monastery layout. They sometimes build the structure in the general shape of the deity's holy symbol as a focus of divine power. Monks adorn their churches with religious iconography, statues, stained-glass windows, and ornate decorations. Monks often gather for communal prayer, meditation, chanting, and daily services, though some communities might have a greater emphasis on seclusion and individual observances.

CHURCH & CLOISTER

A monastery is typically arranged around an open central courtyard known as a cloister, possibly with a fortified church at its center, depending on the style and focus of its devotion. Surrounding the cloister are covered walkways and other key structures.

The cloister is the monastery's heart and serves as a place for meditation, study, and solitary reflection. Covered stone walkways surround the space, providing sheltered access to other areas, and cobblestone pathways dotted with wooden trellises weave through the courtyard. Also nestled within a neatly cultivated bed of flowers sits a bubbling fountain, perhaps carved with religious symbols or otherwise decorated in a manner fitting the monastic order (see also **What's in the Fountain?** table).

The monasteries of orders based more solidly around established religions and devoted to one or more gods will most likely have a church. If a church is present, one or more of the following rooms or structures might also be present within or adjacent to it (see also **Alternative Rooms** table).

WHAT'S IN THE FOUNTAIN?

d6	Waters
1	***Anointment.*** Monks use the fountain waters for baptisms and similar rites.
2	***Fish.*** The fountain is home to sacred koi or other colorful fish.
3	***Healing.*** The water is holy and possesses properties that heal or bless the faithful who drink from it.
4	***Insight.*** The abbot uses the divine waters to scry or to send messages to other monasteries.
5	***Luck.*** Coins and trinkets line the bottom—offerings gifted to the monastery to ensure luck.
6	***Passage.*** The fountain hides a secret passage to an ancient shrine.

ALTERNATIVE ROOMS

d8	Rooms
1	***Abbot's Study.*** In a more significant monastery, an abbot might maintain a private room for conducting administrative duties, studying, and reflection. The study allows for the more complete separation of their personal meditations and community duties.
2	***Chapter House.*** The monastery might retain a separate space for hosting forums for decision-making and administrative matters. Here, the abbot or prior presides over discussions, makes announcements, and when necessary, enforces discipline. A typical chapter house consists of a meeting area with benches that face a small podium or lectern.
3	***Guest Quarters.*** A monastery more distrustful of outsiders bringing disruptive or heretical ideas might maintain separate accommodations for visitors or pilgrims that seek refuge or spiritual guidance within the monastery.
4	***Infirmary.*** Monks dedicated to learning the arts of medicine and healing might build a separate location where they practice medicine and tend to sick or injured members of the community.
5	***Library.*** Large monasteries almost always maintain a library of books and scrolls containing their collective knowledge and intellectual pursuits. The content of a monastic library concerns ideologies, histories, and secrets associated with the church. Libraries are attended to by a sage or master librarian, usually an older monk with a fondness for intellectual pursuits. Most libraries remain off limits to anyone outside the order.
6	***Novitiate.*** The monastery dedicates this space to the training and education of novice initiates that seek to gain the skills and knowledge they need to enter the order. On entry, initiates must surrender their belongings and don a monk's drab cotton robes. Initiates are then appointed several chores and duties that various ordained monks teach. During the internship, they follow a strict schedule of work, prayer, study, and meditation.
7	***Obedience Rooms.*** The monastery might maintain specialized workrooms for monks to practice crafts such as brewing, farming, beekeeping, woodworking, or similar arts used to sustain the community and generate income. An obedience room is supervised by an ordained member who teaches their craft to others.
8	***Prior's Quarters.*** The living quarters of the prior, who serves second in command to the abbot.

APSE

The apse is an elevated area of the hall that lies just beyond where its sweeping steps partially partition the nave. A wooden pulpit and a broad stone altar stand at the center of the platform, facing the pews and overlooking the entire congregation. Above the apse extends a small, boxed gallery for musicians, an organist, or a small choir.

BELL TOWER

Within the courtyard, pressed against the church wall, rises a slender stone tower with a pointed roof, shingled with green and gray slate. A small, open balcony beneath the roof, partitioned with waist-high walls, houses a collection of massive, weighty brass and copper chimes. A great cloth-wrapped sledge hangs on a nearby post, allowing a bell-keep or lookout to strike the chimes to ring out messages or warnings to other monks within the temple. When necessary, monks use the tower as a lookout or defensive position.

CHAPEL

Monks maintain small, dedicated spaces within the church for private worship that contain altars and religious artifacts.

DORMITORIES

Down a narrow door-lined hallway are the dormitories. Neophytes and non-ordained monks reside in an unadorned standard room, sleeping on hard bunks with straw pallets pressed against the cold stone walls. Initiates must share a space, have no privacy, and are permitted only a few small personal belongings. At one end of the room stands a wooden closet with small crates that store drab woolen robes, blankets, sheets, and other bedding. Ordained monks live separately in small, modestly furnished cells with little more than a bed, a small desk, and a prayer area. The spartan accommodations encourage a life of simplicity, poverty, and contemplation (see also **Monastic Occupants** table).

NAVE

The nave is a long, spacious chamber that serves as the central structure of the church. It houses most of the seating for ceremonies and is split by a processional aisle. Individuals entering the church first arrive within the nave. It provides seating for congregants or meeting areas for monks. All indoor services and celebrations are performed here. Most other chambers within the church connect to the nave.

PARVIS

The parvis is the church's facade and primary entrance. Its aesthetics imply something about the nature of the monastery or the monks within.

REFECTORY

The refectory is a dining hall where the monks gather for communal meals, usually consisting of simple fare like bread, vegetables, and occasionally fish. Some monasteries practice more restrictive diets based on their vows. Similarly, mealtimes tend to be quiet. Monks eat in silent contemplation or listen to another member of their order as they recite passages from religious texts from a small podium. The refectory can either be a separate building on the grounds or attached to the dormitories.

SCRIPTORIUM

Archways running along the nave's perimeter open into a long hall with rows of small, angled writing desks. The desks hold bottles of various colored inks, quills, wooden boxes of vellum, blotters, wood-carved letter stamps, glue, and bookbinding tools. This candlelit hall, the scriptorium, is dedicated to copying and illuminating manuscripts. Preserving knowledge and producing handwritten books are essential activities for many orders. Monks skilled in calligraphy spend hours painstakingly copying and decorating religious texts, scientific treatises, and literary works.

VESTRY

This small room sits adjacent to the nave. Monks use it to prepare for services and other formal events hosted in the church. Crammed snuggly into a side alcove stands a large wardrobe, and within hang formal vestments used to perform services. A chest of drawers holds various liturgical items, such as beads, chalices, incense, candles, symbols, and relics, and atop it sits a collection of sacred vessels. Propped against another wall leans a tall wooden display cabinet with glass doors. An arrangement of wooden dividers holds dozens of leather scroll tubes stuffed with years of records.

OTHER STRUCTURES

A monastery can be a truly unique thing. Depending on an order's organization, vows, and relationship with the greater community, it could accommodate almost any endeavor, including a stable or dock if it does any trading, a brewing or winemaking facility and the orchards or farmlands to support it, pasture land for cows (especially for cheesemaking), a hospital for the care of anyone beyond just those of the order, or even a training facility if it has a more martial focus.

Any of the following structures might also be present.

CEMETERY

The rear of the cloister leads to a meticulously maintained walled cemetery that contains neat rows of simple, weathered gravestones. Carved markers on the

MONASTIC OCCUPANTS

d10	Occupants
1	***Abbot.*** Abbot Eregorus serves as the wise and respected monastery leader. He guides the monks with discipline and compassion. He is known for his deep knowledge of religious texts and unwavering devotion to his god.
2	***Baker.*** Pilagio prepares meals for the monks using herbs and vegetables from the monastery's gardens. He is known for his baking skills and for the delicious aromas from the monastery's kitchen that have become synonymous with his name.
3	***Bard.*** The monastery's choir director and musician, Gabriela leads the monks in their daily chants and plays various musical instruments during religious ceremonies. She is known for her melodic voice.
4	***Beekeeper.*** The monastery's gardener and beekeeper, Sebastian tends to the lush gardens surrounding the monastery and maintains the beehives, producing honey for the community. He is known for his connection to nature.
5	***Carpenter.*** A skilled craftsman and the monastery's carpenter, Lostarian constructs and repairs furniture and creates intricate wood carvings and decorative pieces for the monastery. He is known for his precision and creativity.
6	***Gardener.*** The monastery's gardener and herbalist apprentice, Michaela assists Brother Sebastian in tending to the gardens and learning the secrets of herbal medicine. She is known for her enthusiasm and willingness to learn.
7	***Healer.*** Remino, the monastery's herbalist and healer, has extensive knowledge of plants' medicinal properties. He is responsible for tending to the sick and injured within the monastery and is often seen brewing herbal remedies.
8	***Loremaster.*** The monastery's librarian and historian, Sindaston meticulously catalogs and preserves the monastery's extensive collection of historical documents and artifacts. He is known for his passion for history.
9	***Protector.*** The monastery's gatekeeper and defender, Lysander, ensures the monastery's security, welcoming guests and watching for potential threats. He is known for his strength and dedication.
10	***Scribe.*** Tiberian, a skilled scribe and bibliophile, copies ancient manuscripts and organizes the vast collection of books. He is known for his meticulous attention to detail, patience, and love of learning.

stones display the name, date of birth, and date of death. Those interred might be solely of the order or might consist of those from the greater community as well if the order views that service as part of their mission.

GARDENS

The monastery maintains extensive gardens where the monks cultivate vegetables, herbs, and medicinal plants. These gardens serve both practical and symbolic purposes, providing sustenance for the community and herbal ingredients and reagents used in medicine, rituals, and offerings to the deity to which the monastery is dedicated.

SACRED CRYPTS

A pair of stone mausoleums serve as the entrance to the sacred crypts, and a flight of stone stairs descends into a solemn and dimly lit underground chamber. Those entering experience a strange sense of timelessness. The air is cool and tinged with the faint scent of incense. Thick stone walls and pillars support a vaulted ceiling, forming a network of arches. Narrow corridors lead to distant sections with burial chambers, reliquaries, or small chapels dedicated to saints or important figures in the monastery's history. Small niches display relics of saints or esteemed community members at various intervals. The crypt serves as a place of reverence and remembrance and as the final resting place for deceased members of the order.

MONASTERY ADVENTURE HOOKS

d10	Hooks
1	***Forbidden Love.*** One of the monks is secretly entangled in a complicated romantic relationship with an already betrothed villager from a nearby town. The couple seeks the PCs' help in avoiding the fallout of angering the villager's family and of breaking monastic vows before running away together.
2	***Haunting.*** Strange and unsettling occurrences begin to plague the monastery, suggesting the presence of a vengeful spirit. PCs must confront their fears and delve into the monastery's dark history to uncover the truth behind the haunting and find a way to bring peace to the tormented soul.
3	***Hidden Relic.*** The monks stumble upon a hidden chamber within the monastery that contains a long-lost relic of immense spiritual significance. While attempting to unveil its secrets, they draw the attention of a dark entity that seeks to corrupt weaker members of the order. The monks call upon the PCs to protect them until they can gain true insight into the nature of the relic.
4	***Inquisition.*** The monastery falls under suspicion by an inquisitor who seeks to root out heresy and corruption within the church. The monks call upon the PCs to help them defend their way of life and navigate the treacherous political intrigue to prove their innocence against mounting accusations.
5	***Lost Manuscript.*** A monk discovers an ancient manuscript in the monastery's archives, the contents of which has the potential to reshape the order's faith and challenge their long-held beliefs. Knowing it is heretical, the monk seeks the PCs' protection against high-ranking officials that demand their imprisonment or death.
6	***Miracle Worker.*** A monk begins exhibiting extraordinary spiritual abilities, performing miracles that attract the attention of both devout believers and skeptics. The monastery becomes a site of fervent devotion and heated debate, and the PCs are called upon to investigate the phenomenon.
7	***Mysterious Disappearances.*** Monks begin to vanish mysteriously from the monastery, one by one. The abbot calls upon the PCs to investigate the strange occurrences. Their investigation uncovers a dark secret threatening their lives and the foundation of the monk's faith.
8	***Sacred Quest.*** A monk receives a prophetic vision that reveals a sacred artifact in a distant and dangerous location necessary to save people. The monk calls upon the PCs to escort them on a perilous journey to retrieve the artifact and fulfill their destiny.
9	***Schism.*** A deep ideological rift emerges within the monastery, pitting monk against monk. The PCs must help them reconcile their beliefs and find a way to heal the division that threatens to tear the community apart.
10	***Word of Power.*** The PCs suddenly find themselves pursued by dangerous, highly skilled assassins. An individual traveling with the same caravan reveals themselves as a monk who carries knowledge the assassins are after. Struck with a poisoned arrow, the monk reveals their secret, teaching a mysterious word of power to one of the PCs. With dying breath, the monk begs the character to seek sanctuary with their order.

4 ROYAL MAGIC

Two robed cultists summon the spirit of a dead king from his tomb.

Even if magic is not prominent within a certain nation's borders, the peoples of neighboring nations might still employ it—so it's best to be prepared. Even if the world's magic is fleeting and scarce, rest assured that those at court, those that make the rules, will accumulate what magic they can, possibly using it for everything from mundane, everyday tasks to matters of national defense or else hoarding it away so that others can't be tempted by its wickedness. Anyone with frequent dealings with the nobility or with the state would do well with a little extra knowledge of what they might be facing and with the understanding that a sovereign's access to magic has few limitations. Within this chapter are new magic items and spells, both powerful and useful, and including fabled rituals of the royal court.

MAGIC ITEMS

This section presents descriptions of magic items that were commissioned and brought to bear in royal courts, stately war rooms, castle grounds, and fields of battle across the realms, all in service to the throne. Or else in opposition to it.

Cape of Magnificence

Wondrous Item, Uncommon (Requires Attunement) — *2,500 gp*

This splendid cape is made from luxurious velvet and richly trimmed with fur. While you wear it, you always look amazing and have advantage on CHA (Performance and Persuasion) checks.

As an action, every creature within 120 feet of you that you can see must make a DC 12 WIS save. On a failure, a target is charmed by you. While charmed, a target can't look away from you and ignores all other activity around it until you or your companions harm it or until you fail to use your action to continue the effect. When the effect ends, the target knows it has been charmed by you. Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before using it again.

Feather Token

Wondrous Item, Rare — *Price Varies*

This tiny object looks like a feather. Different types of feather tokens exist, each with a different single-use effect. The GM chooses the kind of token or determines it randomly.

FEATHER TOKENS

d4	Feather Token	Price
1	Catapult	650 gp
2	Ladder	100 gp
3	Mattock	1,500 gp
4	Spoon	50 gp

Catapult. You can use an action to drop this token on the ground. It disappears, and a Huge catapult siege engine takes its place. The catapult is wheeled, and a creature can use an action to move it 10 feet. If the catapult's bucket is empty, a stone sphere appears in it every minute for the item's duration. The catapult hurls the stone in an arc and can hit targets behind total cover. It takes one action to aim the weapon and one action to fire it. Loading ammunition other than the one created by the item requires two actions. The catapult remains for 24 hours and then disappears. (See also **Siege Equipment** in **Chapter 2** for more on siege warfare, in addition to *Game Master's Guide*.)

Use the following attack for the catapult: ***Catapult Stone.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 200/1,100 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 feet of it), one target. *Hit:* 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage.

Ladder. You can use an action to touch the feather to an unoccupied space on the ground next to a wall, building, or other vertical obstacle. The token then disappears, and a siege ladder appears. This ladder is tall enough to reach the top of the obstacle (to a maximum of 200 feet). The top of the ladder latches onto the top edge of the obstacle and can only be removed with a successful DC 20 STR check. A creature climbing the ladder moves at twice its normal speed. The ladder remains for 24 hours and then disappears.

Mattock. You must be outdoors or in natural surroundings to use this token. As an action, you can toss the token up to 10 feet in the air. The token then disappears, and a floating magical mattock appears. This resembles an agricultural tool with a metal head that has a pickaxe blade on one side and a chisel edge on the other. Choose an area of natural terrain within 120 feet of you, no larger than 40 feet on a side. You can use an action to command the mattock to reshape stone, dirt, sand, or clay in the area. You can dig out or collapse a tunnel, create or fill in a trench, or erect or flatten a wall. The extent of any such change can't exceed the area's largest dimension. It takes 10 minutes for these changes to complete.

The mattock can't manipulate stone construction or crafted objects. Because the transformation occurs slowly, creatures in the area can't typically be trapped or injured by it.

The mattock remains for 1 hour and then disappears.

Spoon. You can use an action to touch the feather to an unoccupied space. The token then disappears, and an ornate golden spoon appears. While you are holding

this spoon, you sense the presence and locations of any poisons, poisonous creatures, and diseases within 30 feet of you. You also identify the kind of poison, poisonous creature, or disease in each case. For the duration, you can use a bonus action to cast the *lesser restoration* spell from the spoon. Once you do so, the duration immediately ends. The spoon remains for 8 hours and then disappears.

Golden Seal of the Realm

Wondrous Item, Uncommon *1,500 gp*

This ornate seal resembles a faceted metal cone with a loop at the top and a flat base decorated with a carved heraldic matrix. The seal can be dipped into red ink and used to stamp a parchment or pressed into softened wax to create an impression of its heraldic symbol.

As an action, you can use this seal to stamp a written message. Once you do so, its writing can't be altered or added to until the stamp is removed (via a *dispel magic* spell or similar magic).

In addition, you can use an action to seal a closed parchment or scroll with wax. Once you do so, the parchment can't be opened unless the command word is spoken. You select the command word when you press the seal into the wax.

Attempting to break the seal or otherwise open the sealed message triggers an explosion of magical energy that destroys it. Each creature in a 20-foot radius centered on the wax seal must make a DC 15 DEX save, taking 3d8 fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Once a parchment is sealed in this way, it can't be altered until the seal is removed.

Herald's Staff

Staff, Common *100 gp*

This engraved staff comes in many forms and styles, depending on the culture that produced it. Typically, it has a metal sphere at its top, but some have gemstones or glowing rune crystals instead.

When you strike the end of the staff twice against a solid surface, your voice is magically amplified, so every creature within 300 feet of you (that can see or hear you) hears your voice clearly. Your amplified voice is loud but not deafening, even for those next to you. When you strike the end of the staff against a solid object again or drop the staff or when 1 minute passes, your voice returns to normal.

Kinetic Orb of Regency

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement) *6,250 gp*

This 5-inch-diameter sphere of gray metal is engraved with a complicated spiral pattern, and it constantly hums at the edge of hearing. The orb has 4 charges.

You can use an action to expend 1 charge to mentally activate the orb. When you do so, the orb floats and flies in a straight line up to 60 feet in a direction of your choice. Any creature in the path of the orb must make a DC 12 DEX save, taking 4d8 force damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success. While in motion, the orb can't be moved by any outside force.

At the start of each of your turns, you can expend 1 charge as a bonus action to mentally command the orb to fly 60 feet in a straight line in a new direction or to teleport back to your hand. You can mentally deactivate the orb, causing it to fall to the ground (no action required).

The orb regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

Mirror of Truth

Wondrous Item, Very Rare *15,000 gp*

This handheld item has 10 spokes surrounding a convex mirror. Small, circular badges set into each spoke feature intricate images of figures wielding the mirror in various scenes. The mirror has 5 charges.

When you hold the mirror, you can use a bonus action to expend 1 or more of its charges to produce the following effects:

- Look into the mirror and gain truesight to a range of 120 feet for 10 minutes (1 charge).

- Hold up the mirror to force all creatures within 120 feet, which are either shapechanged or disguised by illusion, to succeed on a DC 15 WIS save or revert to their natural forms (2 charges).
- Negate any *invisibility* spell or effect within 120 feet (3 charges).
- Hold the mirror facing outward. All creatures within 120 feet of the mirror that can see it must succeed on a DC 15 WIS save or become frightened of you for 1 minute (4 charges).

The mirror regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

Naphtha Orb

Wondrous Item, Rare *1,000 gp*

This metal sphere measures 4 inches in diameter and weighs 1 pound. Within its engraved shell rests a viscous, flammable liquid called naphtha.

You can use an action to throw the orb up to 60 feet at a spot you choose. The orb bursts upon impact and is destroyed. Each creature within a 10-foot radius of where the orb landed must make a DC 15 DEX save. On a failure, a target takes 2d10 fire damage and catches on fire, taking another 2d10 fire damage at the start of each of its turns. On a success, a target takes half as much damage and doesn't catch on fire. Flammable objects in the area immediately catch on fire.

A creature must use an action to douse the flames on a burning target. Smothering the flames is the only way to effectively douse the flames; water doesn't extinguish burning naphtha.

Ormur's Medallion

Wondrous Item, Rare *8,500 gp*
(Requires Attunement)

This engraved medallion is set with a green stone that seems to contain a concentration of coiled worms within its matrix. As an action, you can command the worms to leave the medallion and appear in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of you that you can see. The worms have the statistics of a **swarm of insects** but have no effect on living material.

On your turn, you can use a telepathic command (no action required) to order the worms to move to an object, structure, or area. Once there, the worms disintegrate all nonliving material in a 5-foot cube.

If a creature occupies the space, it must make a DC 15 DEX save. On a failure, the worms disintegrate all nonmagical items carried or worn by the target. On a success, the target can move to an unoccupied space of its choice adjacent to the worms, and its items are not disintegrated.

Once the worms are finished, they return to the medallion, and you can't use them again until the next dawn.

Pocket Mangonel

Wondrous Item, Uncommon *4,500 gp*

This item resembles a small wooden model of a catapult that fits in the palm of your hand. When you speak the command word as an action, it expands into a full-sized, functional mangonel.

Use the following attack for the mangonel:
Mangonel Stone. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 feet), one target. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage + 4 (1d8) force damage. If the target is a structure or vehicle, the attack deals double damage.

As an action, you can speak a different command word to return the mangonel to its compact form.

Ring of True Lineage

Ring, Rare *7,500 gp*
(Requires Attunement)

Originally designed for the guards of royal families, this magical signet ring has an ornate golden band with a blank face. When a creature places a drop of blood to the ring's face, the heraldry of that creature's family appears on the ring. If the bloodline does not have heraldry, an image of the creature appears instead.

When you attune to the ring, you gain a +2 bonus to your AC and saves while you are within 30 feet of a direct bloodline member of the family linked to the

ring. For example, the son of the woman who donated the blood would qualify but a cousin would not.

In addition, as an action you can touch the face of the ring and make it brighten when pointed in the direction of the closest direct-bloodline member of the family, as long as you are on the same plane (GM's discretion regarding which member is closest). If you have been within 30 feet of a family member in the last 24 hours, you can choose to know the direction of that creature instead. Once you use this aspect of the ring, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

If the creature who donated the blood dies, the ring exerts a faint pull toward that creature's direct heir.

Rod of Abasement

Rod, Uncommon *1,200 gp*

This ornate rod is made of precious metals and has a faceted gemstone button at one end. As an action, you can point the rod in a direction and press the button. When you do so, each creature in a 30-foot cone in that direction must succeed on a DC 10 WIS save or bow respectfully to you. On a success, a target is immune to the power of the rod for 24 hours. Once used, the rod can't be used again until the next dawn.

Rod of Stolen Forms

Rod, Very Rare *25,000 gp*
(Requires Attunement)

This beast-headed rod has a fang-filled mouth. It's made from multicolored strands of metal, interwoven in a complex pattern that seems impossible to follow with the eye.

You can use this rod as a magic mace that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. In addition, the rod has 3 charges.

When you make a successful attack roll with the rod, you can expend 1 charge to force the target to make a DC 15 WIS save. On a failure, it takes 4d10 psychic damage, and you transform into an exact copy of the target. If the target has a CR greater than the wielder's CR or level, it is immune to this effect.

The transformation lasts for 1 minute but requires concentration (as if focusing on a spell). Your game statistics, including mental ability scores, are replaced by the statistics of the form you selected, but you retain your alignment and personality. You gain all the abilities, features, traits, skills, and hit points of your new form, and you lose access to those of your original form. This effect ends if you drop to 0 HP, lose concentration, or die.

When you revert to your original form, you return to the number of hit points you had before you transformed. If you revert as a result of dropping to 0 HP, any excess carries over to your original form. As long as the excess doesn't reduce your original form to 0 HP, you aren't knocked unconscious.

The rod recovers all expended charges daily at dawn.

Siege Gittern

Wondrous Item, Very Rare *10,000 gp*
(Requires Attunement by a Bard)

You must have proficiency with instruments (strings) to use this gittern.

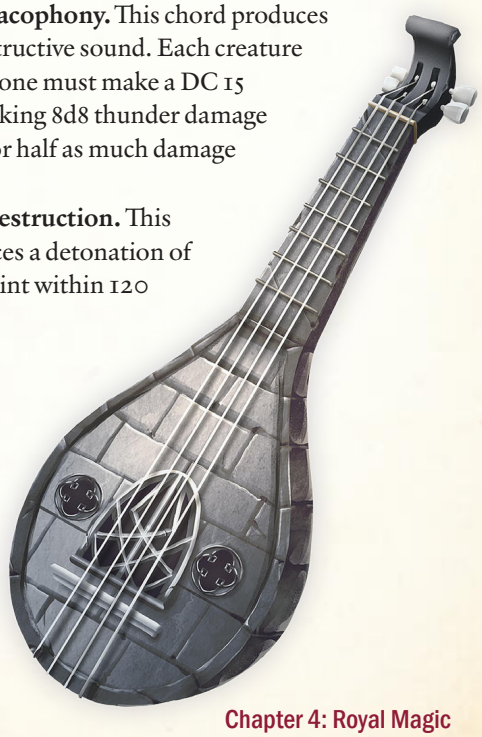
This ornate stringed instrument features a carved rondel decorated with castle themes. While you play this gittern, as an action, you can strum a chord to launch a sphere of churning sound at a target within 120 feet. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d10 thunder damage. The gittern creates more than one sound sphere when you reach higher levels: two spheres at 5th level, three at 11th, and four at 17th. You can direct the spheres at the same or different targets, making separate attack rolls for each sphere.

In addition, while you play this instrument, you can use an action to strike a special chord that produces a magical effect. Once you use any special chord, you can't use another until you finish a long rest.

The magical chords of the gittern are described below.

Chord of Cacophony. This chord produces a wave of destructive sound. Each creature in a 60-foot cone must make a DC 15 CON save, taking 8d8 thunder damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

Chord of Destruction. This chord produces a detonation of sound at a point within 120



feet of you that you can see, dealing 6d8 bludgeoning and 6d8 thunder damage to structures within a 20-foot radius of that point. If a structure drops to 0 HP, it collapses. Each creature within a radius of a collapsed structure, equal to half its height, must make a DC 15 DEX save. On a failure, a creature takes 5d6 bludgeoning damage and becomes prone and restrained in the rubble. The creature can free itself, or another creature within 5 feet of it can free it, with a successful DC 15 STR (Athletics) check. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and suffers no additional effects.

Chord of Undermining. This chord produces a deep, rumbling sound at a point in an area of natural terrain within 60 feet of you that you can see. The terrain in a 40-foot cube around that point transforms into deep mud for 8 hours. Rocks and structures shift to accommodate the new terrain, and if the mud would make a structure unstable, it might collapse (GM's discretion).

A creature that enters or begins its turn in the mud must make a DC 15 DEX save. On a success, the creature treats the mud as difficult terrain. On a failure, the creature sinks into the mud and becomes restrained until the start of their next turn. A creature outside the area can use an action to attempt to pull a trapped creature within reach free with a successful DC 15 STR (Athletics) check.

When the duration ends, the mud solidifies over a period of 1 minute, and creatures still within the area can no longer be restrained by the mud and can free themselves easily.

Throne of Protection

Wondrous Item, Very Rare *25,250 gp*

This throne is made from the finest materials: gemstone decoration, inlaid rare woods, and velvet cushions. The throne has 3 charges and regains expended charges daily at dawn.

There are two gemstone buttons on the left armrest and one on the right. A creature sitting on the throne or within 5 feet of it can use an action to touch a button and expend 1 or more charges, causing one of the following effects:

- Left Armrest (1 charge). Pressing the emerald gemstone button surrounds the creature sitting on the throne with a protective ward for 1 minute. The next time the creature on the throne is attacked before the ward ends, its AC increases by 5 against that attack. Then the ward ends.
- **Left Armrest (2 charges).** Pressing the ruby gemstone button causes the creature sitting on the throne to regain 25 HP.
- Right Armrest (3 charges). Pressing the diamond gemstone button casts a *globe of invulnerability* spell on the creature sitting on the throne. The spell lasts for 1 minute.

Throne of Terror

Wondrous Item, Rare *16,100 gp*

This throne is made from a dark stone and carved into grinning skulls and other ghoulish imagery. The throne has 3 charges and regains expended charges daily at dawn.

As an action, a creature sitting on the throne or within 5 feet of it can touch a gemstone on the armrest and expend 1 charge to cause the throne to emit an aura of fear in a 60-foot radius. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 WIS save or be frightened of anyone sitting on the throne, for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Throne of Vainglorious Dramaturgy

Wondrous Item, Rare *10,100 gp*

This ornate throne is highly decorated with the finest materials. It has 2 charges and regains expended charges daily at dawn.

As an action, a creature sitting on the throne or within 5 feet of it can touch a gemstone button on the armrest and expend 1 charge to cast the *dimension door* spell on the throne itself and any creature sitting on it. The throne disappears and reappears in a cloud of colorful smoke and a dramatic musical crescendo. The smoke lightly obscures the spaces the throne both leaves and reappears in, dissipating at the end of 1 turn. A light or stronger wind disperses the smoke.

FABLED ITEMS

This section presents descriptions of fabled magic items, each a unique and storied relic that has seen more adventure than can be easily imagined. Such fabled items grow in power along with their owner.

Crown of Broken Blades

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

This mighty crown is fashioned from broken blades melted together to form the band. Four iron blades rise, point up, from the band with smaller blades arrayed between them. The blades are made from various metals and other materials.

Crafted by early mage-smiths, the *Crown of Broken Blades* was first worn by Lann, the greatest warrior of his time. In an age mostly forgotten, Lann cut his way through legions of monsters and demons to carve out an empire. Tales speak of the warrior's mastery of every weapon.

The great Lann was ultimately brought low by the poisons of Vos, his shield-brother. The crown was smuggled out of the palace by servants and has remained hidden ever since.

While you wear this crown, you can use a bonus action to conjure a bladed weapon of the finest steel (your choice of dagger, rapier, scimitar, shortsword, longsword, or greatsword) for 1 minute. This weapon appears in your hand, and you have proficiency with it while it exists. If the weapon leaves your hand, it vanishes at the end of your turn.

Jagged Coronet (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown.

5th Level. When you hit with an attack using a weapon conjured from the crown, the target takes an extra 1d8 radiant or necrotic damage (your choice).

9th Level. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with weapons conjured by the crown. In addition, the weapon deals double damage to objects and structures.

13th Level. You now gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with weapons conjured by the crown, instead of +1. In addition, if you see a target within 120 feet use a magical weapon, you can use a bonus action to copy the powers of that weapon and apply them to a weapon conjured by the crown, for 1 hour. Copied properties never replace or supersede this item's +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. Once you use this copy feature, the crown can't be used again in this way until the next dawn.

17th Level. You now gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls with weapons conjured by the crown, instead of +2. In addition, these weapons each gain 3 charges. You can expend 1 charge while making an attack with one of these weapons to target three additional foes within 60 feet of you (that you can see) with the same attack. Roll attacks and damage separately for each additional attack. The crown regains all expended charges daily at dawn.

Crown of Domination

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

This crown seems to be made from glowing crystals and a black and purple metal of unknown origin. In the center of the band is a large, spherical cat's-eye gemstone that appears to contain a swirl of darkness and stars in its depths. Among the kingdoms lost to the current age was En-Elki, land of the Crystal Seers, a realm ruled by an unbroken line of powerful mages. The Last Umbja, a woman named Saysha Veneba, crafted the *Crown of Domination* by solidifying the stolen minds of half of the population of En-Elki into a physical form.

This act was the tipping point. En-Elki fell to a combined army of mortals and gods, and the crown was lost to the sea as the kingdom sank beneath the waves.

While wearing this crown, if you fail a save against an effect that would make you charmed or frightened, you can reroll the save. Once triggered, this property can't be used until the next dawn.

Warlord's Eye (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown.

5th Level. Your CHA score increases by 1, to a maximum of 20. You can use an action to attempt to influence a number of Humanoids within 60 feet of you (that you can see) equal to your PB. A target must make a WIS save (DC 8 + your PB + your CHA modifier). On a failure, the target is charmed by you for 1 minute. You must concentrate to maintain this effect as if focusing on a spell. Charmed targets regard you as a friendly acquaintance until the effect ends or until you or your companions do anything harmful to it. A charmed target can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

You must finish a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.

9th Level. Your CHA score increases by 1, to a maximum of 20. In addition, you can use a bonus action on each of your turns to cast the *command* spell on one target charmed by the crown.

13th Level. Your CHA score increases by 1, to a maximum of 22. In addition, you have a telepathic link to all targets currently charmed by the crown and that are on the same plane. You can use this telepathic link to issue commands to each such linked target (no action required), which the target does its best to obey.

You can use an action to take total control of one charmed target. Until the end of your turn, the target only takes actions that you command it to take. During this time, you can also use your reaction to allow one of your charmed targets to use its reaction.

17th Level. Your CHA score increases by 1, to a maximum of 22. In addition, the charming powers of this crown can now affect any creature within 120 feet of you, not just Humanoids. A creature that fails its save against the crown's power by more than 10 is charmed for 1 month, following the rules described above. At the end of each week, the target can repeat the save, ending the effect on a success.

Crown of Faith

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

This bulbous crown is completely enclosed by a rich golden brocade, decorated with jewels. Tales say this crown was first presented by the gods to a hermit named Ginet as a reward for her unwavering faith and holiness. She refused, saying, "What need does a shepherd have for a crown?"

Angered, the gods sent monsters to punish Ginet, but the hermit rallied her flock of sheep with prayers and benedictions. Imbued and inspired by her faith, the sheep trampled the monsters into the dust.

The gods approached Ginet again and asked what she would have them do with the crown. She replied, "Gift it to one whose faith is unmatched but who lacks a flock to lead." And so they did.

While you wear this crown, you have proficiency in the Performance and Religion skills. If you already have proficiency in one or both of these skills, instead double your PB when you roll checks for it.

Shepherd's Miter (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown.

5th Level. The crown has 5 charges. You can expend 1 charge as a bonus action and choose a number of creatures (that can hear you) equal to your PB to receive a special blessing called a benediction.

Once within the next 10 minutes, a target can call upon this benediction to add your PB to all ability checks, attack rolls, or saves it makes until the end of its turn. A creature can only have one benediction at a time. The crown regains expended charges daily at dawn.

In addition, a bard attuned to this item can instead expend a charge for an additional use of their Bardic Inspiration feature.

9th Level. You gain resistance to either necrotic or radiant damage. You can change the type of damage as part of a long rest. In addition, when a target uses your benediction, it gains the ability to deal an extra 1d8 necrotic or radiant damage (your choice) on all weapon and spell attacks until the end of their turn.

In addition, a paladin attuned to this item can instead expend 1 or more charges to increase the spell slot used for their Divine Smite feature, by one circle for each charge expended. The adjusted slot can't be of a higher circle than you could normally cast.

13th Level. When a target blessed by your benediction takes damage, you can use your reaction to expend a spell slot (if you have any) to heal all targets currently blessed by your benediction. A target recovers 1d6 hit points for a 1st-circle spell slot, plus 1d6 for each circle higher than 1st.

In addition, a druid attuned to this item can instead expend a charge for an additional use of their Wild Shape feature.

17th Level. When you cast a spell with a range of self, you can expend a charge from the crown and apply the benefits of that spell to all targets currently blessed by your benediction.

In addition, a cleric attuned to this item can instead expend 5 charges to cast the *wish* spell. Once used, the crown can't be used in this way for 1 week.

Crown of Glass

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

This crown was ordered as part of a set when nine feuding monarchs sought a peaceful solution to their conflict. The fabled smith Kelgror was commissioned, along with other smiths of commensurate skill, to craft regal relics that would secure their respective owners with the rights of their stations.

The *Crown of Glass* was meant to reflect the beauty of the kingdom of Annealon, famed for the sublime works of their glassblowers and elementalists. When pacts between Annealon and her sister kingdoms were broken, the crowns were lost, one by one, in a cascade of assaults, subterfuges, and coups.

Though Annealon now lies in ruin, it is foretold that this crown's rightful bearer will refire the kingdom anew and forge something greater than before.

While wearing this crown, you gain resistance to one damage type of your choice from the following list: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder. You can change the damage type you are resistant to after a short or long rest. In addition, you can use the crown as an arcane spell focus.

Prismatic Sovereign (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown. The crown also has 5 charges, and it regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

If you possess the Spellcasting feature (from your class), use your spell save DC for the crown's abilities. Otherwise, your spell save DC equals 10 + your proficiency bonus (PB).

5th Level. You can use an action to expend 1 or more of the crown's charges to cast one of the following spells, using your spell save DC: *color spray* (1 charge), *mirror image* (2 charges), or *protection from energy* (3 charges).

9th Level. Once per round, you can use your reaction to reflect a spell that targets you, or the space you occupy, back at its caster. Make a CHA save (DC 10 + the circle of the spell slot used for the spell). On a success, the spell is redirected toward the original caster as if you had cast it.

13th Level. The crown's number of charges increases to 7. You can now cast the following spells, using your spell save DC: *resilient sphere* (4 charges) and *mislead* (5 charges).

In addition, you can expend 1 charge as a bonus action to change the damage type of the resistance granted by the crown.

17th Level. The crown's number of charges increases to 10. You can now cast the following spells, using your spell save DC: *prismatic spray* (7 charges) and *prismatic wall* (9 charges).

In addition, every time you take damage of the type you have resistance to because of the crown, it regains 1 charge, and you can change your resistance to a different damage type provided by the crown.

Crown of Griffons

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

One of two crowns forged personally by legendary smith Kelgror, the *Crown of Griffons* was an undesired gift. At the end of the Nine Kingdoms War, the leaders involved found an unsteady peace when relics of power were commissioned for each kingdom.

The *Crown of Griffons*, however, was not crafted for one of noble birth but rather for a griffon-riding ranger named Bronwyn, who earned the peoples' love. The free people elected Bronwyn their lord and paid a king's ransom to have the crown crafted with the likeness of his noble steed, a golden griffon.

Sadly, the ranger never wanted his appointed station and grew restless during his brief time at court. When he left the throne permanently, following a tragic loss, the act signaled the end of the brokered peace among the kingdoms and the beginning of the Lost Crowns Age.

While wearing this crown, you always know the direction of true north. In addition, you have advantage on WIS and CHA checks with Beasts and Monstrosities with avian or feline features.

Feathertalon Lord (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown.

5th Level. You have the heightened eyesight of a bird of prey, granting you proficiency in the Perception skill. If you are already proficient, double your PB for related rolls. In addition, you possess the agility of a feline predator. While moving, opportunity attacks targeting you are made with disadvantage.

9th Level. You gain a +1 bonus to saves. You also gain the ability to cast the *gust of wind* spell once per long rest. While concentrating on this spell, you gain a flying speed equal to half your walking speed.

13th Level. You now have a +2 bonus to saves, instead of a +1. In addition, when you make an attack using a piercing or slashing weapon, you deal a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. When you score a critical hit with such a weapon, you deal triple damage instead of double damage.

17th Level. You now have a +3 bonus to saves, instead of a +2. In addition, you can cast the *greater dominate* spell once per short rest. Beasts and Monstrosities that have avian or feline features have disadvantage on their saves against this effect.

In addition, the crown's 9th-level ability recharges after a short or long rest.

Crown of Radiance

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

This glorious golden crown is constructed with a number of narrowing metal rays that rise from a stylized band to represent beams of sunlight. Crafted by devotees of an ancient god of light as tribute to a now-forgotten kingdom, the *Crown of Radiance* has been in the treasured possession of kings, emperors, and warlords throughout history. Most recently, the crown was worn by Solis Ilakos, the leader of the Cult of the Enlightened Doom.

This secret sect believes the gods wish the world to end. By aiding in this task, the faithful can receive the gods' blessings. Ilakos was slain by adventurers, preventing him from enacting a ritual that would bring a living star through a magical gateway. The crown was lost in the melee, and its current whereabouts are unknown, though the surviving cult members seek its recovery.

While wearing this crown, you can use an action to cast the *prestidigitation* cantrip, and you have advantage on CHA (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks.

Sun Crown (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown.

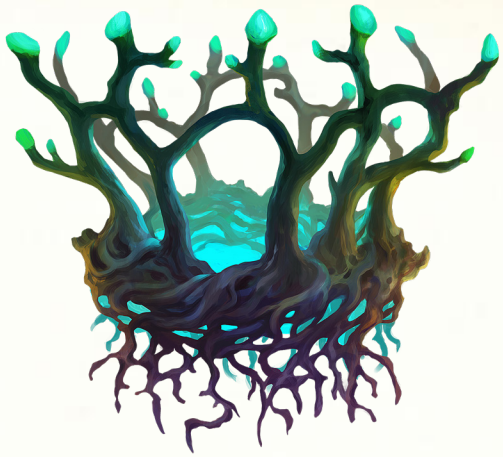
5th Level. As an action, 5 of the golden spikes on the crown crackle with power for 1 minute. You can use a bonus action to project a beam of brilliant energy from one of the spikes at one creature within 60 feet that you can see. When you do so, make a ranged attack with an attack bonus of +5. On a hit, the target takes 2d12 radiant damage. Whether you hit or miss, the energy in that spike is expended. This feature ends early if you expend the power in the last spike. Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

9th Level. You gain a +1 bonus to your saves. While wearing the crown, you have resistance to psychic damage, and you are immune to magic that allows other creatures to read your thoughts, determine whether you are lying, know your alignment, or know your creature type. Creatures can telepathically communicate with you only if you allow it.

13th Level. You now gain a +2 bonus to your saves, instead of +1. You can cast the *prismatic spray* spell from the crown as an action (DC 8 + your PB + your CHA modifier). Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

17th Level. You now gain a +3 bonus to your saves, instead of +2. While you wear the crown, you can use an action to bring the full might of your personality down on a creature within 90 feet that you can see. The target must make an INT save (DC 8 + your PB + your CHA modifier). On a success, the target's INT and CHA scores are reduced to 1 (modifier −5) until the end of their next turn. The target can't cast spells, activate magic items, understand language, or communicate in any intelligible way. The target can, however, identify its friends, follow them, and even protect them. On a failure, the target takes 9d6 psychic damage and is stunned for 1 minute. A stunned target can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.



Crown of Twisted Roots

Wondrous Item, Fabled *Priceless*
(5th-Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

This crown is formed of a root, single and organic in nature, twisted and woven around itself. Small shoots extend upward and also hang down around the wearer's head. Each upright stalk ends in a glowing cerulean bulb, or "root cap," and a similar radiance shines from between the tight braids of the crown.

The *Crown of Twisted Roots* was fashioned from a piece of Yggdrasil, the World Tree, by a dark druidic sect called the Heralds of Winter. These druids believed the deprivations of civilization must be torn out and destroyed to restore the world to the proper balance. Their grand hierophant wore this crown as he commanded titanic vines and roots to overrun the once-proud city of Calhaven.

That first crown was broken after a band of heroes destroyed the hierophant in the ruins of the city at the heart of Forest of the Lost. However, in every age, a new *Crown of Twisted Roots* grows in some out-of-the-way woodland, ready to offer the vengeance of nature to one brave enough to wear it.

While you wear this crown, you ignore difficult terrain created by plants, earth, or unworked stone.

Deeproot Laurel (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wearing this crown.

5th Level. As an action, you can pluck one of the root caps and hurl it up to 60 feet. The cap disappears, and an animated, vine-like root springs into existence in its place. You determine the size of the root when you throw the cap. It can be up to 30 feet long with a diameter up to 5 feet. The root has AC 15 and hit points equal to half of your hit point maximum. If the root is reduced to 0 HP, it vanishes, and you can't pluck a new cap until the next dawn.

You can use a bonus action to mentally command the root to return to its cap form in a space formerly occupied by the root. You can then throw the cap again using an action.

On your turn, you can use a bonus action to command the root to seize a Huge or smaller creature within 10 feet of it, and the creature becomes grappled (escape DC 15). Medium or smaller creatures have disadvantage on escape checks. While a creature is grappled, you can use a bonus action to command the root to crush it, dealing 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

The root lasts for a number of minutes equal to your PB, not counting any time it spends in root cap form. Once you use this feature, the crown can't be used in this way again until the next dawn.

9th Level. As an action, you cause twisting roots of glowing energy to erupt from the ground in a 20-foot radius centered on a point you can see within 100 feet of you. They remain for 1 minute, and the ground becomes difficult terrain for the duration.

When a creature moves into or starts its turn within the affected area, it must succeed on a DEX save (DC 8 + your PB + your WIS modifier) or be grappled by the roots (escape DC 8 + your PB + your WIS modifier). While grappled, the creature takes 2d4 force damage. You regain hit points equal to half the amount of the damage dealt.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

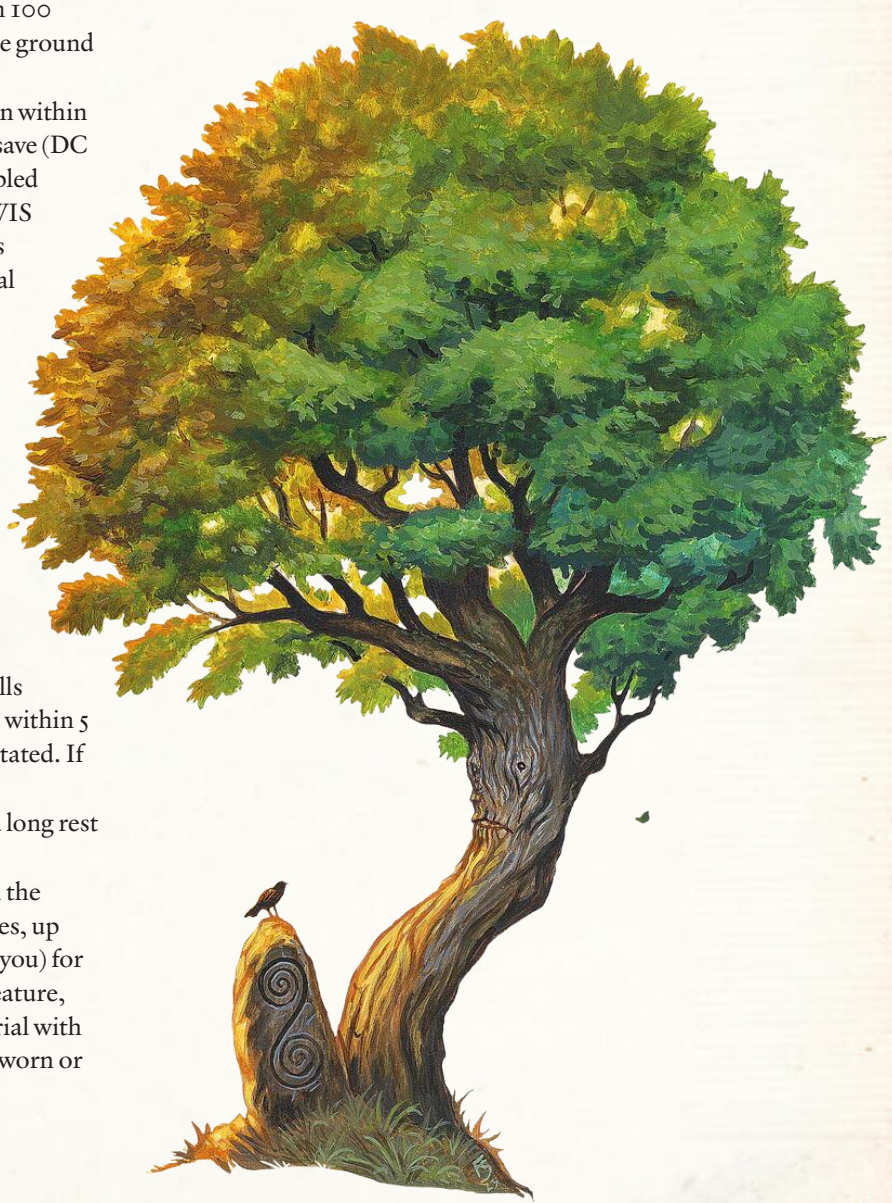
13th Level. You can command the crown to summon allies. As a bonus action, one **awakened tree** or four **awakened shrubs** appear in unoccupied spaces within 10 feet of you. They remain for a number of rounds equal to your PB. The creatures are friendly to you and your companions. They understand you and obey your spoken commands. Each has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of its allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated. If reduced to 0 HP, the Plant ally vanishes.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

17th Level. As an action, roots spring from the ground beneath a number of willing creatures, up to half of your PB, of your choice (including you) for 1 minute. The roots completely cover the creature, forming a protective layer of bark-like material with a featureless face. This does not cover items worn or carried by the creature.

While covered by the roots, a creature gains the following benefits:

- As a bonus action on its turn, a creature can burrow to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of it that is adjacent to any ally also protected by this feature.
- Melee weapon attacks made by the creature gain an additional 4d6 poison damage.
- The covering produces fresh air regardless of the quality of the environment around the creature, including underwater or in a void.
- The creature can see normally, gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet, and keensense to a range of 10 feet.
- The creature gains +3 to AC.
- The creature gains immunity to poison damage and resistance to fire damage.



FABLED RITUALS

Similar to fabled magic items, fabled rituals are a distinct type of ritual that carry with them a story or legend. Like fabled magic items, they are typically given to PCs as story rewards and can have lasting or long-reaching impacts on a campaign. They function like other rituals in many ways—they take at least 10 minutes to cast, they often require specific components, they don't use spell slots, and spellcasters invoking them must be able to cast spells from a particular circle—but they also have several unique properties as described below.

Using Fabled Rituals. Unlike standard rituals, fabled rituals aren't available to learn via class progression, can't be copied into spellbooks, and can't be added to a list of known spells. The only way to cast a fabled ritual is to find and expend a *spell scroll* that contains one. *Spell scrolls* containing fabled rituals can be found, created, and purchased in the same way as standard *spell scrolls*.

Since fabled rituals are cast only via scrolls, they don't belong to a specific source list. Instead, any creature can use a *spell scroll* to cast a fabled ritual. If a creature is a spellcaster, it uses its spell save DC to determine the base DC for the spell. If the creature doesn't have a spell save DC, its DC for the spell is equal to 10 + its proficiency bonus (PB).

FABLED RITUAL DESCRIPTIONS

This section presents descriptions of a sampling of fabled rituals, each drawing from fairy tales or myths and each full of potent ramifications for any campaign.

BROKEN HEART

4th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Enchantment)

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (a drop of the target's blood, the heart of a dove, and a diamond worth 100 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Until dispelled

You cause a Humanoid to be charmed by the first Humanoid it sees and to be devastated when rejected.

Choose a Humanoid target within range. You must have met the target at least once to affect it with this spell, and creatures immune to the charmed condition can't be affected.

At the end of the casting time, the target must make a CHA save. On a success, the spell ends, and the target can't be affected by this spell for 1 year. On a failure, the target becomes charmed by the first Humanoid it sees after its next long rest—becoming infatuated with the creature and perceiving it as their paramour.

While charmed, the target is compelled to obey any request made by its paramour. Suggestions must be worded in such a manner as to make the course of action sound reasonable. The target isn't compelled to follow obviously harmful requests.

If the paramour makes no requests of the target for 24 hours or otherwise openly rejects the target's affection, the target is no longer charmed by the paramour and has disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saves it makes until it finishes a long rest. At the end of this long rest, the target must repeat the CHA save or become charmed by the next Humanoid it sees—regarding the creature as its new paramour and beginning the cycle again.

If a target is embraced or kissed by a creature that bears genuine—not magically compelled—affection for it, any ongoing effects of this spell are suppressed for 10 minutes. The effects of this spell can only be suppressed in this way once per day.

The spell immediately ends if the target sees its current paramour die. If this occurs, the target becomes incapacitated for 24 hours as it is overwhelmed with grief. After this time, all effects end, and the creature can never be affected by this spell again.

CORONATION

6th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Divination)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a crown or scepter of office and rare oils worth 5,000 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: 1 year

You imbue a creature with the ability to influence a kingdom's subjects and sense dangers within its borders.

You mystically mark a creature to serve as the ruler of a realm. This ritual creates a mystical bond between the target and the land they rule. While the spell is active and the target possesses the crown or scepter used in the casting of this spell, they gain the following benefits:

- ***Aura of the Crown.*** The target has advantage on all WIS and CHA checks made to interact with creatures within the kingdom's borders. The GM has final say on where the borders of a kingdom begin and end.
- ***Land Sense.*** The target is linked to the environment of the kingdom itself, alerting it to possible dangers

that occur within its border. The target feels a mental alarm when five or more creatures are killed by unnatural means within 10 minutes and 1 mile of one another. You can designate creatures, events, or situations that won't set off the warding alarm. The mental alarm doesn't tell the target the type of danger or threat, but it does reveal the 1-mile region in which the deaths took place.

When you cast this ritual, you can designate an additional number of creatures equal to your PB to also receive the benefits of the Land Sense ability. The target of this spell can choose to end this benefit for a creature it designates at any time while the spell is active.

After 1 year, the effects granted by this spell end unless the ritual is cast again (expending the material component cost as normal). Alternatively, this spell ends early if the crown or scepter used in the casting is destroyed.

FORGETTING

3rd-Circle Fabled Ritual (Enchantment)

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (a glass orb and an ivory wand)

Duration: Permanent

You erase the target's memories of a creature.

Choose a creature within range. You must have met the target at least once to affect it with this spell. Creatures with an INT modifier of −3 or lower can't be affected. As part of the casting, you must also choose a second creature to be forgotten by the target. You don't need to have met this second creature but must know its name or be familiar with its general description. The target and the forgotten creature must know one another.

The target must make an INT save. On a success, the spell ends, and the target can't be affected by this spell again for 1 year. On a failure, the memory of the second creature is erased from its mind immediately after the target finishes its next long rest. If asked about the forgotten creature, the target's memory fills in the gaps where that creature once was with explanations as logical as possible. Even if the target is reintroduced to the forgotten creature, any memory of the encounter is immediately erased if the creature is out of the target's sight for more than 1 minute.

FEY RITUALS

In stories and tales throughout the Labyrinth, the mischievous fey are said to have been the ones to initially create fabled rituals. Whether they invented the technique or simply have a marvelous affinity for them, the fey are rightly feared for their spellcasting ability. Powerful fey are rumored to be capable of invoking the effects of a fabled ritual as easily as a wizard might cast a spell—and can even create new rituals without preparation. The obsession of the fey with bargains gives these tales some circumstantial credence, but the truth is known only to the fey themselves.

Many of the fabled rituals in this section feature in well-known nursery rhymes or cautionary tales about the Fair Folk. Of course, the details of these spells shift from storyteller to storyteller, but the spirit of them remains unchanged.

A *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell cast on the target restores the target's true memories. Alternatively, the spell ends if the target sees a portrait, photograph, or similarly realistic visual evidence that includes itself and the forgotten creature. When the spell is ended by any of these methods, the target can never be made to forget the same creature with any future castings of this spell.

KINGDOM RESTORATION

6th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Abjuration)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 10-mile radius

Components: V, S, M (a detailed map worth at least 100 gp and diamond dust worth at least 5,000 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Instantaneous

You cure all creatures within range of their curse or disease.

Name one curse or disease and choose a 10-mile-radius area depicted on the map component. All creatures in that area are immediately cured of the named curse or disease.

If the chosen affliction is magical in nature and can't typically be cured by spells like *greater restoration*, the effects are instead suppressed for up to 30 days. If a cure is not administered within this time, the effects of the disease or curse resume as if no time has passed.

LIAR'S CURSE

3rd-Circle Fabled Ritual (Enchantment)

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (a broken iron mirror, the skin of a snake, and petals from a snapdragon flower)

Duration: Until dispelled

You compel a creature to speak only lies.

Choose a creature within range. You must have met the target at least once to affect it with this spell. A creature must be able to speak at least one language to be the target of this spell.

The target must make a WIS save. On a success, the spell ends, and the target can't be affected by this spell again for 1 year. On a failure, it is magically compelled to speak only in lies. Every time the target communicates—whether through speech, use of hand gestures, writing, or other means of communication—it must tell only falsehoods.

The target won't lie about facts clearly in evidence, such as air being breathable or whether it can see a horse standing in plain sight. Otherwise, it lies about any opinions or knowledge it has. This does not inhibit class features or spellcasting unless the feature relies on telling the truth. Spells or effects that force the target to tell the truth, such as *zone of truth*, render the target speechless instead.

If an owl or similar Tiny winged Beast comes within 30 feet of the target, the effects of this spell are suppressed long enough for the target to speak a single message of 25 words or less. The effects of this spell can only be suppressed in this way once per day.

A *greater restoration* spell cast on the target ends this spell. Alternatively, the target must whisper a secret never revealed to anyone into a glass bottle while alone: the secret will be true, despite this curse. The target must seal the bottle to trap the secret within and then stand fully visible in a crowd of at least 50 people and smash the bottle. The smashed bottle will loudly recite the secret in the target's voice for all to hear. Once the spell is ended using either of these methods, the target

is compelled to speak only truth and can't speak any lies until it completes a long rest. The target can't be affected by this spell again for 1 year.

MONSTROUS ASPECT

2nd-Circle Fabled Ritual (Illusion)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (a drawing or painting of the target and a silver mirror worth at least 50 gp)

Duration: Permanent

You cause others to perceive a creature as a hideous monster.

The target must make a CON save. On a failure, the spell takes effect, and the target is cursed. While cursed, other creatures perceive the target to be a monstrous and grotesque version of its former self. This perception extends to sight, sense, smell, touch, and sound. The target's actual appearance and statistics are unchanged by the curse.

The target has disadvantage on all CHA checks and saves, while affected by the curse, as does anyone attempting ability checks to discern the nature of the creature's transformation.

Creatures with truesight or similar abilities that allow them to see through illusions see the target as it actually appears. The target doesn't suffer penalties when interacting with such creatures, and such creatures don't suffer penalties on ability checks made to interact with the target.

OPTIONAL RULE: MULTIPLE CASTERS

Unlike typical spells, your GM can allow multiple creatures to partake in casting a fabled ritual. To cast one in this way, you must designate a primary caster to channel the power of the spell. The spell's base DC is determined by the statistics of the primary caster. The primary caster is also responsible for choosing the spell's target and has final say on any options included within the spell.

In addition to the primary caster, you can have a number of additional casters (equal to half the spell's circle) participate in the casting (rounded down, minimum of 1 additional caster). The DC of the spell increases by 1 for each caster who participates in addition to the primary caster.

If a *remove curse* spell is cast on the target, that spell's caster becomes the new target of this spell, and all effects end on the original creature. If there is no caster (such as if *remove curse* is cast from an item) or the target itself is the caster, the spell fails. Alternatively, the spell ends if the target is kissed or embraced by a willing creature that is unaware of the target's cursed nature.

OATHBOND

5th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Enchantment)

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a badge of service and a platinum coin, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Until dispelled

You enchant a pair of creatures to support one another or face painful consequences.

The ritual magically binds two target creatures in an agreement of loyalty and fealty. You must touch both creatures while casting the ritual. During the ritual, designate one creature as the servant and one as the liege. Any unwilling creature in this ritual must succeed on a WIS save or be charmed by the other target for the spell's duration. While a creature is charmed in this way, it adheres to the agreement.

The ritual is an agreement of allegiance and loyalty between the servant and the liege. The basic agreement for both creatures is as follows, though you can add duties or change the specifics of existing ones during the casting:

- ***Liege.*** The liege pledges to support and provide for the servant, to defend it against danger, and to never betray its trust.
- ***Servant.*** The servant pledges to be loyal and honest with the liege, to fight to defend it, to never work against its interests, and to obey its lawful commands.

Either target under the effect of this ritual takes 1d10 psychic damage each time they violate their pledge, though no more than once per long rest. Each time an unwilling participant takes this damage, it can repeat the WIS save, ending the spell on a success, but a servant or liege who does so takes 10d10 psychic damage and can be made the subject of the *oathbreaker's curse* ritual. The spell ends early if both creatures mutually agree to end the spell or if a *greater restoration* spell is cast on either creature.

An *oathbond* functions as long as both creatures are on the same plane of existence, regardless of the distance between them.

OATHBREAKER'S CURSE

6th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Enchantment)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Unlimited

Components: V, S, M (a scroll, upon which is written how the oathbond has been broken)

Duration: Until dispelled

You afflict a creature who has violated an oathbond with a debilitating brand.

A creature currently under the effects of the *oathbond* spell, or that has recently ended such a spell, can be targeted by the *oathbreaker's curse* spell. When the spell is cast, the target must make a WIS save. On a failure, an invisible brand appears on the target, who suffers the following effects until the brand is removed:

- The DCs of spells or abilities used by the target are reduced by 1.
- The target can't gain or use Luck.
- The target has disadvantage on all CHA ability checks.

The brand can only be seen by magical means, such as by *detect magic* or *truesight* spells. A brand lasts until the other creature involved in the *oathbond* spell decides to remove it, ending the effects of the *oathbreaker's curse* spell.

SLEEPING CURSE

8th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Enchantment)

Casting Time: 8 hours

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (fine sand, poppy flower resin, and a sharp needle or spindle point)

Duration: Until dispelled

You force a Humanoid and all Humanoids close to it into a magically induced slumber from which they can't awaken.

Choose a Humanoid creature as the target. You must have met the target at least once to affect it with this spell.

The target must make a CON save. On a failure, the target and every Humanoid of the target's CR or lower within 1 mile descends into a magical slumber. Slumbering creatures are unconscious and unaware

of their surroundings. As long as a creature remains in this state, it is immune to the effects of age and doesn't require food, air, or water to survive. Unless the GM determines otherwise, PCs (who lack a CR) and creatures that can't be put to sleep are immune to the effects of this spell. If a slumbering creature takes damage, it can make a CON save, waking itself on a success.

To end this spell, the original target must be contacted via a *dream* spell and made aware of its current plight. Once aware, it can choose to wake up, ending the spell and waking all other creatures affected by it. No magic short of a *wish* spell can otherwise end this spell.

STILLED SPEECH

4th-Circle Fabled Ritual (Necromancy)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (the tongue of a creature of the same species as the target and a gilded conch shell worth at least 250 gp)

Duration: Until dispelled

You steal a creature's voice, sealing it in a shell.

Choose a creature within range that can speak at least one language. You must have met the target at least once to affect it with this spell.

The target must make a CON save. On a failure, their voice is removed and placed inside the conch shell component. The target can't speak or vocalize in any way, including verbal components required for spellcasting. In addition, the target can't communicate about their condition. For example, the target could write that it is hungry but could not write that it is afflicted by a curse.

Casting the *remove curse* spell on the target suppresses the effect of this spell for 1 hour. Only breaking the shell containing the stolen voice permanently ends this spell.

ADDITIONAL SPELLS & RITUALS

Among the royal courts, stately war rooms, castle grounds, and fields of battle across the realms, magic is developed and utilized to suit the needs of the crown. Or else in opposition to it.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

This section presents descriptions of spells commonly cast in the name of the crown—or against it.

ARCANE PAVIS

1st-Circle Arcane (Abjuration)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create an invisible shield that grants half-cover.

An invisible shield of magical force appears in your space. While the shield is active, you have the benefit of half-cover (+2 bonus to AC and DEX saves).

If you are hit by a melee or ranged attack, the shield deactivates until the start of your next turn.

At Higher Circles. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd circle or higher, you create one additional shield for each spell slot above 1st. If you are hit by a melee or ranged attack, only one shield deactivates. As long as at least one shield remains active, you retain the benefits of half-cover. Regardless of the number of active shields, this spell never grants more than the +2 bonus to AC and DEX saves granted by half-cover.

DECOY

2nd-Circle Arcane (Illusion)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a leather pouch and a faceless puppet worth at least 100 gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You conjure an illusory double to absorb the damage that your target would take.

Choose one Medium or smaller creature within range. If the target is unwilling, it can choose to make a WIS save, ending the spell on a success.

If the spell is successfully cast, you cause an illusory copy of the target to appear in an unoccupied space

within 10 feet of you. Whenever the target creature would take damage, the copy takes the damage instead. The copy can't otherwise be damaged, can't be targeted by attacks or spells, and is immune to all conditions.

When it first appears, the copy has 20 HP. If the copy takes damage that would reduce it below 0 HP or if you lose concentration on the spell, the copy explodes. When it explodes, all creatures within 20 feet of the copy must succeed on a DEX save or take force damage equal to the total amount of damage absorbed by the copy.

While the copy is active, you can use a bonus action each round to move it up to 10 feet. The copy can take no other actions.

At Higher Circles. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd circle or higher, the copy's hit point maximum increases by 5 for each slot above 2nd.

PROTECTIVE TRAP

2nd-Circle Arcane and Divine (Transmutation)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a pinch of jelly or honey)

Duration: 1 minute

You cause the ground beneath an attacker to rise and envelop it.

You touch a willing creature and grant it a defense against an attack.

When the target would be successfully hit by a melee or ranged attack by a creature within 60 feet of it, the attacker must make a DEX save. On a success, the attacker acts normally, and the spell doesn't trigger. On a failure, the attack fails, and the attacker is restrained as the ground envelops the attacker. The spell then ends on the target.

The enveloped creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it, can use its action to attempt to break free, ending the effect on a success. At the end of each turn that it remains enveloped, it must succeed on a STR save or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

SIEGE COMET

6th-Circle Divine and Wyrd (Conjuration)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 150 feet

Components: V, S, M (a piece of meteoric stone)

Duration: Instantaneous

You conjure a glowing meteor that damages terrain, creatures, and objects within the area of impact.

A 5-foot-radius stone appears up to 100 feet above a point you can see within range, and it accelerates as it falls to the ground directly below. All creatures within 30 feet of the point of impact must make a DEX save. On a failure, a creature takes 5d6 fire damage and 5d6 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone. Additionally, the area around the point of impact becomes difficult terrain for 1 minute.

Nonmagical structures also take this damage if they are in the area of impact and collapse if the damage reduces them to 0 HP.

At Higher Circles. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th circle or higher, the impact radius increases by 10 feet for each slot above 6th.

RITUAL DESCRIPTIONS

This section presents descriptions of rituals commonly cast in the name of the crown—or against it.

BLESSED HARVEST

4th-Circle Primordial Ritual (Conjuration)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a jeweled cornucopia sculpture worth at least 500 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: 7 days

You cause an area to sprout an abundance of food each dawn.

Touch a point of soil, earth, or another natural surface capable of sustaining plant life. An area up to 50 feet around that point becomes infused with the power of growth, sprouting into a field of edible crops the dawn after the spell is cast. The field creates 225 pounds of food, enough to sustain up to 75 Humanoids or 25 steeds for 24 hours. Food created by the field is comprised of various edible crops native to the region.

If the field is completely harvested before the next dawn, the field fully regrows—allowing a maximum of seven harvests before the spell ends. The crops in the field take a single creature 8 hours to harvest. Each additional creature helping the effort reduces this time by half.

PRECOGNITIVE WARD

2nd-Circle Arcane and Divine Ritual (Abjuration)

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (two halves of a coin and a silver candle worth at least 5 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: 8 hours

You create a ward to sound an alarm if a creature passes by with harmful intent.

This spell wards a willing creature and creates a mystic connection between the target and a point you can see within range. Until the spell ends, you are alerted via mental alarm if any creatures hostile toward your target pass within 15 feet of that point. Such creatures must also succeed on a WIS save, or you also learn the creature's surface thoughts and intent.

The creature scanned by this spell doesn't know that its mind has been read unless it succeeds the save by 5 or more.

5 RULERS AND KINGDOMS

A defeated human king surrenders to a fairy queen on the field of battle.

The heroes and NPCs are now in hand and ready for action, plus the castles and other setting pieces, and even some magic. The only thing missing are the lands that they can all call home, one or more kingdoms to serve as backdrop for adventure. And this requires details about the region, such as size, geography, climate, and population, but also its peoples and their cultures, their views on religion and magic, and their politics, of course—and those that make the decisions that affect everyone, whether benevolent monarch, tyrannical dictator, or elected representatives. Within this chapter are guidelines, descriptions, and random tables designed to make it easy to build fantasy kingdoms and the powerful personalities who govern them.

Using this Chapter. The first section, **Building a Kingdom**, contains the advice and tables needed to start creating a fantasy kingdom, including determining details like type, size, climate, geography, population, culture, government, religion, and more. Following that is **Designing a Ruler**, which is filled with useful tips and random tables to help determine who leads the kingdom and to further define them with titles, physical characteristics, personalities, and other notable traits.

With the basics in place, **Kingdom Types** then enables any kingdom to be fleshed out with more detail. Included are sections on the impact of its peoples, such as the differences between kingdoms that might be predominantly human, dwarven, elven,

or faerie—even considering nations outside the norm, such as infernal and spacefaring. Each detailed type offers a general overview and guidelines for adventures, plus sample rulers and kingdoms, complete with maps, containing important settlements and adventuring sites, influential factions and NPCs, the monsters that live there, and other notable features, which can all be adapted directly into a campaign's game world or simply used for inspiration.

BUILDING A KINGDOM

Building a kingdom might seem daunting at first, but the suggestions and tables in this section are designed to spark the imagination and make it easy and fun. The random tables might generate some odd results, so feel free to ignore or amend anything that doesn't fit. Sometimes though, a weird combination might lead to the creation of something truly unique for the game.

KINGDOM TYPE

To begin, roll 1d100 and consult the **Kingdom Type** table or choose the type of kingdom to build. Note that a dwarven kingdom, for example, doesn't mean that the entire population is made up of dwarves, but that they are the most numerous of peoples in the kingdom and have the greatest influence on its overall culture.

KINGDOM TYPE

d100	Type
01–25	Human
26–35	Beastkin
36–45	Dwarf
46–50	Elf
51–55	Small Folk (Gnomes and/or Halflings)
56–60	Syderean
61–64	Fey
65–68	Gnoll
69–72	Goblin
73–76	Kobold or Dragonborn
77–80	Orc
81–84	Monstrous
85–88	Underwater
89–92	Underworld
93–96	Space
97–00	Extraplanar

KINGDOM SIZE

d20	Size	Number of Miles Across
1–3	Tiny	Less than 100
4–7	Small	100–200
8–13	Medium	200–500
14–17	Large	500–1,000
18–20	Huge	Over 1,000

KINGDOM SIZE

Next, decide on the size of the kingdom. Is it small, measuring only a hundred miles or so across? Or is it a huge empire, encompassing vast swaths of territory? Roll 1d20 and consult the **Kingdom Size** table or choose something appropriate.

Tiny kingdoms are often individual city states, consisting of a single town or city surrounded by satellite farms and villages. Huge kingdoms are likely to be empires—large groups of states or countries ruled over by a single figure and often built through conquest.

CLIMATE

Determine where in the campaign world the kingdom is situated and what kind of climate it has. Is it located in the frozen north or high in the mountains or buried in the sweltering tropics? Roll 1d20 and consult the **Climate** table or choose something appropriate:

- Cold climate zones endure wintry conditions all year round with average temperatures remaining below 50° F (10° C). Cold areas include both polar regions and high-altitude mountainous regions.
- Temperate areas have both warm and cold seasons. Winters are longer in cool temperate regions with temperatures dropping to below 32° F (0° C) in the coldest months. Warm temperate regions have a subtropical or Mediterranean-like climate and enjoy longer summers.
- Arid climate zones are dry deserts or steppes where what little rainfall they receive swiftly evaporates.
- Tropical climate zones have an average temperature of 64° F (18° C) or higher every month of the year and experience significant rainfall.

CLIMATE

d20	Climate
1–3	Cold (Alpine or Polar)
4–10	Cool Temperate
11–16	Warm Temperate
17–18	Arid
19–20	Tropical

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The next step is to determine a kingdom's major geographical features, starting with the coastlines (if any) and large bodies of water. Roll 1d20 and consult the **Coastlines** table or choose something appropriate.

COASTLINES

d20	Feature
1–2	Archipelago
3–4	Large Island
5–9	Single Coastline
10–14	Multiple Coastlines
15–18	Landlocked (with One or More Large Lakes)
19–20	Landlocked (with No Major Bodies of Water)

Then, determine the predominant terrain types for the kingdom by choosing or rolling 1d3 times on the **Terrain Types** table. One or more types can also be combined, such as forested hills or marshy grassland (moors).

DRAWING A MAP

With the basic geography of the kingdom worked out, it's a good idea to draw a simple map showing its rough shape, including coastlines, lakes and rivers, and any major terrain types. Being a fantastic cartographer is not required, but sketching out what's where will make building the rest of the kingdom much easier. To take things to the next level, online mapmaking tools or books on fantasy cartography can help.

Remember to add a scale and compass rose. Also, drawing the map on graph paper (whether hex or square) will make measuring distances and calculating the area of the kingdom more straightforward.

POPULATION

To work out how many inhabitants the kingdom has, its area in square miles first needs to be calculated. Use the map's scale to measure the distance in miles across the kingdom from north to south and from east to west, and then multiply the two figures to work out the approximate area.

If the kingdom is an irregular shape or spread across a series of islands, measure the whole map, then estimate what percentage of the total is occupied by the kingdom's territory to calculate the area. Alternatively, if drawn on graph paper, work out the area of a single hex or square in square miles and multiply this by the number of hexes or squares that are at least half-filled with the kingdom's territory. Don't worry about being too precise, for a rough estimate will do.

Once the kingdom's area is known, roll 1d10 and consult the **Population** table or choose the population density—and then calculate the kingdom's total population.

For example, the sample island kingdom of the Alchorades covers 357 hexes, each with an area of 21.5 square miles, for a total area of 7,675 square miles. A moderate population density of 75 people per square mile gives a total population for the kingdom of 576,000 (rounded up to the nearest thousand).

TERRAIN TYPES

Cold (d6)	
1–2	Arctic Wastes
3–4	Mountains (Glaciers)
5–6	Tundra
Temperate (d10)	
1	Badlands
2–4	Forest
5–6	Grassland (Plains)
7–8	Hills
9	Marsh/Swamp
10	Mountains

Arid (d6)	
1	Badlands
2–4	Desert
5–6	Grassland (Dry Steppes)
Tropical (d10)	
1–4	Forest (Jungle)
5–6	Grassland (Savannah)
7–8	Hills
9	Marsh/Swamp
10	Mountains (Volcanoes)

POPULATION

d10	Population Density	Population (Persons per Square Mile)
1	Sparse	30
2–3	Light	40
4–6	Moderate	75
7–8	High	100
9–10	Dense	120

DEMOGRAPHICS

The predominant lineages indicated by the kingdom type chosen at the start (human, dwarf, elf, and so on) typically account for 50 percent or more of the total population. In most kingdoms, there are another 1d4 + 1 prominent lineages living there that make up the bulk of the remaining population. Roll 1d100 and consult the **Prominent Lineages** table or choose who these are.

If the same lineage is rolled twice (or the already predominant lineage is rolled), either increase the percentage of the total population attributed to that lineage by 10 percent or decide that the second group belongs to a distinct yet somehow related subgroup.

PROMINENT LINEAGES

d100	Lineage	d100	Lineage
01–05	Alseid*	51–55	Goblin
06–10	Beastkin	56–60	Halfling
11–15	Catfolk*	61–65	Human
16–20	Dragonborn	66–70	Kobold
21–25	Dwarf	71–75	Minotaur*
26–30	Elf	76–80	Orc
31–35	Erina*	81–85	Pixie
36–40	Gearforged	86–90	Satyr
41–45	Gnoll	91–95	Syderean (Celestial)
46–50	Gnome	96–00	Syderean (Fiendish)

(*) see *Tome of Heroes*

Once all the primary lineages in the kingdom are determined, decide what percentage of the population each represents—typically this is between 5 and 20 percent. With this, the total number of inhabitants of each lineage in the total population can be determined. There will often be additional lineages with much smaller populations living in any given kingdom, all of which might account for 5 percent of the overall population.

For example, the island kingdom of the Alchorades has a total population of 576,000. If humans, the predominant lineage, account for 50 percent of this total, this presents a human population of 288,000. Four other prominent lineages—dwarves (20%; 115,200), catfolk (10%; 57,600), minotaurs (8%; 46,000), and alseids (7%; 40,300)—account for a further 45 percent, and the remainder (5%) belongs to other lineages.

Next, decide where all these peoples live. Do they dwell alongside one another in the major settlements, or do they live in separate communities? Are some of the major terrain types in the kingdom especially suited to some? Do they all get along well together, or is there tension or worse between them?

GOVERNMENT

Having determined who lives in the kingdom, the next step is to decide who rules and how they do it. The sample kingdoms in this chapter each have a single ruler, but a kingdom could also be ruled by a triumvirate or a council of elders or some other group.

Roll 1d100 and consult the **Government Types** table or choose the kingdom's system of government. Note that there could be overlap between some of these forms of government—such as the ruling oligarchs might also be nobles or wealthy merchants, or the queen of the realm might be a tyrant who seeks to embezzle as much gold as possible from her downtrodden subjects.

Once the system of government is determined, see also **Designing a Ruler** to create the NPC(s) in charge of the kingdom.

STATE OF THE NATION

With the core facts established for the kingdom, the next thing to decide is the state of the nation. Is the kingdom a peaceful place where inhabitants enjoy a contented, pastoral existence, or is it under threat from invasion by undead legions or at war with its neighbors? Roll 1d20 and consult the **State of the Nation** table or choose something appropriate.

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

What is the kingdom best known for? What is it like to live there? What ideas, attitudes, and customs do the inhabitants share? Answering these questions will help to bring the kingdom to life, turning it into a living, breathing backdrop for adventure and continuing source of inspiration.

(The suggestions in this section are suitable for many different kingdoms, but more specific considerations for dwarf, elf, fey, and other non-human kingdoms are detailed in later sections.)

GOVERNMENT TYPES

d100	Government	Ruled By . . .
01–04	Aristocracy	The nobility.
05–16	Autocracy or Dictatorship	An individual with absolute power.
17–20	Bureaucracy	Officials, each responsible for a different aspect of the kingdom.
21–24	Confederation	An allied league of cities or member states.
25–28	Democracy	The people, or their elected representatives.
29–43	Feudalism	Lords and vassals holding land in exchange for service or labor
44–47	Kleptocracy	Corrupt leaders who steal from their subjects.
48–49	Magocracy	Wizards.
50–52	Matriarchy	The eldest, wisest, or most important women.
53–54	Meritocracy	The brightest and best.
55–57	Monarchy	A king or queen.
58–62	Noocracy	A council of elders.
63–77	Oligarchy	A small group of leaders.
78–82	Patriarchy	The eldest, wisest, or most important men.
83–84	Plutocracy	The wealthy.
85–86	Republic	Elected officials and a core charter.
87–91	Satrapy	Governors, on behalf of a king or emperor.
92–93	Stratocracy	The military.
94–98	Theocracy	The priesthood.
99–00	Triumvirate	A trio of officials.

If coming up with a unique culture from scratch seems daunting, find inspiration in fantasy novels, TV, movies, video games, and other fictional sources. Alternatively, look toward historical cultures from the real world, but take extra care when using this material in games for strangers at conventions or when making it available online or in print to others (see the **Finding Historical Inspiration** sidebar).

To get started, roll 1d20 and consult the **Kingdom Characteristics** table or choose the kingdom's notable characteristics. Make this roll 1d3 times, possibly gaining additional characteristics. In addition, roll once more to establish something the kingdom lacks or is not very good at, something that is a very real sore spot for the kingdom. This can help in evaluating what trade goods or services the kingdom might need to import (or

FINDING HISTORICAL INSPIRATION

Foremost, understand that historical cultures represent real people, and some living today may trace their own heritage to them—this is important, and it means something to someone. So learn what you can. A modicum of research, even reading just a couple of online articles, helps you learn what those people valued and how they lived. This makes your game world livelier and less likely to fall into stereotypes. And speaking of which . . .

Go deeper than stereotypes. Don't stop at your first idea. See what other, better ideas might lie underneath with just a bit of imagination. The stereotype might be what attracts you to a culture, and that's okay, but digging deeper, you'll often find more interesting elements to build on, and that effort is automatically more respectful.

Accept your naivety. Even after your best shot, your creation might still contain something ill-considered—maybe even offensive. Don't stop trying though. Use this opportunity to learn, to admit your ignorance on the topic, and apologize if it's needed—then try again.

STATE OF THE NATION

d20	Situation
1	A comet, eclipse, volcanic eruption, or mystical event portends dark times ahead.
2	A demonic cult has infiltrated the corridors of power, and its sinister influence is spreading.
3	A new technological advance or magical discovery is about to transform the kingdom's way of life forever.
4	A peculiar new law passed by the ruler upsets some or all of the kingdom's inhabitants.
5	A portal has opened to another plane, and strange visitors have started to arrive.
6	A royal engagement is announced, and there is much celebration as the date for the wedding approaches.
7	After decades of bitter civil war, the kingdom seems to be at peace at last.
8	Bring out your dead! A terrible plague is spreading throughout the kingdom.
9	Fearsome monsters are emerging from underground and laying waste to the land.
10	Food supplies are running low due to poor harvests and/or dwindling game.
11	Jealous princes or nobles are plotting to overthrow the ruler.
12	Magical storms are ravaging the kingdom.
13	New trading partners or trade routes are bringing new goods into the kingdom—and business is booming.
14	Nothing much is happening, and the kingdom is stagnating.
15	Pirates, bandits, or warlike humanoids are raiding settlements on the kingdom's borders.
16	Relations with the kingdom's neighbors have deteriorated, leading to tension and occasional skirmishes near the border.
17	The kingdom's ruler is elderly with no clear heir.
18	The old ruler has been overthrown and a newfound optimism is sweeping across the nation.
19	The peasants are revolting!
20	The ruler clamps down hard on a group of the kingdom's inhabitants, either with good reason or no just cause.

steal) from neighbors. Maybe its army is so bad that the kingdom must spend a fortune on foreign mercenaries. Perhaps its cuisine is so reviled that visiting dignitaries always bring their own chef with them.

Next, roll 1d20 and consult the **Customs and Traits** table or choose one or two customs and traits of the kingdom's inhabitants—or make up some. Remember that while many of the kingdom's citizens might demonstrate these traits, there will always be exceptions.

MAJOR SETTLEMENTS

To work out how many cities and towns there are in the kingdom, first calculate its urban population by multiplying the total population determined earlier by between 5 and 20 percent. More cosmopolitan kingdoms with well-established trade and wealthy economies will be at the higher end of this range. If unsure, 10 percent works well as the default.

Next, determine the number and size of cities and towns as follows:

- The kingdom's largest city (usually the capital) has a population equal to 25 percent of the kingdom's urban population.
- The second largest urban settlement has a population equal to 20–80 percent (2d4 × 10%) of the largest.
- The third largest has a population equal to 20–80 percent (2d4 × 10%) of the second largest, and so on. A city can't have a population less than 6,000 though, so if the next city can't reach that threshold, then stop, and all remaining urban population will instead make up towns.
- Determine the remaining urban population: add together all the cities' populations and subtract that from the kingdom's urban population. Now, divide this number by 3,500 (the average population of a town) and round up to determine the number of towns in the kingdom.
- The breakdown of peoples within each city or town can follow the overall breakdown determined earlier under **Demographics**, or it can vary by city.

For example, the island kingdom of the Alchorades has a total population of 576,000, so using the default 10 percent, it has an urban population of 57,600.

- The capital city of Chalandropolis is home to 25 percent of the urban population: 57,600 × 25% = 14,400.

KINGDOM CHARACTERISTICS

d20	The Kingdom . . .
1	Celebrates a different festival every single week.
2	Has a decadent nobility that is oblivious to what's going on outside the capital.
3	Has a dozen intrepid merchant houses who buy and sell goods far and wide.
4	Has a mighty navy that rules the waves.
5	Has a powerful and highly disciplined army.
6	Has influential criminal organizations pulling the strings behind the scenes.
7	Has many ancient dungeons and ruins, a big draw to adventurers.
8	Has no cities and few towns, and the bulk of the population lives in small rural communities.
9	Holds regular gladiatorial contests or circuses to keep the people entertained.
10	Is a center of learning with several excellent universities.
11	Is celebrated for its exquisite cuisine and fine wines.
12	Is famous for its capital's library, which holds the largest collection of tomes and scrolls in the known world.
13	Is governed by an exhaustive but convoluted legal code.
14	Is home to some of the world's most formidable wizards.
15	Is home to the world's most wondrous monument, built by an architectural genius.
16	Is noted for its dedicated artisans and the exceptional crafts they produce.
17	Is renowned for its many ornate temples and cathedrals.
18	Is rich in mineral resources.
19	Produces the finest armor and weapons money can buy.
20	Values beautiful art, music, and poetry above all else.

- Atenisi is the second largest city in the Alchorades and has 70 percent of the population of Chalandropolis: 10,080.
- Megandros is the third largest city in the Alchorades and has 60 percent of the population of Atenisi: 6,050.
- Since this last city population is only just above the 6,000 minimum population for a city, all the other urban settlements in the Alchorades will be towns with a total population between them of 27,070. Dividing this by 3,500 and rounding up gives a total of eight towns in the Alchorades. We decide that Ferripos has a population of 5,500 and Tylinope has a population of 4,800, meaning the remaining 10 towns have an average population of 2,795.

Once the number of cities and towns in the kingdom has been determined, add them to the map. Such population centers are most often located near rivers or on coasts and are surrounded by farmland with likely other natural resources nearby. Cities should typically be at least 50 miles apart while towns are typically at least 25 miles apart. These distances vary considerably based on population density. The remainder of the total population lives in villages or other rural communities.

For lots of useful information and advice to help further detail these settlements, see also *Campaign Builder: Cities & Towns*.

RELIGION

The gods and their priests might or might not be of significance in the kingdom. A typical kingdom will have one patron god and a handful of others with a significant number of worshipers, but the kingdom might instead officially pay homage to just a single god, or it might not be particularly religious at all, having no divine patron.

To help determine which gods are worshiped in the kingdom, roll 1d20 and consult the **Great Gods** table, which features key spheres of divine influence that can be matched up to gods from any pantheon, or choose something appropriate. This is the kingdom's patron, but if multiple gods are worshiped, then make this roll an additional 1d4 times or choose the portfolios of the kingdom's other great gods.

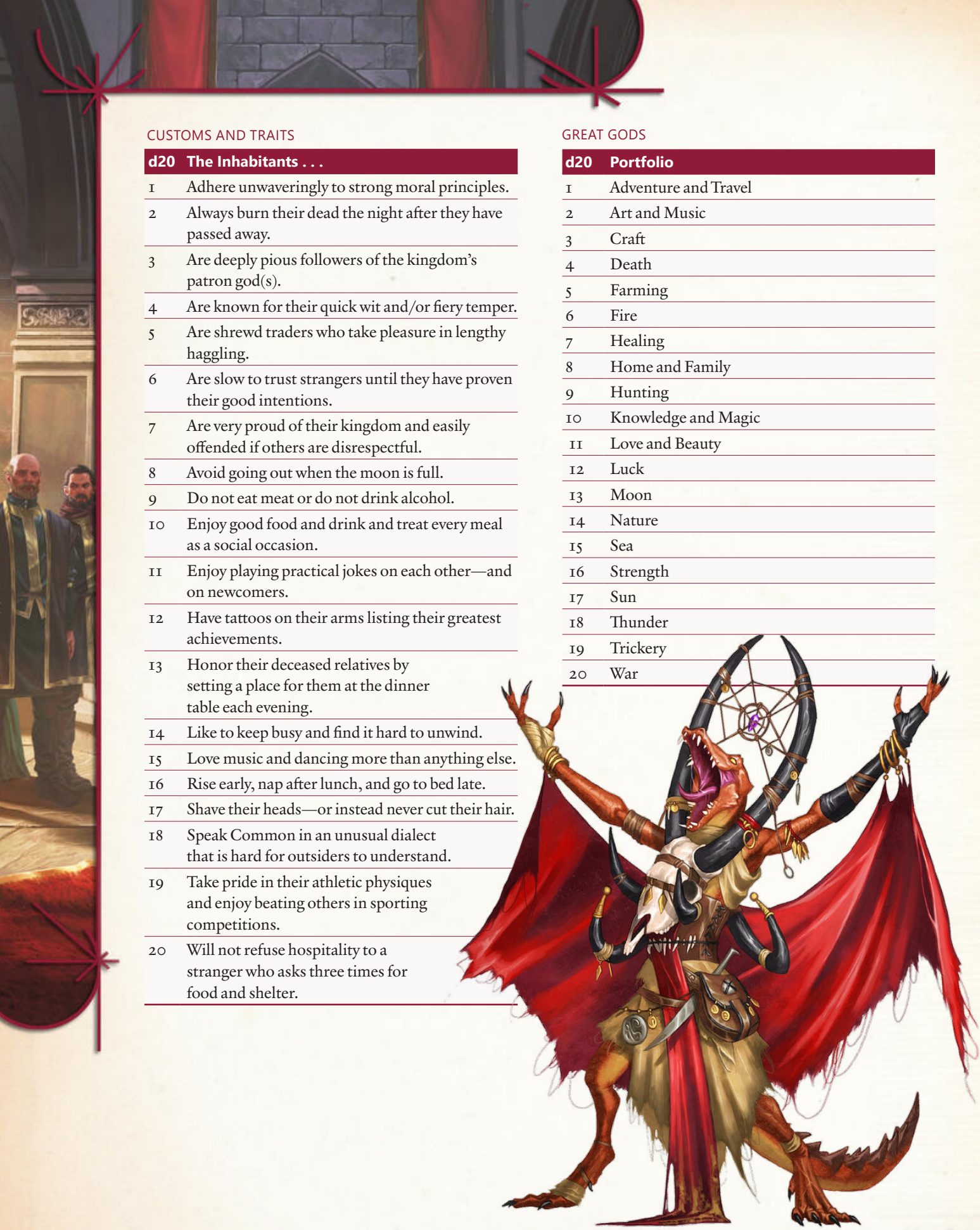
Once the gods have been determined, place the major temples and start to think about their high priests. If religion is going to play an important role in the campaign, add those names to the list of the kingdom's important personages.

CUSTOMS AND TRAITS

d20	The Inhabitants . . .
1	Adhere unwaveringly to strong moral principles.
2	Always burn their dead the night after they have passed away.
3	Are deeply pious followers of the kingdom's patron god(s).
4	Are known for their quick wit and/or fiery temper.
5	Are shrewd traders who take pleasure in lengthy haggling.
6	Are slow to trust strangers until they have proven their good intentions.
7	Are very proud of their kingdom and easily offended if others are disrespectful.
8	Avoid going out when the moon is full.
9	Do not eat meat or do not drink alcohol.
10	Enjoy good food and drink and treat every meal as a social occasion.
11	Enjoy playing practical jokes on each other—and on newcomers.
12	Have tattoos on their arms listing their greatest achievements.
13	Honor their deceased relatives by setting a place for them at the dinner table each evening.
14	Like to keep busy and find it hard to unwind.
15	Love music and dancing more than anything else.
16	Rise early, nap after lunch, and go to bed late.
17	Shave their heads—or instead never cut their hair.
18	Speak Common in an unusual dialect that is hard for outsiders to understand.
19	Take pride in their athletic physiques and enjoy beating others in sporting competitions.
20	Will not refuse hospitality to a stranger who asks three times for food and shelter.

GREAT GODS

d20	Portfolio
1	Adventure and Travel
2	Art and Music
3	Craft
4	Death
5	Farming
6	Fire
7	Healing
8	Home and Family
9	Hunting
10	Knowledge and Magic
11	Love and Beauty
12	Luck
13	Moon
14	Nature
15	Sea
16	Strength
17	Sun
18	Thunder
19	Trickery
20	War



MAGIC

Consider how important a role magic plays in the kingdom. How prevalent is it? Is it treated with awe, suspicion, or a shrug of the shoulders? Of course, if the kingdom is a magocracy, magic is certain to play a major role, at least in the higher echelons of society.

Here are some questions to ask:

- Are spells such as *arcane lock*, *mage hand*, and *mending* in everyday use?
- Can one buy permanent magic items in shops?
- Do temples offer to heal the people or resurrect the dead in exchange for donations?
- How common is teleportation magic? Are there teleportation circles in major cities, or do travelers who want to get somewhere fast need to use more dangerous means to do so, such as Midgard's shadow roads?
- How easy is it for PCs to purchase potions and other consumable items?
- How superstitious are villagers living deep in the countryside? Do they treat fireball-flinging adventurers with mistrust or fear? Do they burn would-be witches at the stake?
- Is magic something known only to the privileged few?
- Is there a wizards' guild or other society of spellcasters? If so, is it a well-known organization or a secret cabal?

TRADE GOODS

The kingdom possesses a number of natural resources, produces finished goods, or provides services of interest to other kingdoms. Roll 1d100 and consult the **Trade Goods** table or choose what the kingdom has available to trade. Make this roll 1d4 + 1 times.

HISTORICAL EVENTS

There is no requirement to spend hours writing a detailed timeline for the kingdom, but it's worth deciding on one or two major historical events that helped to shape what it is today. Whether relatively recent or centuries past, these help to make the kingdom feel more real and to create fun adventure possibilities. Roll 1d12 and consult the **Historical Events** table or choose something appropriate.

NAME AND SYMBOL

Finally, give the kingdom a name if it doesn't already have one (see also **Naming Tables** in the **Appendix**). It might even use a symbol based on its history or significance. For example, the Island Realm of the Alchorades uses a leaping dolphin as its symbol.

With the basics of the kingdom itself now covered, it's time to design the kingdom's ruler.

TRADE GOODS

d100	Goods
01–03	Antiquities and Curios
04–06	Barrels, Wheels, or Wagons
07–10	Beer or Cider
11–13	Books and Scrolls
14–16	Cheese
17–19	Dyes and Inks
20–22	Fruit, Nuts, or Olives
23–25	Furs
26–28	Gems and Jewelry
29–32	Grain: Barley, Oats, Wheat
33–35	Honey or Mead
36–38	Horses and Mules
39–40	Ivory or Pearls
41–44	Leather
45–47	Livestock: Goats, Oxen, Pigs, Sheep
48–50	Meat or Fish
51–52	Mercenaries
53–56	Metals, Common: Copper, Bronze, Iron, Tin
57–59	Metals, Precious: Gold, Platinum, Silver
60	Metals, Rare: Adamantine, Mithral
61–63	Peat
64–65	Perfumes
66–69	Pottery and Glassware
70–72	Rugs and Carpets
73–75	Salt
76–77	Ships
78–80	Spices or Herbs
81–83	Stone
84–88	Textiles: Cotton, Flax, Hemp, Linen, Silk, Wool
89–92	Timber
93–96	Weapons or Armor
97–00	Wine or Brandy

HISTORICAL EVENTS

d12	Event
1	A bloody civil war pitted the noble houses of the kingdom against one another as they lined up beneath the banners of three rival queens.
2	A failed attempt to invade a rival kingdom led to the downfall of an entire dynasty.
3	A terrible famine wiped out a significant portion of the population. Thousands more fled to neighboring lands.
4	An earthquake, flood, or other natural disaster caused the people to lose faith in the gods.
5	Eldritch warfare waged against the mages of a neighboring kingdom turned part of the landscape into a magical wasteland.
6	Ferocious tribes of orcs, goblins, or gnolls invaded the kingdom, sacked several towns, and seized the surrounding territory.
7	The discovery of new lands rich in natural resources led the kingdom to establish a colony overseas.
8	The eruption of a mighty volcano buried the kingdom's former capital under lava and ash.
9	The kingdom's ruler and much of the nobility were overthrown in a violent revolution and put to the sword.
10	The kingdom's tyrannical ruler was assassinated, and a just and noble usurper claimed the throne.
11	The **isonade** (see *Tome of Beasts*) or **tarrasque**, or an **ancient red dragon**, once laid waste to the kingdom.
12	Worship of a previously obscure foreign god became widespread as a new cult gained influence among the great and the good.

DESIGNING A RULER

Unless a kingdom is in a state of anarchy, it will have one or more rulers. These powerful individuals might be wise and kind, impetuous and cruel, or anything in between. The suggestions and tables in this section will help in creating memorable and vital NPCs that players will enjoy interacting with—or will love to hate.

As with the previous kingdom tables, rolling randomly may lead to some odd results, so feel free to disregard or change particular elements when creating a ruler. Alternatively, embrace those apparent contradictions to end up with a fascinating and complex three-dimensional leader.

NAME

First, a ruler needs a good name. If desired, name generators and lists of names can be found online or in other books. These resources are particularly helpful when kingdoms are inspired by historical cultures and can provide authentic-sounding NPC names.

Whatever a ruler's name, it's always a good idea to say it out loud a few times to check that it's not too challenging to pronounce or ridiculous sounding. Players should respect or fear a kingdom's ruler, not descend into fits of giggles whenever their name is mentioned.

TITLE

Next, the ruler needs a title. If building upon the previous **Building a Kingdom** section, then that kingdom's system of government should help inform this choice. Alternatively, roll 1d100 and consult the **Ruler Title** table or choose something appropriate.

Giving a ruler a suitably grandiose style of address and an epithet turns Queen Epiphania into the much more impressive sounding Her Divine Magnificence, Queen Epiphania the Imperturbable. Roll 1d12 three times

STYLES OF ADDRESS

d12	Adjective	Noun	Epithet
1	Blessed	Eminence	Bloody
2	Brilliant	Excellency	Cruel
3	Divine	Grace	Fair
4	Excellent	Highness	Farsighted
5	Faithful	Holiness	Gifted
6	Gracious	Lordship	Indefatigable
7	Honorable	Majesty	Just
8	Illustrious	Potentate	Proud
9	Imperial	Protector	Ruthless
10	Royal	Resplendence	Thoughtful
11	Serene	Sovereign	Unready
12	Venerable	Worship	Wise

on the **Styles of Address** table or choose something appropriate. The first adjective is often preceded by *His*, *Her*, *Their*, and/or *Most*. A given epithet might be well deserved, flattering, or ironic.

BACKSTORY

Think about the ruler's history and what they did before ascending to the throne of the kingdom. Did they live a sheltered life at court or attend every feast, party, and ball they could? Did they lead the kingdom's armies into battle against its enemies, study wizardry at the Five Towers of Thaumaturgy, or train to become a priest at the Golden Temple of Apollo? Perhaps they were an adventurer themselves in the past, a fact that could potentially color their view of the PCs, for good or ill. Maybe they grew up penniless on the streets of Zobeck or another big city, oblivious of their royal parentage.

Next, decide how they became the ruler. Did the previous incumbent step down or die of old age? Was the succession a peaceful affair, or did a bloody feud erupt between several candidates for the throne? Did the ruler liberate the kingdom from the rule of a tyrant, or did they seize the throne in a violent coup against a weak but benevolent king? Were they called back from a carefree life of adventure and exploration to take on the mantle of rulership?

It's not necessary to come up with more than two or three bullet points, but establishing a ruler's backstory at this stage helps to bring them to life.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Next, decide what the ruler looks like. Start with the basics like gender, lineage, and age.

Is the ruler of the kingdom's predominant lineage, or do they have a different ancestry? Choosing a ruler from the same lineage is logical, but a dwarf ruling an elven kingdom raises interesting questions about how this unusual situation came about. Perhaps a dwarven hero rescued the elves from a cruel hobgoblin tyrant and welcomed them into the forested mountains of the hero's kingdom? Now, centuries later, the elves still live in the forests and honor the hero's descendants as their monarch. Or maybe a dragon, a celestial or fiend, or a vampire or lich rules the kingdom. The inhabitants could be aware of their ruler's true nature, treating their monarch with a mixture of respect and fear, or they could be none the wiser.

A ruler's age can influence how they are perceived or treated by both their subjects and their enemies and allies. A child ruler might be king or queen in name only while a regent or advisor makes all the key decisions on how the kingdom is run—and not always with the young monarch's best interests at heart. A young but adult ruler might be seen as naive and easily manipulated by their scheming courtiers while an elderly ruler thought past their prime might find themselves losing influence over their nobles as they instead seek to curry favor with the likely successor.

The **Physical Appearance** and **Clothing & Gear** tables can help flesh out a ruler's physical appearance and any distinctive personal effects.

RULER TITLE

d100	Title
01–03	Archmage/First Wizard
04–06	Basileus
07–09	Bey
10–12	Chieftain
13–15	Czar
16–20	Dictator
21–25	Duke/Duchess
26–28	Elder
29–31	Emir
32–34	Emperor/Empress
35–37	First Citizen/First Speaker
38–40	First Minister
41–44	High Priest
45–47	Khan
48–57	King/Queen
58–60	Matriarch/Patriarch
61–64	Overlord
65–66	Pasha
67–68	Pharaoh
69–74	Prince/Princess
75–77	Rajah
78–80	Regent
81–83	Satrap/Governor
84–86	Sheikh
87–89	Sultan/Sultana
90–92	Tribune
93–96	Tyrant
97–00	Warlord

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

d20	Feature
1	Aquiline Nose
2	Brawny
3	Completely Hairless
4	Disfigured or Ugly
5	Disheveled
6	Distinctive Scar on Face
7	Distinguished
8	Grubby
9	Hirsute
10	Homely or Nondescript
11	Immaculately Groomed
12	Missing an Eye, Ear, or Limb
13	Significantly Over/Underweight
14	Stooped or Bowlegged
15	Strong Jawline
16	Studious
17	Tall and Lithe
18	Tattooed
19	Unusually Shaped Birthmark
20	Very Attractive

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

To ensure a ruler is as well rounded as possible, it's a good idea to assign them personal characteristics similar to PCs. Suggestions for personality traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws or secrets can be found in the tables in this section. If the ruler has an epithet, that might provide a clue to one or more of their personality traits. Ideals are often linked to alignment, so if this hasn't been decided yet for the ruler, now is a good time to do so. Alternatively, roll 1d12 and consult the **Ideals** table, allowing the result to inform their alignment, or choose something appropriate.

CLOTHING & GEAR

d20	Item
1	Adamantine breastplate engraved with a dragon in flight.
2	Bronze helmet with 2-foot-long, curling bull's horns.
3	Chain shirt of gleaming mithral.
4	Collar of semi-precious stones in the shape of an eagle.
5	Copper breastplate emblazoned with a grinning demon's face.
6	Crown made of flowers and leaves.
7	Dark-blue turban or patterned headpiece.
8	Golden crown with long points representing the rays of the sun.
9	Golden, serpent-shaped armband with emeralds for eyes.
10	Green silk robes embroidered with golden lotus flowers.
11	Headdress of freshly picked flowers.
12	Heavy royal-blue robes trimmed with ermine.
13	Iron scepter topped with a skull.
14	Lionskin cloak.
15	Long necklaces of white, black, and pink pearls.
16	Ornate, diamond-studded crown with a purple-velvet bonnet.
17	Plain white cotton robes and leather sandals.
18	Purple toga.
19	Silver coronet studded with sapphires.
20	White ash staff topped with a glowing green crystal.

FINAL DETAILS

Once the basics have been established, add a few more final details to bring the ruler to life. Are there any catchphrases they like to use? Do they have any mannerisms, such as impatiently drumming their fingers on the side of their throne when faced with time-wasting PCs? Perhaps they are prone to daydreaming, and it's hard to keep their full attention? What are their passions and interests? Maybe the king loves hunting and fishing, or maybe the governor enjoys painting portraits of her dogs in her spare time? More suggestions for fleshing out rulers can be found in the **Kingdom Types** section.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

d20	Trait
1	Being ruler means I get to line my pockets with the hard-earned coins of my gullible subjects.
2	Crushing my enemies on the battlefield and hearing the lamentations of their loved ones brings me great joy.
3	Everything I touch turns to ash.
4	I act like a petulant child when I'm not the center of attention.
5	I have an insatiable curiosity and love new things.
6	I have grown tired of late, and the crown sits heavily on my head.
7	I have no time for people who beat around the bush.
8	I have yet to meet anyone who is my equal, let alone someone of superior intellect.
9	I like to consider things carefully from every angle before making my move.
10	I never fail to speak my mind and am not afraid to cause offense.
11	I prefer my own company (and my dog's) to that of my court.
12	I put the well-being of my subjects first and foremost.
13	If I really set my mind on it, nothing can stop me.
14	It's hard to keep track of everything that's going on in the kingdom. Thank the gods I have people for that.
15	My attention often wanders when I should be concentrating.
16	My elegant coiffure, beautifully tailored clothes, and glittering jewels ensure I am the best dressed in any room.
17	My enemies are everywhere, and I no longer know whom I can trust.
18	Now that I've achieved all I set out to do, it's time to enjoy the rest of my reign in peace.
19	The glass is half empty at best, and those who think otherwise are naive fools.
20	There is always time for music and merriment.

A suitable NPC stat block for the ruler can be found in the **Appendix** or from *Tome of Beasts*, *Creature Codex*, or *Tome of Beasts 3*.

IMPORTANT PERSONAGES

Once the finishing touches have been added to the ruler, the next step is to draw up a list of other important NPCs in the kingdom. These could be members of the ruler's family, including their spouse, parents, siblings, and children, or other potential claimants to the throne. Ideas for these NPCs might come out of the ruler's backstory, their bond, or other personal characteristics, or they might come from the kingdom's recent history and its enemies and allies.

Think also about other members of the ruler's court, including officials such as viziers and ministers, powerful nobles and wealthy merchants, generals and other military commanders, priests of the major gods and so on (see also **Factions in Adventures** in **Chapter 2**). Make a note of the names of these NPCs—their roles and basic information such as alignment, gender, and lineage—under "Important Personages" in the growing kingdom's notes.

KINGDOM TYPES

This section details different types of kingdoms based on their peoples—human, dwarven, elven, and fey—and it also explores some less common possibilities, infernal and spacefaring kingdoms. Each includes useful advice and tables, sample rulers, and adventure ideas to add more color to a kingdom and its leader. There are also detailed examples of the various kingdoms and their rulers, ready to be added to a game or used for inspiration.

HUMAN KINGDOMS

Humans are an incredibly adaptable race, capable of thriving almost anywhere. Their realms can be found in nearly all climates and biomes, even underground or underwater, though these latter are rare. Human kingdoms come in all shapes and sizes and have a wide variety of cultures and customs.

In many ways, human kingdoms can be regarded as the baseline for what's been described earlier in this chapter. The tables and suggestions in the preceding sections work well for most human kingdoms and are

IDEALS

d12	Ideal
1	**Altruism.** Everyone in my kingdom will have a roof over their head and bread on their table if it's the last thing I do. (Good)
2	**Aspiration.** One day, my kingdom's borders will stretch from sea to shining sea. (Any)
3	**Community.** Together we have the strength to hold back the darkness. (Lawful)
4	**Fairness.** Our laws must be followed by all—and not just when it's convenient to do so. (Lawful)
5	**Freedom.** Our people must have a greater say in their government. (Chaotic)
6	**Hedonism.** This calls for a celebration! Huzzah! (Chaotic)
7	**Knowledge.** Books are steppingstones to greatness. (Neutral)
8	**Live and Let Live.** While I rule, we will never meddle in the affairs of our neighbors. (Neutral)
9	**Might.** All who stand in my way must bend their knee or die on the spears of my legions. (Evil)
10	**Peace.** I am determined no one in my kingdom will die during my lifetime in a needless war. (Good)
11	**Redemption.** I must make amends for the sins of the past. (Any)
12	**Retribution.** I will inflict swift and terrible vengeance on everyone who has wronged me in the past. (Evil)

BONDS

d10	Bond
1	Everything I have accomplished has been to honor my father's name.
2	I am determined to recover the lost halls of our people and restore them to their former glory.
3	I am so proud of my three daughters and would do anything to see them achieve greatness.
4	I have sworn an oath to preserve the sanctity of the Holy Mountain and the Sepulcher of Saint Rahael the Twice-Blessed.
5	I will not rest until the Iron Lord has been defeated and his heads adorn the spikes above the castle gates.
6	My allies can always rely on me to stand shoulder to shoulder with them.
7	My hall of hunting trophies is my pride and joy.
8	One day I will feel ready to marry again.
9	The beauty of the wilderness must be preserved.
10	Vimryrth the Thunderer, my loyal companion and mighty steed, is my one true friend.

FLAWS AND SECRETS

d12	Flaw or Secret
1	Creatures from the Void have stalked me in my dreams since I read that accursed tome.
2	I find it almost impossible to make decisions.
3	I find respite from the pressures of the throne in the bottom of my tankard.
4	I lash out angrily at those who irk me.
5	I made an ill-advised pact with an arch-devil, and my son and heir's soul is forfeit.
6	I'm an impostor who imprisoned the real ruler and took their place.
7	I'm being blackmailed by a foreign power and am secretly acting in their best interests.
8	I'm having an illicit affair with someone close to me.
9	I'm very susceptible to flattery.
10	My brother's death wasn't really a hunting accident.
11	My father died on the battlefield because of my cowardice.
12	The kingdom faces bankruptcy because I've gambled away almost the entire contents of the royal treasury.

less likely to create anomalies than they might for other kingdom types. This section will help round out any human kingdom.

Enemies and Allies. Who are the kingdom's enemies and allies? Think about how its citizens and its ruler view their neighbors. And consider how those neighbors feel in return. Roll 1d100 and consult the **Kingdom Type** table or choose what sort of realms border the kingdom.

Use the details determined earlier for the kingdom's ruler, government, state of the nation, and culture to inform how the kingdom gets on with its neighbors—and which might be allies and which enemies. Human kingdoms are often more likely to be on friendly or neutral terms with other human kingdoms, and also with dwarf, elf, gnome, and halfling realms, than they are with goblins, orcs, fey, or monstrous kingdoms, but this is not always the case. Wars and disputes between humans are common, and the orcish khanate, for instance, might well be the kingdom's staunchest ally against the pesky halflings of Greenburrow.

If the kingdom is ruled by a tyrannical warlord or is renowned for its military, decide if it has any designs on its neighbors or if it is keen to preserve the status quo. Are the army and navy poised to invade their enemies at a word from their commander-in-chief, or do they stand firm, ready to defend their borders against mercenaries led by the ruler's exiled brother? A peaceful kingdom might be under threat of invasion from hordes of rapacious goblins, or they might skirmish frequently with its warlike dragonkin neighbors—or perhaps there are hobgoblin pirates marauding on the high seas who are attacking the kingdom's merchant vessels.

A kingdom that is a major commercial hub, trading with nations from all points of the compass, is likely to have one or more bitter rivals. Maybe one of the neighboring kingdoms offers financial incentives to lure merchants to its markets instead of to the kingdom's capital? Consider also what trade routes exist between the kingdom and its neighbors. Is there a treacherous, narrow mule trail that leads to the dwarven realm high in the mountains? Does sailing to the minotaur capital mean passing through the notorious Wandering Rocks? Perhaps lucrative trade flows to and from the nearby vampire-ruled principality, a situation that many would find distasteful.

Don't forget that there may be enemies hiding within the kingdom too, plotting against the ruler and their government. Maybe the gnomes living in the Bloodthorn Forest, who once swore fealty to the king, are now fomenting rebellion. Or have the merchant princes fallen under the baleful influence of the Cult of Mammon?

All these relationships and conflicts can bring the kingdom to life and provide fertile ground for adventure.

HUMAN LANDMARKS

Every city or important town in the kingdom needs one or two interesting landmarks to make it memorable. Roll 1d12 and consult the **Human Landmarks** table or choose some special buildings and monuments.

HUMAN LANDMARKS

d12	Landmark
1	***Ancient Lighthouse.*** Stands 300 feet tall, illuminated by a bound fire elemental.
2	***Beautiful Park.*** Contains a tranquil lake surrounded by elegantly manicured lawns and topiary in the shape of fantastic beasts.
3	***Bronze Statue.*** Depicts the kingdom's most renowned past monarch, standing atop a granite obelisk carved with eldritch symbols.
4	***Golden-Domed Basilica.*** Dedicated to the kingdom's patron god(s), interior adorned with wondrous mosaics.
5	***Grand Arsenal.*** A fortified complex of shipyards and armories.
6	***Large Central Plaza.*** Holds weekly public executions in front of huge crowds.
7	***Ominous Castle.*** Ironclad, studded with rusty blades and spikes, looming over the city from the top of a steep hill.
8	***Ostentatious Mausoleum.*** White marble and dedicated to the kingdom's ruling dynasty, built by the ruler for their recently deceased spouse.
9	***Signal Tower.*** Tall and round, topped with a giant gong that is sounded by a copper construct six times a day.
10	***Sprawling Bazaar.*** Busy stalls and narrow walkways, stretching from one city gate to another.
11	***Walled Necropolis.*** Broken monuments and crumbling mausoleums.
12	***World-Renowned Library.*** Contains an infamous archive of forbidden tomes.

HUMAN RULERS

The suggestions and tables for titles, backstory, physical description, and personal characteristics presented earlier in the **Designing a Ruler** section all work well for human rulers. In addition, roll 1d20 and consult the **Human Ruler Quirks** table or choose an appropriate quirk.

HUMAN RULER QUIRKS

d20	The Ruler . . .
1	Bites their nails.
2	Breaks wind loudly.
3	Can speak with animals.
4	Can tell when someone is lying.
5	Collects butterflies.
6	Cooks delicious meals.
7	Falls asleep during long ceremonies.
8	Flirts constantly.
9	Goes out among the common folk in disguise.
10	Has a perfect memory.
11	Has a pet parrot that perches on their shoulder.
12	Is the finest dancer in the kingdom.
13	Lisps.
14	Loves a parade.
15	Only wears their favorite color.
16	Paints self-portraits.
17	Shouts instead of talking normally.
18	Smokes a pipe.
19	Tells inappropriate jokes.
20	Whistles tunelessly.

Here are sample human rulers, ready to be slotted into a campaign (see also **Sample Human Kingdom** for the Queen of the Islands).

BASILEUS OF THE ENDLESS STEPPES

Basileus Edzel Bekzhan, the Great Conqueror, rules the Endless Steppes, vast grasslands that stretch for more than 2,000 miles from east to west. The basileus is the supreme leader of several dozen clans of antelope-riding human nomads who roam the steppes, searching for fresh pasture and hunting grounds and raiding surrounding towns and cities on the fringes of the grasslands.

Ten years ago, Edzel united the squabbling clans under his banner after defeating three of the most powerful leaders in single combat. He showed mercy to the two who yielded but beheaded Marat the Bloody for refusing to accept his preeminence and for spitting in his face. Marat's sons swore allegiance to the new basileus immediately after their father's death and have so far remained loyal, but Yeldos, the hot-headed youngest son, is furious at his father's fate and plots a terrible revenge.

A cunning general, Edzel loves war but demonstrates clemency to those willing to bow before him and pay tribute. Tired of being raided, many towns on the edge of the steppes now open their gates willingly when he arrives, and they bring him sacks of gold while he waits. Those proud cities that dare put up a fight instead are brutally sacked and burned to the ground.

Edzel is a short and stocky man with a long face, a flat nose, brown eyes, and a sallow complexion. He wears his dark hair short and braids his long beard—both flecked with gray. He wears lamellar armor and a golden spiked helm studded with jade and topped with a red plume. He fights with a longsword and lance in close combat and is a superb mounted archer, shooting unerringly from atop Thunderbolt, his trusty antelope steed, as she hurtles toward the enemy.

Personality Trait. "If I really set my mind on it, nothing can stop me."

Ideal. "All who stand in my way must bend the knee or fall to the arrows and lances of my warriors."

Bond. "I have loved my wife Aisara since childhood. She is the light of my life."

Flaw/Secret. "My brother's death wasn't really a hunting accident."

KING OF THE SNOWPEAK MOUNTAINS

High in the Snowpeak Mountains lies the mighty castle of His Brilliant Excellency, King Khando Skytouched. This remote mountain kingdom of tall peaks, icy glaciers, and densely forested valleys sees cold, wintry weather for much of the year and is home to white dragons, remorhazes, and frost and stone giants. There wouldn't be a kingdom here at all if it wasn't for the fact that the mountains are rich in iron ore and that gold and silver have also been found by intrepid miners. Because of its rich mineral resources, the kingdom has had to defend itself numerous times against jealous neighbors.

King Khando has ruled the mountain kingdom for the past three years. Still a young man, he took the throne after his father Namdol was slain by frostjacks (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) sent by the Holly King (see also **Sample Faerie Kingdom**) to punish him when the kingdom's blacksmiths began making cold-wrought iron blades. Upon ascending to the throne, King Khando immediately suspended production of the offending weaponry and made peace with the fey lord, lest he suffer a similar fate. Not long afterward, he ordered the smiths to secretly start manufacturing the blades again.

Bold and resolute, King Khando is determined to keep his kingdom safe from its many enemies. He believes being visible to his people is vital, so he pays frequent visits to the lofty settlements of his realm, on his giant eagle mount, to the consternation of Sangyal, his chamberlain.

King Khando is a handsome man in his early twenties. Tall and muscular, he wears ornate splint armor decorated with golden eagle emblems on each pauldron, a thick cloak of winter wolf fur, and a bronze helmet with a pair of golden wings. Khando is very observant and can always tell when he is being lied to.

Personality Trait. "I put the well-being of my subjects first and foremost."

Ideal. "Together, we have the strength to stand firm against our many enemies."

Bond. "Everything I have accomplished has been to honor my father's name."

Flaw/Secret. "Taking unnecessary risks makes me feel more alive."

MARSH QUEEN OF THE PATHLESS BAYOUS

Most Venerable Protector, Appoline Veco the Wise is the Marsh Queen of the Pathless Bayous, a small coastal kingdom of wetlands made up of miles of labyrinthine waterways, stagnant bogs, and towering cypress trees that drip with moss. The kingdom is sparsely populated, with the inhabitants mostly living in small villages of wooden cabins dotted throughout the swamp. Humans make up more than 70 percent of the population, and the rest are riverfolk halflings and shoal gnomes (see *Tome of Heroes* for both), who live in the same villages, plus good-natured bog goblins and unfriendly lizardfolk.

Now an elderly woman, the Marsh Queen has ruled the Pathless Bayous for nearly 40 years from her longhouse in Spoonbill Roost, the kingdom's largest settlement—a ramshackle town of wooden boardwalks and cabins, named after the pink-feathered birds that nest on every reed-covered rooftop. Her beloved husband passed away a decade ago, and she grows weary of the throne but worries that her son Thibault is too indecisive to be king. She is considering abdicating in favor of her granddaughter Reine, a warm-hearted and shrewd woman, and a druid like herself. Reine wanders the bayous with her alligator companion Snapjaw and has a true affinity for the swamp and its peoples.

Meanwhile, a dark threat rises. Bazramith, a culicoid demon (see *Tome of Beasts 2*), has traveled to the Pathless Bayous from the Abyss and has established a stronghold deep in its swamps where it is surrounding itself with swarms of insects hungry for blood.

Appoline is a stooped, dark-skinned old woman with lots of wrinkles and tufty white hair. She wears a wooden crown decorated with swamp flowers, a necklace of gator teeth, and long green robes that are usually spattered with mud. She sometimes breaks wind loudly while holding audience with her advisers.

Personality Trait. "I have grown tired of late, and the crown sits heavily upon my head."

Ideal. "All life is worth protecting."

Bond. "The beauty of the bayous must be preserved."

Flaw/Secret. "I find it impossible to let go."

ADVENTURES IN HUMAN KINGDOMS

With the kingdom and its ruler now detailed, there is a believable backdrop ready for PCs to run around in, causing all manner of mayhem. Ideas for adventures may already abound, but here are some suggestions for potential adventures set in human kingdoms.

ADVENTURE PLOTS

However well-organized a kingdom's government and armed forces are, rulers and their deputies often need to hire adventurers to handle the problems no one else can (or wants to) deal with. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Human Kingdom Adventure Plots** table for possibilities (see also the kingdom's **State of the Nation** for more plot ideas) or choose something appropriate.

HUMAN KINGDOM ADVENTURE PLOTS

d8	Plot
1	Deal with the ogres and trolls that attack farming villages on the kingdom's frontiers.
2	Escort emergency food supplies through a countryside infested with giant insects to outlying villages affected by recent famine.
3	Identify the unnatural source of the terrible plague that sweeps the kingdom—and put a stop to it.
4	Investigate reports of demons emerging from a cursed megalith deep in the forest.
5	Retrieve a rare magical fungus from an underworld cavern in the hopes that it will cure the unknown ailment bedeviling the ruler.
6	Sneak into the neighboring kingdom, spy on their army, and uncover their invasion plans without being caught.
7	Solve the mystery of the untimely death of the ruler's brother.
8	Track down infamous bandits or pirates and bring them in dead or alive for a sizeable bounty.

ADVENTURE SITES

As well as cities and towns, the kingdom needs a few deadly dungeons and mysterious ruins. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Human Kingdom Adventure Sites** table for some suggested locales to add to the kingdom map or choose something appropriate to use as inspiration.

VILLAINOUS NPCS AND FACTIONS

Treacherous nobles, evil cults, vile necromancers, cruel bandit leaders, and belligerent humanoid tribes can all serve as excellent villains for adventures set in the human kingdom. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Human Kingdom Villainous NPCs** table (see also the kingdom's **Enemies and Allies** for more plot ideas) or choose some appropriate villains.

SAMPLE HUMAN KINGDOM: ISLAND REALM OF THE ALCHORADES

Scattered across an archipelago of over 50 islands, the Island Realm of the Alchorades is a small, matriarchal kingdom in the often-tempestuous Winedark Sea. Although its borders stretch 250 miles from east to west and nearly 200 miles from north to south, empty seas make up most of its territory. The islands themselves have a total land mass of less than 8,000 square miles.

Maritime trade is the lifeblood of the realm, and its well-traveled merchants sail regularly between the islands, bringing their wares to its towns and villages. The traders also do significant business with distant markets, but this is not without its perils. The seas around the Alchorades can be stormy, and bloodthirsty hobgoblin pirates and fearsome sea monsters are a constant threat.

HUMAN KINGDOM ADVENTURE SITES

d8	Site
1	***Ancient Aqueduct of Caromago.*** Haunted by the terrifying Weeping Widows.
2	***Catacombs of the Blasphemous Idol.*** A vast network of tunnels beneath the kingdom's capital city, where sinister cults gather.
3	***Fellchasm.*** A rift in the earth, several miles deep. Strange creatures are drawn to the area by its necrotic energies.
4	***Glass Dragon.*** An enormous draconic statue of unbreakable crystal and unknown origin, said to mark the location of a cache of legendary dragon magic.
5	***Impossible Tower.*** Home of Velthas the Frenetic, Master of Chaos.
6	***Redstone Abbey.*** Cursed ruins of a fallen temple to the Blood Goddess.
7	***Ruined Grimmtor Keep.*** Burned to the ground by the kingdom's ruler for its lord's treachery. Now home to a vicious tribe of gnolls.
8	***Shipwreck Hoard.*** Site of the treasure galleon, the *Bearded Unicorn*, sunk by demon-worshipping sea dwellers.

HUMAN KINGDOM VILLAINOUS NPCS

d8	Villain
1	***Cult of Chittr'k'k.*** Followers of the Demon Lord of Rats that spread quickly and quietly throughout the kingdom.
2	***Fellowship of the Burning Spear.*** A ruthless order of knights that revel in slaughter.
3	***General Nellix Rageblade.*** Will stop at nothing to trick the ruler into declaring war on a neighboring kingdom.
4	***House Magnis.*** The devious lord plots to usurp the throne once he has married the ruler's eldest daughter.
5	***Mazoga Ribsnapper.*** Overlord of the Highland Hordes with two dozen orc tribes ready to pour out of the mountains and lay waste to the kingdom.
6	***Ruler's Spouse.*** Has been seduced by the whispers of a silver-tongued devil into betraying the kingdom.
7	***Scorchwind.*** An ancient dragon who seeks revenge on the ruler for stealing her eggs.
8	***Withered Lord.*** Decrepit head of a once-mighty noble house, who has preserved his own life through blasphemous rituals and blood magic.

Until just over 200 years ago, the Alchorades were part of the Empire of the Brazen Horns, a vast, unstoppable power ruled by minotaur warlords that controlled the known seas. The Alchorades had been conquered and absorbed into the empire a century earlier, but its citizens longed to regain their freedom.

Eventually, the islanders rebelled in an uprising led by the priestesses of the Earth Serpent, who conjured a tremendous earthquake centered on the minotaur governor's palace on the island of Theraxis. The quake reduced the Palace of Marmaros to ruins, burying its infamous labyrinth beneath the rubble. When the minotaurs' imperial navy sailed toward Chalandropolis to destroy the rebels, a huge tidal wave rose up out of the sea in the form of the Earth Serpent and reduced the fleet to driftwood. The priestesses claimed that the goddess herself had manifested to free her people from tyranny.

After the minotaurs had been overthrown and the

ISLAND REALM OF THE ALCHORADES

Symbol: Leaping dolphin

Ruler: Her Divine Magnificence Queen Epiphania the Imperturbable (NG human, see **Ruler: Queen of the Islands**)

Important Personages: Admiral Vigilantia Saltbeard (LG spindrift dwarf **field commander**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Appa Nicetas, satrap of Methexis (NG human **noble**); Captain Maurus Ghostwind (NE hobgoblin **bandit lord**, see *Tome of Beasts*); Consolantia Palamas, satrap of Psekonisi (N human **mage**); Imilce the Dutiful, satrap of Sekousa (LN minotaur **merchant captain**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Didyma Opilio, satrap of Zegora (N human **noble**); High Priestess Syagria of the Twisted Coil (NG human **first servant** of the Earth Serpent, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Oracle of the Earth Serpent (NG **guardian naga**)

Population: 576,000 (288,000 humans, 115,200 spindrift dwarves, 57,600 catfolk, 46,000 minotaurs, 40,300 alseids, 28,900 others)

Capital: Chalandropolis, population 14,400 (10,800 humans, 1,500 spindrift dwarves, 1,000 catfolk, 600 minotaurs, 500 others)

Cities: Atenisi (10,080), Megandros (6,050)

Towns: Ferripos (5,500), Tylinope (4,800)

Great Gods: Earth Serpent (patron), Artemis, Hermes, Poseidon, Torrik

Trade Goods: Wine, olives, cheese, honey, oranges and lemons, nuts, pottery, marble (in order of importance)

islands regained their independence, the priestesses chose one of their number to rule over the Alchorades as its queen. Today, the realm remains a matriarchy, and Queen Epiphania rules over it, her priestess sisters governing each of the major islands as her satraps. All important roles in her government, such as admiral of the royal navy, are traditionally held by women.

Although the Empire of the Brazen Horns no longer controls the Alchorades, minotaurs make up a significant portion of its populace. Most live on the island of Sekousa, governed by the minotaur satrap Imilce the Dutiful. As her name suggests, she remains loyal to the queen while championing the rights of her people and facilitating trade with the remnants of the minotaur empire. All is not well elsewhere, however, for Didyma Opilio, the satrap of Zegora, has designs on the throne and seeks to destabilize Queen Epiphania. She conspires with the hobgoblin pirate leader Maurus Ghostwind. Meanwhile, on Methexis, a groundswell of support for independence from the rest of the Alchorades is gaining momentum.

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

Those familiar with the Alchorades know the following:

- The queen, satraps, and other important officials are typically women chosen from the realm's noble families. Rarely, the Oracle of the Earth Serpent will issue a pronouncement that leads the priestesses to select someone from outside this group.
- When the queen dies, the priestesses of the Earth Serpent gather at the Seat of the Oracle, a small island south of Theraxis, to obtain guidance on her successor. Once chosen, the newly anointed queen-in-waiting must travel to the Cavern of the Earth Serpent in the mountains of Theraxis and receive the goddess's blessing from her avatar before she can ascend the Dolphin Throne. This blessing is usually given but not always—a handful of queens-in-waiting have been deemed unworthy and were instead swallowed whole by the avatar, never to be seen again.
- Alchoradeans grow grapes, olives, citrus fruits, and nuts on terraces, and graze goats on the hillsides. They catch fish, crustaceans, octopus, and squid in the waters around their islands and keep bees to make honey.
- Many islanders are superstitious and will consult the oracle at their local temple before starting a new enterprise or embarking on a voyage. If the omens are not in their favor, they will change their plans.
- Alchoradean merchants love to haggle and will happily spend hours negotiating a deal if the wine keeps flowing and all parties are kept well fed.
- Fearsome monsters and capricious fey haunt the mountains, remote hillsides, and forests of the Alchorades. The fey have even been known to tear innocent wanderers to pieces when their drunken revels have gotten out of hand.

SETTLEMENTS AND SITES

Blessed with a warm temperate climate, the 50 or so islands of the Alchorades vary greatly in size and are mostly mountainous or hilly. Many are forested with pines and firs, and olive trees grow nearly everywhere. The largest island, Theraxis, measures 63 miles from end to end while the smallest uninhabited island is less than a mile across.

The kingdom's population is concentrated on the larger islands of Theraxis, Methexis, Psekonisi, Sekousa, and Zegora. Many of the smaller islands are home to a handful of fishing villages or a dozen or so families of goat herders. Some have wild beasts or dangerous monsters as their only inhabitants.

Atenisi. The second largest city in the Alchorades, Atenisi is the seat of the satrap of Methexis. It has a large malkin catfolk population (see *Tome of Heroes*), and these folk are at the vanguard of the campaign to declare Methexis's secession from the realm. In recent weeks, large gatherings have been held in the agora to hear from pro-independence advocates. So far, these rallies have been mostly peaceful, but tensions are rising with scuffles breaking out between the campaigners and the city guard. Comedies staged at the Sunset Amphitheater at a recent drama festival have satirized both the protestors and the government.

Cavern of the Earth Serpent. A well-worn, steep path leads to a yawning cave mouth high in the mountains of Theraxis. Inside, a long tunnel heads deep into the earth, and the spiral symbol of the Earth Serpent is carved into the walls at regular intervals along the route. A mile underground, the passage opens into a large cavern filled with stalagmites and stalactites, its walls studded with glittering gemstones. Coiled around a huge rock column in the center of the chamber is a gargantuan snake with a rocky hide and eyes like glowing emeralds. This is the avatar of the Earth Serpent, who lies here sleeping until it is time to bless (or reject) a new Queen of the Islands—or until she is awakened by the presence of intruders. The avatar has the statistics of a **purple worm** but is an Elemental with the following additional traits:

- **Damage Resistances:** fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
- **Damage Immunities:** acid, poison
- **Condition Immunities:** exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

If the avatar is slain, a replacement spawns from the rock in 1d3 days. Meanwhile, the Earth Serpent afflicts the avatar's killers with a dire curse that cannot be removed until they atone for their blasphemy.

Chalandropolis. Located on the southern coast of Theraxis, Chalandropolis is the capital city of the Alchorades and the seat of Her Divine Magnificence, Queen Epiphania the Imperturbable. A small city that became the capital after the islands broke free from minotaur rule, Chalandropolis is a welcoming and cosmopolitan place of columned temples, domed houses, and narrow streets that wind their way up the sides of the hill to the queen's white-marble palace, overlooking Great Harbor.

The first thing ships see when approaching the city is the Lighthouse of Eternal Flame, a 300-foot-tall structure built on a small island and connected to the mainland by a 1,000-foot-long causeway. At the top of the tower, a bound **fire elemental** provides a constant source of bright orange light that keeps vessels from crashing into half-submerged rocks as they sail into port. The elemental rages against its imprisonment and has nearly escaped on two recent occasions.

On arrival, merchants unload their goods before transporting them to the bustling agora, a large, open marketplace packed with boisterous traders, wheeling and dealing and eating and drinking from midday until long into the night.

Fort Syrenus. Built by the minotaur empire at the top of the small, hilly island of Syrenus to guard the northeastern approach to the Alchorades, this ruined castle now serves as the secret stronghold of Captain Maurus Ghostwind, leader of the hobgoblin pirates. The fort bristles with siege weaponry, and Ghostwind's fleet is stationed in hidden coves on the neighboring islands, ready to strike.

Isle of the Sirens. Ruled by Athanasia, the self-styled Queen of the Harpies (**owl harpy**, see *Tome of Beasts*), this island is surrounded by rocky shoals and subject to strong tides. Ships give the island a wide berth as a magical bowl inside the harpy roost amplifies their songs, so they can be heard from over a mile away.

Jaws of the Underworld. Only the foolhardy and the desperate are willing to wade through the foul waters of the Mire of Lost Souls and enter this ominous cavern, said to lead to the Realm of the Dead. Redolent of brimstone and resembling the toothy maw of a vile demon, the yawning entrance leads to a frigid tunnel that heads steeply down into the bowels of the earth. Those that tread the ice-cold passage encounter **walled horrors** (see *Tome of Beasts* 2), **shadows**, **wraiths**, and other types of restless dead before coming at last to the banks of a black river. Here, a hooded, skeletal boatman awaits to ferry the souls of the deceased to their eternal resting place. Living adventurers may be able strike

a bargain with the ferryman to gain passage across the river, but such deals usually involve surrendering something of great personal value.

Marmaros. Destroyed by a mighty earthquake 200 years ago, little remains of the former minotaur capital on the northern coast of Theraxis. Juniper trees, oregano shrubs, and purple wildflowers have sprung up among the broken columns and ruined foundations. Lifelike statues are scattered amid the vegetation—petrified victims of the **gorgons** that wander the ruins.

The splendid palace of the governor was at the epicenter of the earthquake and has been reduced to a huge mound of overgrown rubble. The legendary labyrinth of over 1,000 rooms, built by the minotaurs beneath the palace, lies buried deep under the wreckage. From time to time, adventurers mount expeditions into the debris-choked tunnels in search of the long-lost riches of the Empire of the Brazen Horns. The lucky ones merely face **lost minotaurs** (see *Creature Codex*) and deadly traps. The less fortunate encounter the terrifying undead form of Shemun Stormhoof, former minotaur governor of the Alchorades (use **boneshard wraith**, see *Tome of Beasts 2*, changing to Large and 180 HP).

Megandros. The small city of Megandros on the island of Sekousa is notable for its large minotaur (see *Tome of Heroes*) population, of which the bull-headed humanoids account for almost half. The city's buildings are clustered tightly around the harbor, connected by a maze of narrow streets. Frescoes of dolphins, bulls, and giant eyes painted on the sides of the buildings help with navigation, though repeated designs can cause confusion. Gladiatorial contests held at the arena in honor of Torrik, the god of strength, draw large crowds on festival days.

Mire of Lost Souls. Brutal, one-eyed ogres with four arms called **abaasy** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) inhabit this foul-smelling, gloomy swamp at the western end of the island of Odyros. Here they dwell in large wooden cabins, which rise out of the murky water on stilts, and spend their days hunting giant frogs and blue egrets in the marshes.

A network of raised paths crisscrosses the mire. Some are safe to travel while others are treacherous, leading wanderers into the many maws of a **hydra** or into a pool of quicksand. Sometimes, adventurers can bribe abaasy into guiding them through the marsh with offers of armor to replace those pieces grafted to their flesh that have rusted in the damp conditions.

Mount Hellfire. This active volcano is home to Magnentius, a **royal chimera** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) who claims to be a child of the Earth Serpent and Torrik and has a bull's head instead of a goat's. Magnentius reappeared after an absence of several decades, following Mount Hellfire's recent eruption, and is demanding tribute from the alseids and satyrs living in the forested islands to the east. The inhabitants of Psekonisi are worried the creature will turn its attentions on them next.

Seat of the Oracle. This small island between Theraxis and Odyros is the center of worship of the Earth Serpent and home to her oracle, a **guardian naga** with shimmering scales of blue and gold. The oracle offers wise counsel—to both the Queen of the Islands and to the priestesses of the Earth Serpent—from her many-columned inner sanctum in the Temple of the Restless Earth.

Sunken Colossus. When the Empire of the Brazen Horns ruled over the Alchorades, its first governor built a colossal bronze statue of Emperor Harbaal Brightfury on a tiny islet north of Theraxis. One of the first actions of the newly crowned Queen of the Islands, following the realm's liberation, was to topple the enormous minotaur statue into the sea.

Today, only the statue's corroded feet and ankles remain on the rocky outcrop. The rest of the hollow colossus lies 150 feet below the surface on the seabed where it serves as the lair of a **keelbreaker crab** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*). The monstrous crustacean preys on ships that sail too close to the sunken monument and has assembled a sizeable treasure hoard inside the statue's chest.

Wandering Rocks. Another infamous hazard of the Winedark Sea, the Wandering Rocks are a group of partly submerged rocky islands responsible for many shipwrecks. Once a single landmass, an earthquake broke it to pieces. The resulting rocks are suffused with elemental energy and change position randomly, making sailing through them extremely dangerous. Some sailors swear that the rocks are sentient and actively seek to crash into passing ships.

RULER: QUEEN OF THE ISLANDS

Queen Epiphania is an attractive human in her early thirties with a regal air. Her complexion is a warm bronze, and she wears her long, curly black hair swept up in an elaborate arrangement held in place by long hairpins and a delicate gold circlet. A gold leaping dolphin—the symbol of the realm—hangs on a pendant around her neck.

Favored by the Oracle of the Earth Serpent over her elder sister Catella, Epiphania ascended the Dolphin Throne of the Alchorades seven years ago, following the untimely death of her predecessor who was swallowed by a dragon turtle as she sailed from Chalandropolis to Sekousa to meet with its satrap.

Epiphania was initiated into the Cult of the Earth Serpent at an early age and was already well thought of by the priestesses of the goddess when she was put forward by the naga. After deeply inhaling the mystic incense burning in her inner sanctum, the oracle is said to have experienced a vision in which Epiphania overcame several existential threats to the realm to emerge battered and bruised but victorious.

Although the queen's rule has not been straightforward so far, these perils lie ahead, rather than behind her. Since becoming queen, Epiphania has earned her epithet "Imperturbable" because of her refusal to be fazed by the trials and tribulations of rule, including the political maneuvering of her ambitious

satraps and the growing depredations of the hobgoblin pirates. She wisely promoted the capable Vigilantia Saltbeard to admiral to keep the latter in check and has dealt deftly with the former with a mixture of tact, flattery, and sheer stubbornness. She knows Didyma Opilio, the satrap of Zegora, is not to be trusted but is yet unaware of her treachery. But the wily Epiphania has spies throughout the islands and is unlikely to remain ignorant for long.

As the Earth Serpent's chosen servant, the queen has an affinity with snakes and can communicate with them telepathically and give them commands. She can also take on snakelike characteristics to defend herself if she is ever attacked. Elektra, her pet viper is always close at hand, either draped around her neck or wrapped around an arm, and there is usually a giant constrictor or two dozing in her throne room. Queen Epiphania enjoys seeing the reaction to her pets from those unfamiliar with Alchoradean traditions.

(See also **Sample Rulers** in **Appendix** for this ruler's statistics.)

Roleplaying Queen Epiphania. The queen comes across as charming, calm, and firm when dealing with others and is an excellent judge of character. If the conversation grows tiresome, she will pet Elektra, stroking the serpent's head and whispering to her soothingly. Her courtiers have come to recognize this as a sign that they should quickly get to the point or depart.

Personality Trait. "I have no time for people who beat around the bush."

Ideal. "I will do everything I can to keep the people of these islands safe."

Bond. "I will not marry. I am already wedded to my one true love, the Alchorades."

Flaw/Secret. "Despite being named as imperturbable, my sleep is plagued by horrific nightmares, and I wake up every morning in a cold sweat."

FACTIONS OF THE ALCHORADES

Many powerful factions call the kingdom home.

Cult of the Earth Serpent. The Earth Serpent is the island realm's patron goddess, and her cult plays an integral role in Alchoradean society. The Queen of the Islands is chosen by the priestesses of the Earth Serpent with guidance from the oracle and nearly always comes from among the ranks of her cult.

The venerable High Priestess Syagria of the Twisted Coil leads the Cult of the Earth Serpent from the Seat of the Oracle. A direct descendent of one of the priestesses who conjured the great earthquake that destroyed Marmaros 200 years ago, Syagria is a formidable force with a no-nonsense attitude and a sharp tongue. In contrast, the Oracle of the Earth Serpent (**guardian naga**) is an unnerving, mystical figure who shares her prophetic visions with the priestesses, so they can best follow the goddess's will. Often, her pronouncements are unexpected and puzzling. The queen's elder sister Catella, a dedicated member of the cult's inner circle, is still indignant that she was overlooked as queen by the oracle.

Satraps. Four powerful women have been appointed to the position of satrap, each governing one of the larger islands:

- Appa Nicetas is the satrap of Methexis. A warm-hearted and thoughtful leader, she is currently wrestling with the rise of an independence movement among the island's catfolk that is rapidly gathering momentum. So far, she has adopted a conciliatory approach and has been ridiculed as a ditherer by Atenisi's comic dramatists.
- Consolantia Palamas is the satrap of Psekonisi. From a long-established noble family with an immaculate pedigree, the haughty Consolantia is dismissive of the threat posed by Magnentius and has refused to call upon the queen for help.
- Didyma Opilio, the satrap of Zegora, is the biggest threat to the stability of the queen's rule. Didyma's ambition knows no bounds, and she has been divulging information about well-laden merchant ships to the hobgoblin pirates, so they can attack and demonstrate the queen's deficiencies in defending her waters. Didyma is playing a dangerous game but believes she will be chosen to replace Epiphania when the priestesses of the Earth Serpent depose her.
- Imilce the Dutiful is the satrap of Sekousa. A consummate diplomat and negotiator, Imilce walks a fine line supporting her people while not pandering to those belligerent souls who feel the Alchorades rightfully belong to the minotaur empire. The lucrative trade Imilce has fostered with minotaur cities across the Winedark Sea has helped protect the status quo, but recent pirate attacks are jeopardizing this.

Pirates. Captain Maurus Ghostwind leads a fleet of nearly two dozen ships crewed by bloodthirsty hobgoblin pirates. These fast-moving vessels have been preying on Alchoradean and foreign merchant ships for several months, and their successful raiding has brought more ships under Ghostwind's banner.

Emboldened by his triumphs, the arrogant and ruthless captain has established a secret base in the abandoned Fort Syrenus, believing that the intelligence he is receiving from Didyma Opilio will help him remain one step ahead of Admiral Vigilantia Saltbeard. Ghostwind has no intention of ever letting Opilio become queen. Once she has outlived her usefulness to him, the cruel hobgoblin will take great pleasure in cutting her throat.

GODS OF THE ALCHORADES

Name	Worshipers	Domains
Earth Serpent (Patron)	Humans	Nature, Prophecy*, Serpent†
Artemis	Alseids, Catfolk; also Hunters	Hunting*, Life, Nature
Hermes	Merchants, Travelers	Travel*, Trickery
Poseidon	Spindrift Dwarves; also Pirates, Sailors	Ocean*, Tempest
Torrik	Minotaurs; also Soldiers	Tempest, War

(*) see *Deep Magic Volume 1* (†) see *Tome of Heroes*

GODS OF THE ALCHORADES

The major gods of the islands and their domains (see **Gods of the Alchorades** table) have largely been taken from the Greek pantheon, with Hercules recast as the bull-headed minotaur god Torrik.

MONSTERS OF THE ALCHORADES

Any monster can appear in the Island Realm of the Alchorades, but fearsome aquatic monsters and creatures inspired by Greek myths or by the legendary voyages of Sinbad are a great fit. See the **Monsters of the Alchorades** table for some suggestions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- A young lad, Brygos, has gone missing on the hillside while looking for his stray goats, and his mother begs the PCs to find him. The naive youngster stumbled upon a drunken fey revel in the woods, got mixed up in the shenanigans, and doesn't want to come home. Can the PCs extract him from the wild shindig before he falls head over heels in love with a forest nymph?
- Queenslayer, the infamous **dragon turtle** that swallowed Queen Epiphania's predecessor, has been sighted off the coast of Odyros. The queen hires the

MONSTERS OF THE ALCHORADES

CR	Creature	CR	Creature
1/8	Merfolk	6	Chimera
1/4	Giant Poisonous Snake	6	Medusa
1/2	Alseid (see *Tome of Beasts*)	6	Mountain Nymph (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
1/2	Hobgoblin	7	Karkadann (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1/2	Satyr	8	Abaasy (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1	Dryad	8	Blemmyes (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Harpy	8	Hydra
1	Serpentine Lamia (see *Creature Codex*)	8	Young Bronze Dragon
2	Centaur	9	Keelbreaker Crab (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
2	Giant Constrictor Snake	11	Gynosphinx
2	Minotaur Skeleton	11	Roc
2	Pegasus	13	Carnivorous Ship (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
2	Swarm of Poisonous Snakes	17	Androsphinx
3	Basilisk	17	Dragon Turtle
3	Minotaur	18	Adult Sea Dragon (see *Tome of Beasts*)
4	Lamia	23	Kraken
5	Gorgon		

PCs to track the creature down and persuade it to go after the hobgoblin pirates instead of Alchoradean merchant ships. The party is given a large chest filled with gold and pearls to bribe the monster.

- The magic, talking figurehead of the *Smiling Satyr* was lost at sea when the ship went down close to the Sunken Colossus. The matriarch of the influential Palamas family (and mother of the satrap of Psekonisi) hires the PCs for an underwater expedition to retrieve it. Unfortunately, the figurehead has been dragged inside the colossus by the monstrous **keelbreaker crab** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*) that sank the vessel.
- The queen's spies have discovered that the pirate captain Maurus Ghostwind is using Fort Syrenus as a base. She asks the PCs to sneak into the ruined minotaur castle to learn where the pirates are going to strike next, so Admiral Saltbeard can plan a welcome party for them.

DWARVEN KINGDOMS

While dwarves can be found living in human cities and other places all over the world, dwarven kingdoms are most often located in—and beneath—hills and mountains where their doughty inhabitants carve out wondrous halls and dig deep to find gold, silver, iron, and precious gems. Such kingdoms tend to be smaller than the average human kingdom, but those with extensive networks of tunnels and mines that run for many miles between clan holds have been known.

Typical dwarves are more common in temperate and cold climates, but there are dwarves dwelling in warmer areas too, such as Midgard's Southlands, where dwarves live alongside humans in Nuria Natal and in their own kingdom of Sebbek Sobor.

The fireforge dwarves (see *Tome of Heroes*), believing the best metalwork is made in the fires of the earth, build their kingdoms in areas of volcanic activity, allowing them to create fine weapons and armor in their magma-powered forges. Meanwhile, the spindrift dwarves (see *Tome of Heroes*) eschew the earth for the ocean, spending as much of their lives as possible at sea. Spindrift dwarves are found in the Island Realm of the Alchorades (see **Sample Human Kingdom**) but also have their own kingdoms on islands, along coastlines, and even on floating artificial structures out at sea, constructed from dozens of ships lashed together.

Because dwarven kingdoms can be small, population density is typically "high" or greater (see **Population** table) with a majority of the population dwelling near each other in communal living spaces in their clan holds.

Humans are the most likely non-dwarf race to be found living within the borders of a dwarven kingdom. Usually this is aboveground in a separate farming or trading settlement, such as Glimmervale in Stoneheart Canyon (see **Sample Dwarf Kingdom**). Groups of gnomes and their cousins the deep gnomes sometimes also live alongside dwarves.

Government. Monarchy is often the favored system of government among dwarves—as either a king or a queen ruling the kingdom. The succession can be hereditary, or alternatively, a new monarch can be chosen upon the death of the old by a council of clan chieftains or elders. The annals of dwarven history are filled with tales of disagreements over who should be crowned. Such disputes can lead to violent conflict and even all-out war between rival claimants to the throne.

In larger kingdoms, there may be a high king or queen who is owed fealty by the lesser monarchs ruling each clan hold in the kingdom. This is the situation in Stoneheart Canyon (see **Sample Dwarf Kingdom**).

Although monarchies are common, dwarves also adopt other forms of government. In Midgard, most of the Free Cantons of the Ironcrags elect their rulers democratically while Sebbek Sobor is governed by the Conclave of Brotherhoods, a gathering of elders and guild leaders from the four major cities, who elect a first speaker from among their ranks.

Religion. Dwarven gods will often have craft, fire, home and family, strength, or war in their portfolios. Because crafting beautiful and functional objects from precious gemstones and metals is such an important part of dwarven culture, separate gods may watch over mining, the forge, metalwork, and stonework. Gods of the earth and mountains or of hard work, wealth, or greed are other possibilities.

Suitable dwarven gods include Dunatis, Hephaestus, Hestia, Loki, Ptah, Skadi, and Thor from both fantasy and historical pantheons and Aten, Ninkash, Perun, and Volund from the Midgard campaign setting.

Magic. Dwarves have long been renowned for their skills in blending the physical and arcane arts to create legendary weapons, armor, and wondrous items in their mountain strongholds, so magic plays a significant role in many dwarven kingdoms. Although few dwarves study to become wizards, followers of ring magic (see *Deep Magic Volume 1*), known as ring wardens, are a well-known exception. Ring magic is the dwarven art of forging metal into magical rings. Rune magic (see *Deep Magic Volume 1*), the carving of magical runes and the invocation of their power, is also well known in many dwarven kingdoms, particularly in northern lands.

Enemies and Allies. Dwarven kingdoms located in the mountains may be uncomfortably close to the territory of hostile orc tribes or belligerent giants. Belowground, the dwarves are likely to be competing with goblins or kobolds for the same caverns and natural resources. Heading deeper into the Underworld, a dwarven kingdom might come into conflict with derro, drow, duergar, ghouls, satarre, and other antagonistic subterranean civilizations. And if the dwarves dig too deep, as they often do, the kingdom may come under threat from aboleth and other aberrant horrors.

Dwarven kingdoms typically establish allies and trading partners among humans and other surface dwellers, as their armor, weapons, jewelry, and other crafts are in high demand. Belowground, dwarven kingdoms typically form alliances with deep gnomes, mycolids, and others. (See *Monster Vault* for all creatures.)

DWARVEN LANDMARKS

Every dwarf hold and dwarven city is home to one or more clans, each with its own great hall and communal living space for its members. Roll 1d10 and consult the **Dwarven Landmarks** table or choose some appropriate landmarks.

DWARVEN RULERS

Many of the suggestions and tables for titles, backstory, physical description, and personal characteristics presented earlier in **Designing a Ruler** work just as well for dwarven rulers. In addition, the ruler might have a particular quirk: roll 1d20 on the **Dwarven Ruler Quirks** table or choose something appropriate.

Here are sample dwarven rulers, ready to be slotted into a campaign (see also **Sample Dwarven Kingdom** for the High King).

DWARVEN RULER QUIRKS

d20	The Ruler . . .
1	Brews the best beer in the kingdom.
2	Can accurately estimate the number of coins in a treasure hoard just by looking at it.
3	Can drink anyone under the table.
4	Frequently gets lost in the kingdom's many passageways.
5	Has a steam-powered limb crafted by gnome mechanists.
6	Has a wonderful singing voice.
7	Has been initiated into the Cult of Mammon.
8	Is always the first to eagerly swing a pickaxe at a new mine face.
9	Is an expert on elven history.
10	Is possessed by the ghost of an ancestor.
11	Is sculpting a monumental statue of their late father or grandfather.
12	Keeps pet bats.
13	Makes exquisite jewelry.
14	Rides into battle on a dogmole.
15	Snores loudly enough to wake the dead.
16	Spends an hour each morning braiding their beard.
17	Suffers from claustrophobia, following a terrible mine collapse.
18	Wears light armor and fights with a rapier.
19	Wears their hair in a unique style unlike the rest of the clan.
20	Yearns for the sea.

DWARVEN LANDMARKS

d10	Landmark
1	***Giant Two-Headed Axe.*** Hangs above an impressive archway.
2	***Gleaming Iron Anvil.*** Standing 10 feet tall and 15 feet across, it rests on a stone plinth covered in runes.
3	***Great Stair.*** A huge stone staircase that runs from the top of the mountain to deep beneath the earth, connecting every level of the hold in between.
4	***Huge Pillars.*** Carved to resemble dwarven warriors and their orc foes, they hold up the ceiling of the Great Hall.
5	***Magical Mine Carts.*** Driverless carts that transport ore along a complex network of tracks.
6	***Massive Chandelier.*** Wrought iron and shaped like a roc in flight.
7	***Narrow Bridge.*** Precarious bridge (without handrails) that leads across a deep chasm to link two passageways.
8	***Skull Throne.*** Carved from the skull of an ancient red dragon.
9	***Stone Double Doors.*** Engraved with the fearsome visage of an angry dwarf queen.
10	***Stone Statues.*** Pair of dwarven warriors with axes held high, flanking an enormous set of bronze double doors.

BLESSED MOTHER OF THE SILVER TANKARDS

Her Holiness Queen Barzola Proudbrewer, Blessed Mother of the Silver Tankards, is the ruler of the dwarf hold of Dhargraern, the former head of its brewer's guild, and a priestess of Ninkash, goddess of beer and merriment. Barzola was elected queen by the Chamber of Guildmasters on the death of the previous ruler and former head of the miner's guild. She was a popular choice, respected by the other guildmasters for being levelheaded and willing to always look for the good in others.

Since becoming queen six years ago, Barzola has urged the high king to focus on the wealth and stability of the kingdom rather than fighting endlessly against the duergar in the hopes of recovering the lost holds. Dhargraern's industrious clans produce some of the finest jewelry, weapons and armor, sculpture, and beer in Stoneheart Canyon, and Queen Barzola is keen to maximize her hold's productivity and sales to the wider world. If less time, energy, and—most importantly—dwarven lives can be spent on fighting, so much the better.

The queen is middle-aged and full-figured and has dark-brown skin and black hair, turning gray, worn in two long braids held in place by thick silver bands. She favors dark blue robes and wears a silver crown studded with sapphires and bearing the symbol of her goddess. A small silver tankard hangs from a chain around her neck, and a larger one from her belt. The queen is a good listener who allows all parties to speak before summarizing succinctly and making clear and firm decisions. She is not afraid to bang her tankard on the table to call her subjects—or the other monarchs—to order and is known for her mischievous sense of humor.

Personality Trait. "There is always time for music and merriment."

Ideal. "A stable kingdom is a healthy kingdom."

Bond. "My husband Origath and my two sons mean the world to me."

Flaw/Secret. "My father died in battle because of my cowardice."

CRUSADER KING OF THE PHANTOM DEEPS

His Faithful Majesty, King Gardal Lightbringer the Resolute of Var Dorn is a king without a kingdom. Nearly 300 years ago, the dwarf hold of Var Dorn fell to an invading army of duergar that had already seized control of Garntorm and Haugedrun to the west. The dwarves of Var Dorn fought bravely but suffered heavy casualties and were eventually driven out of their ancestral home by the gray dwarves and their infernal allies. The duergar sacked the stronghold and abandoned it, leaving the unburied bodies of their foes behind. Today, Var Dorn and its mines are haunted by the restless spirits of the dead, and King Gardal and his subjects are living in exile.

Gardal was crowned King of Var Dorn after the death of his mother Queen Dalgret, who was slain on an expedition to drive out the undead and reclaim her ancestral home. The queen's body was not recovered, and she has now joined the ranks of the undead hordes inside the fallen hold.

King Gardal is a somber but steadfast leader, confident that the holy power of the Sun God Aten he and his fellow graveslayers wield will ultimately prevail. He is currently planning a new crusade into the Phantom Deeps beneath Var Dorn, from his adopted home in the dwarf hold of Uppeldhur, and has been lobbying the high king for military support.

Just over 100 years old, King Gardal is a well-muscled, stocky dwarf with rosy-pink skin and reddish-gold hair. He wears his beard in four complicated braids and keeps his hair tied back under a preposterous gold crown decorated with long points to represent the rays of the sun. Gardal's habitual hangdog expression lights up

with excitement whenever military action to reclaim Var Dorn is discussed.

Personality Trait. "I prefer my dogmole's company to that of my court."

Ideal. "Good always triumphs over evil in the end."

Bond. "I will not rest until I am seated on the ancestral throne of Var Dorn's kings."

Flaw/Secret. "When I face my undead mother in battle, I know I'll freeze."

SON OF LOKI

Not all dwarves are hardworking, dependable stick-in-the-muds who rule their kingdoms in the same way that their ancestors have done for centuries—some are flamboyant individualists. His Excellency, Duke Norrim Glitterbeard the Cunning, Lord of Zulvrin, Son of Loki, is one of these mavericks. Much to the horror of the Council of Clan Elders, Norrim succeeded to the throne of Zulvrin, following the unfortunate death of his father, mother, and elder brother in a fierce battle against a satarre cult that had sprung up in the nearby caverns. Norrim was regarded by the elders as an indolent fop, a wastrel unfit for high office who would be unable to command the respect of his subjects.

But Norrim went on to prove them all wrong. Despite his decidedly unconventional appearance and manner, he has turned out to be an astute and charismatic duke—many would add devious. His unorthodox approach to subterranean warfare led first to victory against the satarre and then to a number of successes against the duergar that controlled the western reaches of Stoneheart Canyon. No trick is too dirty, no stratagem is too complicated for Norrim, and his exploits have led to both admiration and disapproval in equal measure from the great and the good of the dwarves, earning him the honorific Son of Loki. The high king is a big admirer of Norrim's and often turns to him both for military advice and for suggestions on how to handle the sizeable egos of Stoneheart Canyon's lesser monarchs.

Duke Norrim is always immaculately styled with well coiffured, shoulder-length light-brown hair (daringly short for a dwarf) and a short, neatly trimmed beard. He wears tight-fitting leather armor emblazoned with a grinning worg's face, fights with a rapier, rather than a battle axe or warhammer, and has even been known to cast spells in combat to bamboozle his enemies. Norrim is charming and witty, possessing an irrepressibly cheerful disposition.

Personality Trait. "If you're going to do something, do it with style."

Ideal. "This calls for a celebration! Huzzah!"

Bond. "My beloved father forged this rapier for me, and it's my most treasured possession."

Flaw/Secret. "I believe my own hype."

ADVENTURES IN DWARVEN KINGDOMS

Dwarven kingdoms and their surrounding subterranean realms offer excellent backdrops for adventure. Here are some suggestions for potential adventures.

ADVENTURE PLOTS

Adventures in dwarven kingdoms might involve disagreements between rival clan chieftains or rulers, conflict with neighbors aboveground or below, or marauding subterranean monsters. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Dwarven Kingdom Adventure Plots** table for possibilities (see also the kingdom's **State of the Nation** for more plot ideas) or choose something appropriate.

DWARVEN KINGDOM ADVENTURE PLOTS

d8	Plot
1	Break into the crypt of Gudrun Runeweaver and retrieve the Scepter of the Granite Throne.
2	Chase the jewel thieves through the tunnels in fast-moving mine carts.
3	Escort the high king's ambassador through the dangerous mountain pass to the elven forest kingdom of Caelevar.
4	Field test the effectiveness of the high mechanist's latest tunnel defense system.
5	Investigate the mysterious, smooth stone monolith that stands on a rocky island in the middle of an underground lake.
6	Prevent the kingdom's cave goats from being rustled by sneaky goblins.
7	Protect a group of miners from bloodthirsty stirges as they excavate gemstones from a newly discovered cavern.
8	Recover a magnificent ruby from the gizzard of Old Stonetooth, an ancient roper.

ADVENTURE SITES

Dwarven kingdoms are filled with great halls, ancient tombs, endless subterranean passages, and mysterious caverns where hideous monsters guard hoards of treasure. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Dwarven Kingdom Adventure Sites** table for some suggested locales to add to the kingdom map or choose something appropriate to use as inspiration.

DWARVEN KINGDOM ADVENTURE SITES

d8	Site
1	***Adamantine Gauntlet.*** A series of trap-filled passageways that lead to the king's treasure vault.
2	***Dusty Library.*** Belonging to Dorsun Firebeard, eccentric collector of ancient, esoteric manuscripts.
3	***Everlost Halls.*** The deepest level of the hold, now under the control of a derro queen and her insane minions.
4	***Igneous Rift.*** A deep chasm where a mighty demon, Draxvisthaal, struggles to break free from its iron chains.
5	***Lavaflow Bridge.*** A wide stone bridge across a river of lava that's inhabited by feisty fire creatures.
6	***Mysterious Cavern.*** Empty apart from a 30-foot cube of floating iron, rusty and pitted.
7	***Subterranean Lake.*** A maze of rock columns stretches from beneath the water to the ceiling 30 feet above. Glowing orbs float in the distance.
8	***Tomb of Thorval Stoneroot.*** Final resting place of the illustrious hero and his legendary magic battle axe, *Goblinsbane*.

VILLAINOUS NPCS AND FACTIONS

Hostile humanoid tribes, expansionist underworld empires, undead hordes, and alien monstrosities are all perfect villains for adventures set in dwarven kingdoms. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Dwarven Kingdom Villainous NPCs** table (see also the kingdom's **Enemies and Allies** for more plot ideas) or choose some appropriate villains.

DWARVEN KINGDOM VILLAINOUS NPCS

d8	Villain
1	***Chezeniorth the Eternal.*** Blind, subterranean dragon, searching for a new lair.
2	***Company of the Burnished Shield.*** Ruthless band of dwarven mercenaries in the service of a rival to the throne.
3	***Einar Rimespike.*** Giant chieftain, determined to drive the dwarves from the mountains once and for all.
4	***Lost Legion.*** Undead soldiers from the Ghoul Imperium, cut adrift from their general and very hungry.
5	***Paruuk Pleurotus.*** Lord of the mycolids, aggressively expanding their fungal forest into the kingdom's territory.
6	***Satarre Cult.*** Cultists practicing dark, alien rituals to open a rift to the Void.
7	***Sazbrima Yazaryn.*** Priestess of the Spider Goddess looking to establish a new outpost with her cadre of warriors.
8	***Thrain Hellblade.*** Duergar warlord with his pack of snarling, fiendish hounds.

SAMPLE DWARF KINGDOM: STONEHEART CANYON

In the heart of the rolling hills, on the southwestern fringes of the Endless Steppes, lies a 1,000-foot-deep rift in the earth. Named Stoneheart Canyon, this vast gorge is home to a fractured dwarven kingdom of the same name. Measuring approximately 170 miles from west to southeast, and 30–50 miles across, Stoneheart Canyon is ringed by ancient dwarf holds—mighty fortresses carved into the sides of the rift, extending from the rim down to the canyon floor and deep into the earth for many miles. Aboveground, these impressive strongholds sport tall towers and forge chimneys, battlements of gray stone, and colossal statues of dwarven kings, queens, and heroes. Belowground, there are gigantic clan halls, great stairways, blazing-hot forges powered by huge waterwheels, busy workshops, and seemingly endless mining tunnels and passageways. Three huge doorways flanked by monumental statues—the Copper, Bronze, and Iron Gates—serve as entrances into these subterranean levels from the bottom of the canyon.

The eight dwarf holds of Stoneheart Canyon were constructed over 1,500 years ago, built by clans drawn to the rift by its rich seams of gold, silver, iron, and gemstones. For centuries, the dwarves mined the earth and made wondrous things from the bountiful resources they dug from the rock, which they sold to their neighbors, both aboveground and below.

The wealth of Stoneheart Canyon's dwarves was to be their downfall. Around 300 years ago, the duergar arrived in force. Backed by devils and other infernal allies sent by their patron god Mammon, Archduke of Greed, the gray dwarves conquered the dwarf holds of Haugedrun and Garntorm and seized control of the Copper Gate. From here, they slowly pushed their way east until they had driven the Stoneheart dwarves from the rest of the rift.

STONEHEART CANYON

Symbol: Armored wyvern flying above a dwarf hold

Ruler: His Indomitable Majesty, High King Torrgath Boulderfist, the Hammer of Justice (LG dwarf, see **Ruler: High King**)

Important Personages: Duke Norrim Glitterbeard the Cunning, Lord of Zulvrin, Son of Loki (CG dwarf **thief lord**, see *Creature Codex*); Duke Valric Agateshine, exiled ruler of Garntorm (CG dwarf **berserker**); King Falthur Hammerschlag of Mithalgar (LN dwarf **field commander**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); King Gardal Lightbringer the Resolute of Var Dorn (LG **dwarf graveslayer**, see *Creature Codex*); Lord High Mechanist Ordred Silvermaster (LG dwarf **mechanist**); Queen Barzola Proudbrewer of Dhargraern, Blessed Mother of the Silver Tankards (NG **dwarf cleric of the brew**, see *Creature Codex*); Queen Heldris Smokebeard of Uppeldhur (LN fireforge dwarf **veteran**); Queen-in-Exile Elserd Torevin of Haugedrun (NG dwarf **noble**); Theodorus Beetlebrow, Mayor of Glimmervale (NG human **noble**); Thrain Hellblade, Warlord of Haugedrun (LE duergar **field commander**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Strozwenn Cragborn, Keeper of Garntorm (LE duergar **knight**)

Population: 157,000 (106,200 dwarves, 31,900 duergar, 7,800 humans, 3,300 gnomes, 2,800 kobolds, 5,000 others)

Capital: Khulodhir, population 28,800 (24,900 dwarves, 2,800 gnomes, 1,100 others)

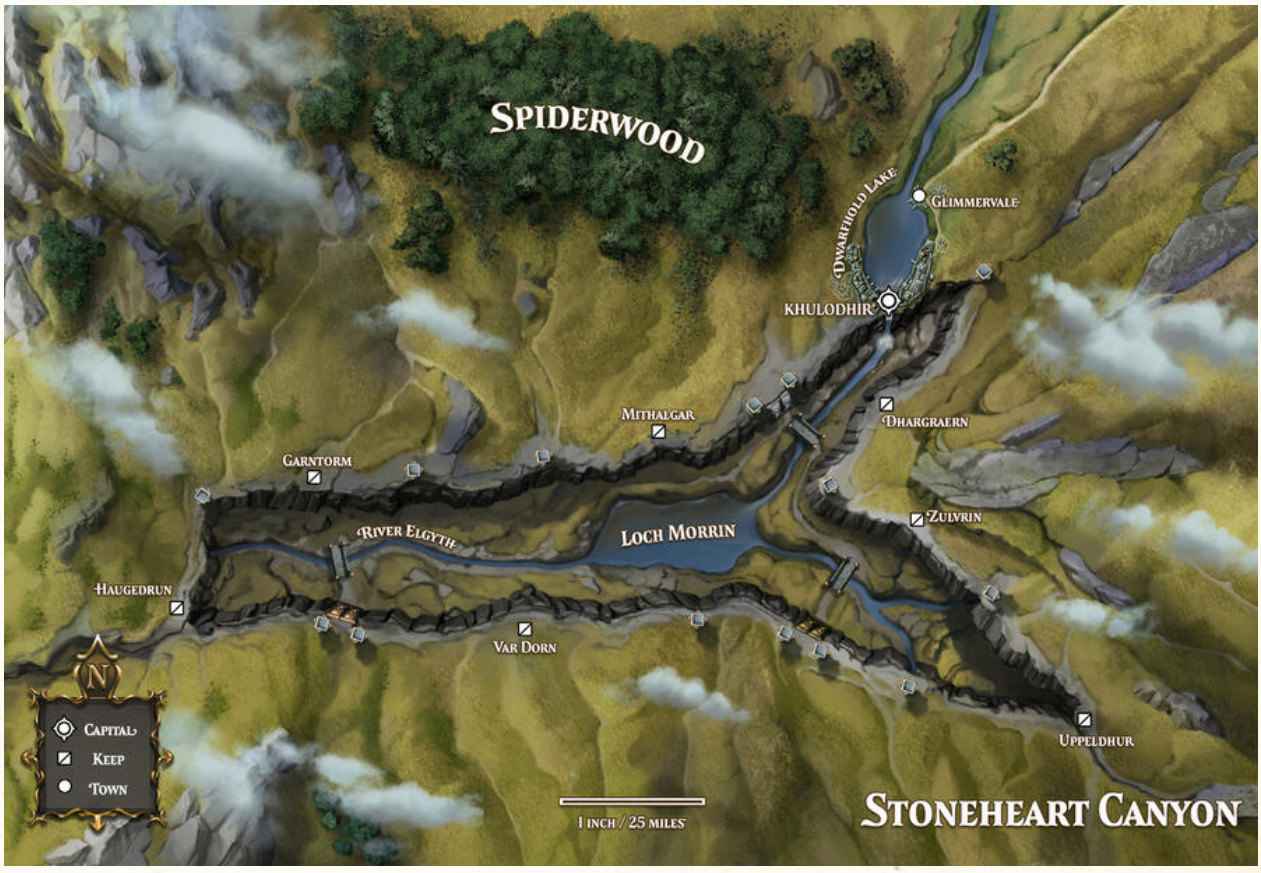
Dwarf Holds: Dhargraern (18,700), Mithalgar (23,400), Uppeldhur (14,900), Zulvrin (16,500)

Towns: Glimmervale (5,500)

Lost Holds: Garntorm (13,300), Haugedrun (17,100), Var Dorn (3,000 undead)

Great Gods: Volund (patron), Aten, Loki, Mammon, Ninkash, Thor

Trade Goods: Weapons, armor, iron, beer, gems, jewelry, silver, gold, copper, bronze (in order of importance)



The dwarves returned, 60 years ago, in numbers and fought back. Led by King Torrgath Boulderfist, the Hammer of Justice, the clans reconquered five of the eight holds and established Khulodhir as the kingdom's capital. Torrgath was elected as high king by the leaders of the dwarf holds, each swearing allegiance to him.

Today, each hold is ruled by a clan led by a king, queen, duke, or duchess who acknowledges High King Torrgath as the overall ruler of Stoneheart Canyon. However, the holds of Haugedrun and Garntorm, the Copper Gate, and two rim watchtowers remain under duergar control—while Var Dorn is still abandoned, haunted by the restless spirits of the dwarven dead. The heirs to these lost holds live in exile with the rest of their clans, waiting impatiently for the day when the whole of Stoneheart Canyon belongs to the dwarves once again. In addition, many of the deep halls and mines are still overrun by subterranean monsters or hostile humanoids. The fighting to reclaim the lost holds and mines rumbles on, but the high king and many others have grown weary after more than a century of war.

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

Those familiar with Stoneheart Canyon know the following information:

- Eight formidable watchtowers stand atop the canyon rim, situated between the dwarf holds. Six are under dwarven control and are used to keep an eye out for enemies within the canyon and on the Endless Steppes beyond. Each has large ballistae and other siege weapons on its battlements and is home to aerial patrols mounted on **war wyverns** (see *Creature Codex*). The two towers flanking Garntorm are under duergar control. The gray dwarves have stationed **gargoyles** and **imps** here to serve as airborne fighters and spies.
- The dwarves graze sheep at the eastern end of the canyon floor and in the rolling hills surrounding the rift, watched over by amiable **shepherd drakes** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*). They also grow hops and other crops at the bottom of the canyon, tend mushrooms in underground caverns, and rear **cave goats** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*). Water from hot springs is channeled into subterranean pools for communal bathing.
- Belowground, tunnels and mines run for miles in all directions, creating a confusing labyrinth that connects the underground levels of the dwarf holds with each other and with the vast Underworld beyond. Steam-powered mine carts run on tracks through the darkness, their rails sometimes crossing fiery pools of molten lava or seemingly bottomless chasms.
- Subterranean fortifications and trapped corridors and chambers separate the dwarven kingdom from those areas under duergar control or long since lost to monsters and other hostile underground dwellers.
- On the surface, most trade goes through the predominantly human lakeside town of Glimmervale, and Underworld trade routes bring deep gnomes, kobolds, mycolids, and even drow and darakhul to trading caverns where enterprising dwarven merchants offer finely crafted items for sale.
- Each year on the autumnal equinox, a contest is held to find the best crafter in the kingdom. The contest is judged by the high king himself, and winning is a much sought after honor, as the triumphant artisan is entitled to add the royal badge to the sign above their workshop.

SETTLEMENTS AND SITES

Most of Stoneheart Canyon's population is concentrated in the major dwarf holds and in the trade town of Glimmervale to the north of the rift, but there are also smaller clan holds and underground settlements beyond the major cities.

Dhargraern. Third largest of the dwarf holds, Dhargraern is ruled by Queen Barzola Proudbrewer (see also **Dwarven Rulers**) and is home to a splendid golden temple to Ninkash, known as the Holy Hostelry. Here, the priests of Ninkash brew the blessed ales of the goddess from hops grown in the gentle hills beyond the top of the rift. These beers have magical properties, including healing, courage bolstering, and ailment relief. Dhargraern is also renowned for its artisans, and for the past three years, the winners of the annual contest to find the kingdom's greatest crafter have all come from this hold.

Dwarfhold Lake. This tranquil lake is filled with perch, bream, and trout, which are fished by the dwarves of Khulodhir and the humans of Glimmervale. These fisherfolk tell stories of the Lake Terror: a monstrous creature, half-wolverine, half-trout, that attacks boats drifting too close to the western shore. Although its exploits are often exaggerated, the Lake Terror, an **aalpamac** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*) does exist, and its territory is best avoided.

Garntorm. The fallen dwarf hold of Garntorm has remained under duergar control for nearly 300 years. Ruled by the lugubrious Strozwenn Cragborn, Keeper

of Garntorm (duergar **knight**), Garntorm is a grim and gloomy place, filled with smog and joyless toil. The duergar inhabitants and their prisoners—any captured dwarves, kobolds, and deep gnomes—work night and day, forging weapons and armor for the endless war against the kingdom of Stoneheart Canyon. **Duergar** mounted on **giant spiders** constantly patrol the tunnels between the hold and the edge of their territory while invisible spies are sent behind enemy lines to gather intelligence.

Glimmervale. Located on the northern shores of Dwarfhold Lake, the human town of Glimmervale connects the dwarves of Stoneheart Canyon with the wider surface world. Dwarven merchants travel from their holds to Glimmervale to sell their wares in the busy markets and to purchase trade goods such as timber to resell when they return home. The mayor is the pompous Theodorus Beetlebrow who enjoys giving long tedious speeches at the monthly meetings of the Traders' Council.

Haugedrun. Larger of the two dwarf holds still under duergar control, Haugedrun is led by the sadistic warlord Thrain Hellblade (duergar **field commander**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*) who imposes punishing mining quotas on his subjects, who dig endlessly for gold. Thrain's pride and joy is his pack of vicious **hell hounds**, which he loves to unleash on any dwarves foolish enough to enter duergar territory.

Thrain is advised by Malthraxus, a sly **gilded devil** (see *Tome of Beasts*) sent by Archduke Mammon, the duergar's infernal patron. Volund's former temple has been converted into a cathedral dedicated to the arch-devil, dominated by a 20-foot-tall golden statue of the rotund fiend.

Khulodhir. The seat of High King Torrgath Boulderfist and effective capital of Stoneheart Canyon, Khulodhir has a population the size of a large city. Aboveground, a formidable fortress straddles the River Elgyth on the southern shores of Dwarfhold Lake where it cascades over the rim in a spectacular waterfall before

plummeting 1,000 feet to the canyon floor below. From the upper fortress, the Great Stair extends downward inside the canyon walls through multiple levels of the hold, each home to clan halls, forges, workshops, and temples to the dwarven gods.

High King Torrgath rules Stoneheart Canyon from his impressive golden throne in Porphyry Hall, a gigantic chamber with columns of purple-red stone inscribed with the names and achievements of dwarven kings, queens, and clan leaders, dating back 1,500 years.

Loch Morrin. This huge lake on the canyon floor is 30 miles in length and over 500 feet deep. It is inhabited by Sparkstorm, a **dragon eel** (see *Tome of Beasts*) that dwells in a maze of underwater tunnels and caverns at the bottom of the lake. Sparkstorm feeds on fish in the loch but also accepts regular offerings of sheep—and treasure—from the dwarves. The walls of its lair are said to be plated with dwarven gold.

Mithalgar. The second biggest dwarf hold, Mithalgar is the westernmost stronghold under dwarven control and is presided over by the belligerent King Falthur Hammerschlag. The exiled rulers and clans of duergar-controlled Garntorm and Haugedrun both live here and are often at the vanguard of the fighting with the gray dwarves.

Recently, the Lord High Mechanist Ordred Silvermaster and her gnomish technicians installed a series of complex and devilishly cunning tunnel defenses to protect Mithalgar from its enemies. The dwarf hold is also the location of Thor's great temple, the House of the Tempest, which houses a giant replica of Mjolnir, the god's legendary hammer.

Spiderwood. A dense and humid forest of laurel trees and other evergreens, stretching 80 miles from east to west, the Spiderwood is aptly named. Gloomy and choked with webs, the forest is home to several dozen **ettercap** communities and their various spider allies, including the hairy-legged **j'ba fofi spiders** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and the terrifying **goliath longlegs** (see *Creature Codex*). Despite the dangers, the inhabitants of Khulodhir and Glimmervale conduct frequent, well-guarded logging expeditions in the Spiderwood as it is the only nearby source of timber. Rumors of an ancient faerie ruin deep in the forest, undisturbed for centuries, have lured many adventurers to their doom.

Uppeldhur. Ruled by Queen Heldris Smokebeard, Uppeldhur is inhabited by clans of fireforge dwarves (see *Tome of Heroes*). King Gardal Lightbringer the Resolute (see also **Dwarven Rulers**) and the dwarves of Var Dorn also live here in exile and have built a shining temple to Aten, their patron god.

The tunnels beneath the fortress reach into areas of volcanic activity, allowing Uppeldhur's smiths to use the magma to power their great forges. Queen Heldris has formed an alliance with a clan of **azers** that live in the fiery depths, defending them against their **salamander** foes and learning new techniques from the azers' master crafters.

Var Dorn. Nearly three centuries ago, the duergar armies laid siege to Var Dorn. When the dwarf hold fell, the gray dwarves sacked its halls and vaults and then abandoned it, leaving the bodies of the dead to rot. Today, Var Dorn is cursed, haunted by its restless dead. Most are **specters** or **ghosts**, but there are also **wights** and **wraiths** among the 3,000 undead in the tunnels and mines beneath the fortress known as the Phantom Deeps. Worse, each time a living creature dies in Var Dorn, their soul is trapped, and yet another undead creature joins the population. Failed dwarven expeditions to recapture Var Dorn over the years have merely succeeded in adding to its numbers, but the exiled King Gardal Lightbringer (see also **Dwarven Rulers**) is determined to make another attempt soon.

Zulvrin. This dwarf hold is ruled by the unconventional Duke Norrim Glitterbeard (see also **Dwarven Rulers**) and is renowned for its excellent jewelry makers and silversmiths. Zulvrin has been plagued by **satarre** in the recent past, and now, a new, larger company has been sighted in the caverns to the east of the hold.

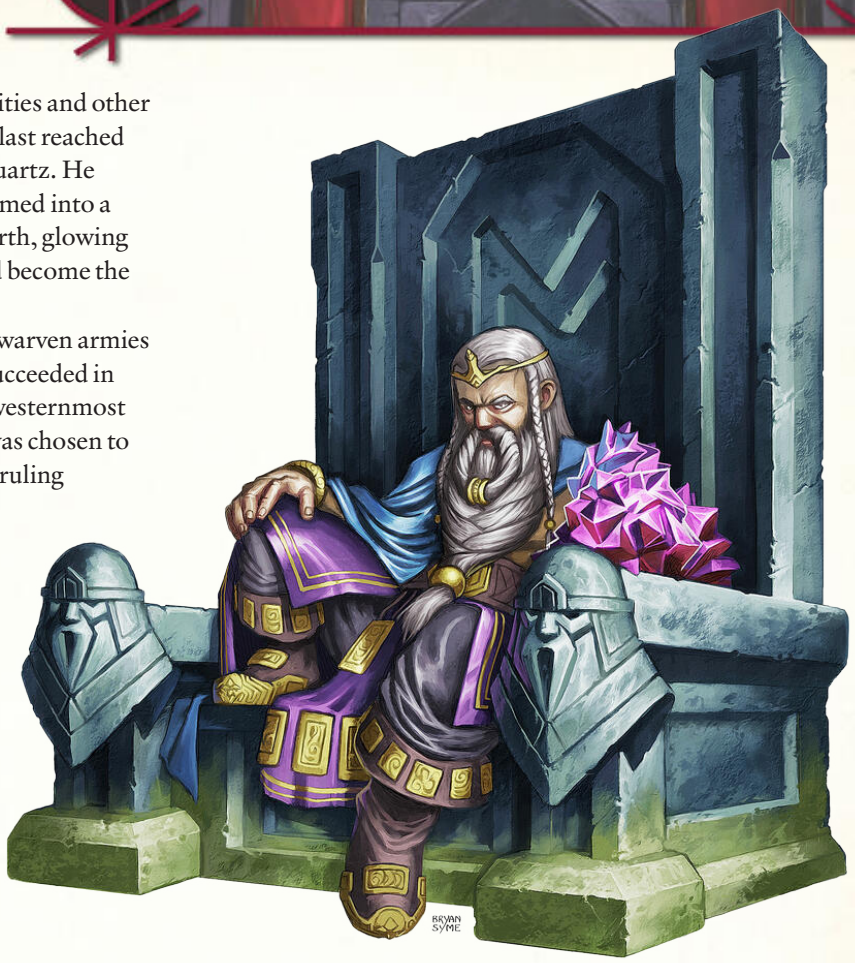
RULER: HIGH KING

High King Torrgath Boulderfist is an elderly hill dwarf with a ridiculously long, plaited gray beard and a weary expression on his heavily lined face. Instead of a left arm, he has an oversized, crystalline appendage, ending in something resembling a club, which he uses to smite his foes. He wears polished plate armor with impressive golden pauldrons, a dark cloak, and a simple crown.

His Indomitable Majesty, High King Torrgath Boulderfist, the Hammer of Justice, is old enough to have been living in Khulodhir 300 years ago when the dwarves were driven out of Stoneheart Canyon by the duergar. Heir to the throne of Clan Boulderfist, Torrgath spent the next 250 years in exile. After a century or so of brooding, he consulted a diviner skilled in reading runes who told him that the dwarven armies would only reclaim Stoneheart Canyon if they fought under the banner of the "Hammer of Justice." Further rune castings led to a perilous quest deep into the Underworld to find the mystic forge, a legendary holy site of Volund and Aten said to possess mighty earth magic. After a grueling trek through tunnels and

caverns inhabited by tentacled monstrosities and other foul subterranean creatures, Torrgath at last reached the forge, a huge block of smoky-black quartz. He touched the crystal, and his arm transformed into a weapon imbued with the power of the earth, glowing whenever wielded in battle. Torrgath had become the Hammer of Justice.

He returned to the surface and led the dwarven armies back to Stoneheart Canyon where they succeeded in driving the duergar from all but the two westernmost dwarf holds. After the victory, Torrgath was chosen to be the High King of Stoneheart Canyon, ruling from Khulodhir with dominion over the kingdom's other four holds.



Weary after 60 years of fighting, the high king is disappointed that he has not been able to expel the duergar from Haugedrun and Garntorm and that Var Dorn has not been reclaimed. But he is also tired of war and is pondering whether now might be the right time to make peace with the duergar, though he knows this will be bitterly opposed by the exiled dwarves. (See also **Sample Rulers** in **Appendix** for this ruler's statistics.)

Roleplaying High King Torrgath. Despite his epithet and fearsome crystal arm, the high king gives the impression of a thoughtful and wise ruler who has grown jaded by war. Torrgath takes great pleasure in celebrating dwarven innovation and craftsmanship and comes alive when he is shown a new sculpture or beautifully made battle axe.

Personality Trait. "I have achieved much in my life, but is it enough?"

Ideal. "One day the dwarves will rule all of Stoneheart Canyon again as they did in the past."

Bond. "My heart belongs to my people."

Flaw/Secret. "I am ready to step aside and let the other kings and queens choose a new ruler."

FACTIONS OF STONEHEART CANYON

Many powerful factions call the kingdom home.

Seven Kings and Queens. Queen Barzola Proudbrewer of Dhargraern, King Gardal Lightbringer the Resolute of Var Dorn, and Duke Norrim Glitterbeard of Zulvrin are described under **Dwarven Rulers**. The other kings and queens of the dwarf holds are described here:

- Duke Valric Agateshine is the exiled ruler of Garntorm. Young and hot-tempered, he has a bright-red topknot and wields a double-headed greataxe in battle. He hates the duergar and will stop at nothing to reclaim his ancestral home.
- King Falthur Hammerschlag is the belligerent but wily ruler of Mithalgar. The veteran king and general has been fighting the duergar for two centuries but finds warfare easier and more enjoyable than keeping Duke Valric and Queen Elserd under control.
- Queen Heldris Smokebeard of Uppeldhur is a talented weaponsmith as well as a highly competent ruler. She spends as much time as possible in the hold's deepest and hottest forges, learning the advanced metalworking techniques of her azer allies.
- Queen-in-Exile Elserd Torevin of Haugedrun is more measured but no less determined. She fled from Haugedrun as a young dwarf, and now elderly, her greatest wish is to die peacefully on her throne in the hold's Hall of Heroes.

GODS OF STONEHEART CANYON

The major gods of Stoneheart Canyon and their domains (see **Gods of Stoneheart Canyon** table) have largely been taken either from the Norse pantheon or from the Midgard campaign setting.

GODS OF STONEHEART CANYON

Name	Worshippers	Domains
Volund (Patron)	Artisans, Smiths	Clockwork‡, Mountain*, Travel*
Aten	Graveslayers, Paladins	Justice*, Light
Loki	Fireforge Dwarves; also Mischief-Makers, Rogues	Trickery
Mammon	Duergar; also Greedy Merchants, Treasure Seekers	Darkness†, Hunger*, Lust*, Mountain*, Travel*
Ninkash	Brewers, Musicians, Tavern Keepers	Beer*, Life
Thor	Warriors	Tempest, War

(*) see *Deep Magic Volume 1* (†) see *Deep Magic Volume 2*
(‡) see *Midgard Heroes Handbook*

MONSTERS OF STONEHEART CANYON

Any underground-dwelling monsters can appear in the caverns and abandoned mines of Stoneheart Canyon. Undead creatures can be found in the cursed hold of Var Dorn, and web-choked Spiderwood is perfect for giant arachnids and other monstrosities. See the **Monsters of Stoneheart Canyon** table for some suggestions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- Antelope riders sent by the Basileus of the Endless Steppes (see also **Human Rulers**) have been seen near Glimmervale and close to the canyon rim. High King Torrgath believes the steppe clans could be planning a raid, so he sends the PCs into the grasslands to capture the riders and bring them before him in Porphyry Hall for questioning.

MONSTERS OF STONEHEART CANYON

CR	Creature	CR	Creature
0	Giant Fire Beetle	1/2	Dwarf Pike Guard (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
0	Shrieker	1	Dogmole (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1/8	Kobold	1	Duergar
1/8	Stirge	1	Giant Spider
1/4	Cave Goat (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	1	Imp
1/4	Drow	1	Specter
1/4	Giant Lizard	2	Azer
1/4	Goblin	2	Ettercap
1/4	Swarm of Bats	2	Gargoyle
1/2	Boot Grabber (see *Creature Codex*)	2	Gelatinous Cube
1/2	Darkmantle	2	Grick
1/2	Deep Gnome	2	Kobold Trapsmith (see *Tome of Beasts*)
2	Mimic	5	Dwarf Pike Guard Captain (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
2	Pech (see *Creature Codex*)	5	Fire Elemental
3	Darakhul (see *Tome of Beasts*)	5	Roper
3	Firecracker Dwarf (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	5	Salamander
3	Hell Hound	5	Shepherd Drake (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
3	J'ba Fofi Spider (see *Tome of Beasts*)	5	Wraith
3	Satarre Destroyer	5	Xorn
3	Satarre Mystic (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	6	Ghost Dwarf (see *Creature Codex*)
3	Wight	7	Gilded Devil (see *Tome of Beasts*)
4	Black Pudding	7	Goliath Longlegs (see *Creature Codex*)
4	Ghost	7	War Wyvern (see *Creature Codex*)
5	Dogmole Juggernaut (see *Tome of Beasts*)	15	Purple Worm

- King Gardal Lightbringer, exiled ruler of Var Dorn, has learned that repairing the sundered stone altar in Aten's ruined temple is the key to breaking the curse of undeath that plagues his ancestral home. Only the legendary *Tools of the Most Worshipful Stonemasons* can fix the broken stone, and they are buried with the order's grand master in his trap-filled tomb in the most dangerous part of the Phantom Deeps. Are the PCs brave enough to head far beneath Var Dorn to retrieve the tools and restore the altar to lift the curse?
- Lord High Mechanist Ordred Silvermaster has been captured by the **duergar** of Garntorm while she was putting the finishing touches on a deadly trap in the tunnels west of Mithalgar. She faces torture at the hands of Strozwenn Cragborn, the sullen Keeper of Garntorm, to force her to reveal the secrets of Mithalgar's defenses. Can the PCs sneak into the duergar-controlled fortress and stage a successful rescue?

ELVEN KINGDOMS

Elven kingdoms are most often found in the great forests of the world. Here, elves create wondrous cities in harmony with their natural surroundings, building slender, glistening spires of white stone, delicate archways, and sparkling fountains on the ground and beautiful wooden houses and platforms high among the trees.

The elves are an ancient people. In the Midgard campaign setting, in Tolkien's Middle-earth, and in other well-known fantasy worlds, their influence has waned as they have withdrawn from the world of humans, setting sail for the west or returning to the faerie realms from whence they originally came. For centuries, the elves of Midgard ruled a vast empire of splendid cities linked by magical roads, but they largely abandoned the mortal world in the Great Retreat, leaving only a fraction of their number behind.

In such worlds, elven kingdoms are small realms hidden among the trees of the forest, often located near the ruined cities of their ancient empires. Sometimes the elves watch over these fallen cities, seeking to preserve past glories and protect their secrets from greedy treasure hunters or those who would harness their lost magic for nefarious purposes. But many of these ruins have already succumbed to darkness and are now home to opportunists and brigands—or worse.

Certain elves establish kingdoms in different environments. The drow create their spectacular cities in huge subterranean caverns in the Underworld while dunewalker elves (see *Tome of Heroes*) live in oasis settlements deep in the desert, and frostfell elves (see *Tome of Heroes*) dwell in high mountainous or arctic regions. In Midgard, the nomadic windrunner elves (see *Midgard Worldbook* and *Warlock 32: Elves*) roam the eastern plains and steppes.

Elves value personal freedom and having their own private space, so elven kingdoms and settlements tend to have a "sparse" or "light" population density (see **Population** table) to give their inhabitants plenty of space. Because they share a common heritage, faerie creatures are often found living within elven kingdoms. Forest-dwelling gnomes and halflings, alseids, and erina are all also known to make their homes there.

Government. Kings and queens are the typical rulers of elven kingdoms. Sometimes this position is hereditary, but monarchs can also be chosen based on merit. In this case, the current ruler proposes a potential successor to their subjects to see what they think. This could be a great wizard, a talented military commander, or someone who has shown themselves to be wise and to possess good leadership qualities. If the candidate is met with universal approval, things are straightforward, but elders in the community may put forward one or more alternatives.

If there are rival candidates for the position, there will be several rounds of hustings (or gatherings at which candidates can debate and directly interact with the people) and speeches, followed by a vote to choose the next ruler. Because elves are so long-lived, choosing the wrong leader is a mistake they will have to live with for centuries, so they prefer to take their time over such decisions. Sometimes, the selection process goes on for months or even years.

Because elven kingdoms are typically small and independent-minded, there might be more than one kingdom in a single region, each with its own ruler. High kings and emperors—with dominion over multiple elven kingdoms—are rare.

Religion. Magic, nature, art, and music are the customary portfolios of elven deities, though many elves worship nature itself as druids. Gods of archery, beauty, hunting, or poetry are other possibilities.

Suitable elven gods include Apollo, Artemis, Balder, the Daghdha, Frey and Freya, Isis, Osiris, Pan, and Silvanus from both fantasy and historical pantheons and Baccho, Holda, Sarastra, Valeresh, and Yarila and Porevit from the Midgard campaign setting.

ELVEN OR FAERIE KINGDOM?

Sometimes, the lines between elves and fey are blurred. This is particularly true in Midgard. For example, the shadow fey are elven but are also considered fey and live largely in the Shadow Realm. (See *Book of Ebon Tides* for more information on their kingdoms.)

Another example, Ulorian the River King, a fey lord (see *Tome of Beasts*), rules the river elves of the Arbonesse and their fey allies. Since the River Court exists simultaneously in Midgard and the Summer Lands though, we're treating this realm—and others like it—as fey kingdoms in the context of this book.

Magic. Magic is part of everyday life in elven kingdoms. Even those elves that don't wield magic themselves are familiar with common spells and items such as magic arrows or *boots* and *cloaks of elvenkind*.

Elves are renowned for their ritual magic (see *Deep Magic Volume 2*), which allows them to cast especially powerful spells, provided the caster has the time available to perform the complex incantations involved. Elven colleges of magic teach their ritual casters how to further enhance such spells by calling upon their inner reserves.

Enemies and Allies. Goblins, bugbears, orcs, and other warlike humanoid tribes living in or close to the kingdom's forests are almost always seen as enemies by the elves. Drow inhabiting subterranean caverns beneath elven kingdoms sometimes venture into the forests at night or lay claim to ruined elf cities, leading to conflict between them and their surface-dwelling cousins.

Elven kingdoms often ally themselves with nearby human nations or cities. Dwarves may be viewed with suspicion, but the elves trade with them anyway because they need the precious metal ores mined by the stout folk to craft their jewelry and fine blades. Gnomish and halfling kingdoms and communities are frequently allies of the elves.

ELVEN LANDMARKS

Every elven city and town should have one or more interesting buildings or features. Roll 1d10 and consult the **Elven Landmarks** table or choose some appropriate landmarks.

ELVEN LANDMARKS

d10	Landmark
1	***Great Parliament.*** A huge beech tree that serves as a roost for the giant owls used as mounts by the elves.
2	***Mixed Orchard.*** Apple, pear, and plum trees clustered among the great oaks, beeches, and pines, offering an abundance of oversized, succulent fruit.
3	***Ornate Fountain.*** Sculpted of white marble and set in the center of a plaza, water pouring from the mouths of intertwined eels.
4	***Pool of Truth.*** A glistening pool with a mirror-like surface that offers a brief glimpse into the future for anyone who studies their reflection.
5	***Princess's Promenade.*** An elegant walkway of wood and glass high in the treetops, connecting several important buildings.
6	***Sculptor's Glade.*** A forest clearing filled with exquisite sculptures of wood and stone and with topiary creations.
7	***Soaring Archway.*** Completely enveloped by sweet-smelling jasmine and other foliage. Passing through the arch grants the effects of the *guidance* spell with a 10-minute duration.
8	***Tall Oak.*** Treehouses and platforms nestle within its branches. A floating slice of tree trunk transports visitors up to the lowest platform from the forest floor.
9	***Tower of High Magic.*** A slender, 200-foot-tall tower of gleaming-white stone without any obvious doors or windows that houses the college of wizardry.
10	***Tree of Knowledge.*** A wondrous library with rooms built into the trunk and thick branches of an ancient, spreading oak.

ELVEN RULERS

Many of the suggestions and tables for titles, backstory, physical description, and personal characteristics presented earlier in **Designing a Ruler** work just as well for elven rulers. In addition, the ruler might have a particular quirk: roll 1d20 on the **Elven Ruler Quirks** table or choose something appropriate.

ELVEN RULER QUIRKS

d20	The Ruler . . .
1	Chews their hair when they are thinking.
2	Enjoys dwarven drinking songs.
3	Eschews jewelry and dresses only in black.
4	Fidgets constantly with a mysterious ring.
5	Frequently trips over their own feet.
6	Goes for a daily walk in the forest before dawn, accompanied only by their green-furred elven hound.
7	Guffaws loudly.
8	Has a special affinity for birds.
9	Has failing eyesight but is too vain to wear their spectacles.
10	Is 999 years old.
11	Is allergic to plants.
12	Is an expert sword fighter and will challenge anyone who disagrees with them to a duel.
13	Is haunted by dreams of an alluring Spider Goddess.
14	Is stunningly beautiful.
15	Is the kingdom's best archer.
16	Limps slightly from an old wound.
17	Plays the lyre to relax.
18	Rides a worg.
19	Seeks the counsel of an ancient green dragon living in the forest.
20	Speaks with a gentle lilt.

Here are sample elven rulers, ready to be slotted into a campaign (see also **Sample Elven Kingdom** for the Queen of Feathers).

QUEEN OF THE FORSAKEN CITY

Sometimes the elves didn't willingly abandon their wondrous cities but were instead driven out by their enemies. Centuries ago, the mighty wizards of the elven city of Isyn Thalore succumbed to hubris as they pushed the boundaries of the arcane arts, weaving ever more powerful rituals. While attempting to create a portal network that would allow them to travel instantly between their cities and other worlds, Isyn Thalore's mages instead opened a dimensional rift to the lower planes. Hordes of fiends poured into the elven city and began slaughtering its inhabitants. Eventually, the desperate wizards were able to close the portal, but it was too late. The city was overrun, and the elves were forced to abandon their home.

The leader of these wizards was Belamaya Miradthas. After the fall, she spent many years in exile, planning how to undo what she and her arrogant colleagues had wrought. Two years ago, Belamaya returned to the ruins of Isyn Thalore with a small army of elven warriors and reclaimed half the city from the squabbling demons and devils. Declaring herself queen, she and her eight sons and daughters, all capable fighter-mages, have established wards around the recaptured part of the city and are ready to take the fight to the remaining fiends and banish them for good.

Her Honorable Resplendence, Queen Belamaya Miradthas the Contrite is nearly 900 years old with graying blond hair and crow's feet around her glittering silver eyes. She dresses in long bright-blue robes and wears a plain silver circlet set with a moonstone on her brow. Despite her advanced years, Queen Belamaya remains full of energy and has a steely determination to bring the rest of Isyn Thalore under elven control.

Personality Trait. "I cannot truly make amends for my past deeds, but I can try."

Ideal. "We will rid Isyn Thalore of fiends and restore it to its former glory."

Bond. "I will make sure my sons and daughters do not repeat their mother's mistakes."

Flaw/Secret. "I still feel tempted to wield magic I don't completely control."

WARDEN OF THE COPPERBEECH FOREST

Ruler of a tiny forest kingdom located on the fringes of the Endless Steppes, His Royal Highness, Prince Reninblas the Undaunted, came to the throne nine years ago when his predecessor was killed fighting a pack of gnolls that had set the Copperbeech Forest ablaze. The gnolls were slain or driven off before they could do too much damage, but the elves knew they would be back. Reninblas was unanimously chosen by the people to lead for his military skills.

Since becoming warden, Prince Reninblas has put his tactical acumen to good use, improving the kingdom's defenses through regular patrols, clever use of deadfalls and other traps, and camouflaging its treetop villages to be easily unnoticed by forest invaders. Any gnolls

ELVEN KINGDOM ADVENTURE PLOTS

d8	Plot
1	Deliver the gift of a beautiful, miniature tree to the High King of Stoneheart Canyon.
2	Discover the hidden tunnel that leads to the Underworld and deal with the drow spies.
3	Escort the royal astronomer to the haunted summit of Baldtop Hill, so he can safely observe the arrival of a comet.
4	Find out why dead bodies of birds and small animals are appearing all over the forest.
5	Gather rare herbs only found in a remote part of the woods inhabited by bad-tempered forest giants.
6	Light the beacon at the top of the Tower of the Rising Sun to awaken the fallen city's ancient guardians.
7	Put a stop to the rapacious orc tribe that lives in the caverns just inside the kingdom's borders.
8	Sneak into the treetop library at Mystic College and steal the special annotated copy of *Potion Brewer's Enchiridion*.

foolish enough to stray into the woods are swiftly and ruthlessly dealt with, and they have avoided the forest for several years now. However, the elves must still contend with the Basileus of the Endless Steppes (see also **Human Rulers**) and his antelope-riding warriors who make occasional forays into the forest.

Prince Reninblas is a grim-faced wood elf of middle-age and wiry build who dresses in green plate armor, which bears the kingdom's beech tree emblem, and a helm topped with an impressive pair of antlers. He wears his silver hair cropped short. In combat, he rides a worg named Bloodfang that treads so lightly as she races through the forest, as if she's floating just a few inches above the ground. Prince Reninblas wields a magic spear with a trefoil head of blue steel that returns to his hands when thrown. He is married to Princess Nathsintra, a drow who appeared in the forest one day, arriving through a one-way portal in the ancient elven ruin of Vilondeth (see **Sample Elven Kingdom**). They make an unlikely couple, for Nathsintra is as joyous as Reninblas is somber, but the warden is besotted with her.

Personality Trait. "Our enemies do not rest, so neither should we."

Ideal. "I will do everything in my power to protect my kingdom."

Bond. "I can't wait until my first child is born. I will see that they never want for anything."

Flaw/Secret. "I lash out angrily at those that irk me."

ADVENTURES IN ELVEN KINGDOMS

Elven kingdoms and the surrounding forests are places of mystery and magic, filled with peril and adventure. Here are some suggestions for potential adventures.

ADVENTURE PLOTS

Elven kingdoms might hire adventurers to scout or map ancient ruins, to deliver a message or escort a dignitary to a neighboring kingdom, or to deal with forest marauders. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Elven Kingdom Adventure Plots** table for possibilities (see also the kingdom's **State of the Nation** for more plot ideas) or choose something appropriate.

ADVENTURE SITES

Abandoned elven cities in the forest are fantastic adventure locations, offering ancient towers and ruined buildings to explore, terrible monsters and evil humanoids to fight, and lost magics to discover. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Elven Kingdom Adventure Sites** table for some suggested locales to add to the kingdom map or choose something appropriate to use as inspiration.

VILLAINOUS NPCS AND FACTIONS

Underworld-dwelling drow, tribes of wicked goblins and feral orcs, greedy loggers, and others who don't respect the forest can all serve as foes in adventures set in elven kingdoms. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Elven Kingdom Villainous NPCs** table (see also the kingdom's **Enemies and Allies** for more plot ideas) or choose some appropriate villains.

SAMPLE ELVEN KINGDOM: CAELEVAR

Located in the dense and ancient Caelevar Forest, south of the Maradrim Mountains, the elven kingdom of Caelevar is a mere shadow of its heyday. Although the southern part of the forest is under the authority of Queen Aulmaris Ilthuryn, the northern half has long since fallen into darkness. The sparsely populated kingdom's borders are hard to define, but beyond the

CAELEVAR

Symbol: A blue jay perched on an acorn

Ruler: Her Serene Majesty Aulmaris Ilthuryn, the Queen of Feathers (NG elf, see **Ruler: Queen of Feathers**)

Important Personages: High Mage Eriladar Starweaver (NG elf **archmage**); Lord Marshal Niennlath Sylree (CG **elvish veteran archer**, see *Tome of Beasts*); Prince Narondeedinore (CN **alseid woad warrior**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Taeralin Rimeblade, First Speaker of the Maradrim Mountains (CG frostfell elf **scout**); Vamaris Gloomstrider, Lord of Vilondeth (CN dark elf **mage**)

Population: 111,000 (66,100 elves, 11,200 goblins, 10,000 orcs, 7,800 dark elves/drow, 4,600 gnolls, 3,300 alseids, 3,000 frostfell elves, 5,000 others)

Capital: Arilaroth, population 12,600 (11,900 elves, 700 others)

Towns: Goldleaf Grove (4,800), Mossgate (5,900), Whisperglade (2,300)

Ruins: Evdylwyn (2,800 orcs), Lamiltas (3,400 goblins, 1,700 orcs), Ruanthal (1,800 gnolls, 1,000 orcs), Vilondeth (6,600 dark elves/drow)

Great Gods: Yarila and Porevit (patrons), Ares, Baccho, Holda, Sarastra

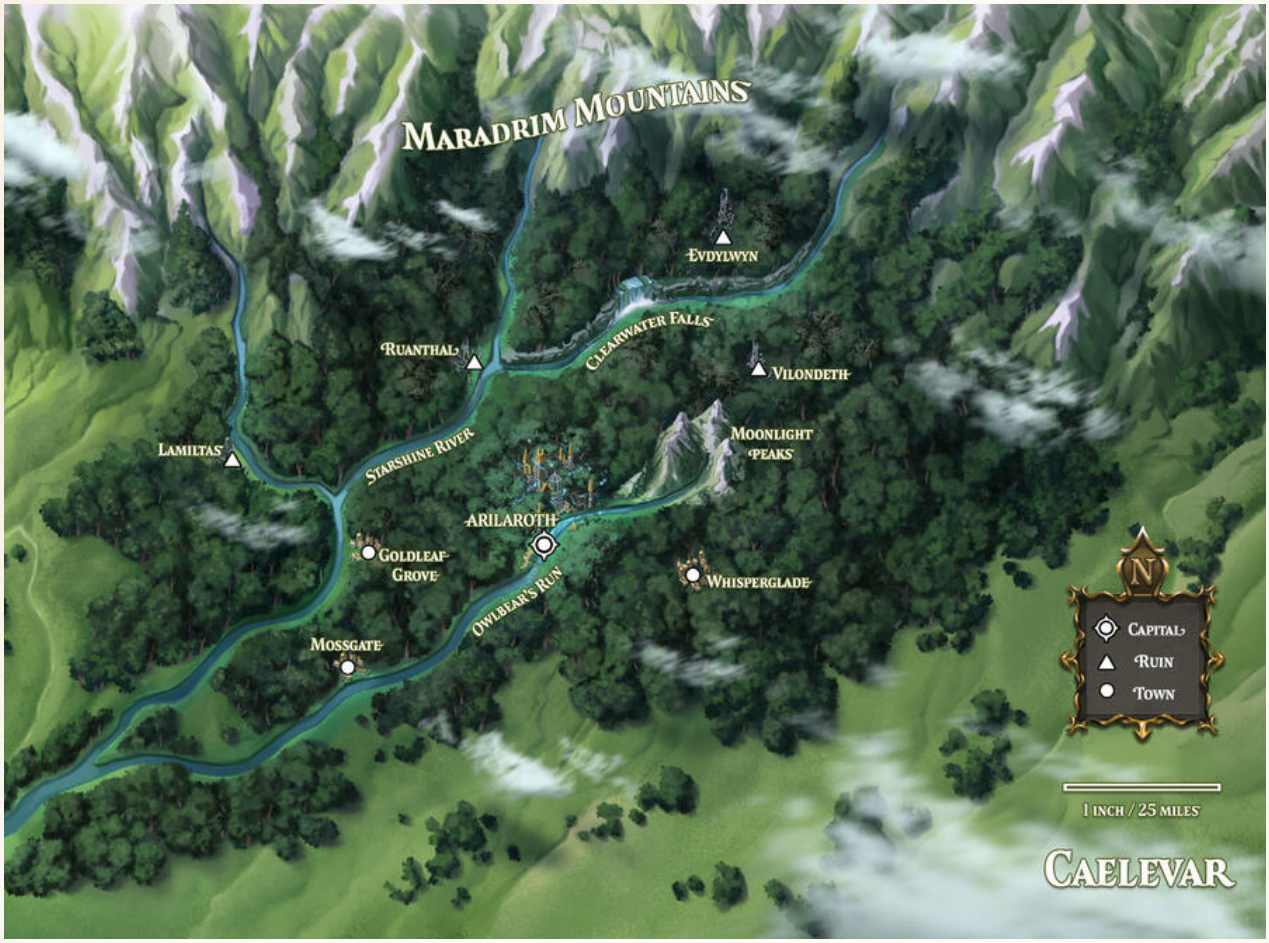
Trade Goods: Timber, fruit, herbs and medicinal plants, jewelry, art objects, fine blades, antiquities and magic items looted from the ruined cities (in order of importance)

ELVEN KINGDOM ADVENTURE SITES

d8	Site
1	***Abandoned Treetop Village.*** Overgrown by plants—and overrun by plant monsters.
2	***Earthen Tunnels.*** A network runs beneath the roots of the settlement's largest trees, inhabited by foul oozes and slimes.
3	***Lonely Watchtower.*** Deep in the forest, abandoned and forgotten.
4	***Observatory of the Seven Stars.*** Now in ruins and infested with hideous creatures from the Void.
5	***Plaza of Memories.*** A square that shares echoes of the lives of the fallen city's former inhabitants with those who tread on its cracked flagstones.
6	***Roaming Tree.*** A magical ash that imparts little-known druidic magic to anyone who can find and befriend it.
7	***Summer Palace of the Heartbroken.*** Desolate site haunted by Queen Yralissa's despairing spirit.
8	***Swanboat Dock.*** An ancient stone jetty where the elves boarded beautiful boats to begin their journey to the Summer Lands.

ELVEN KINGDOM VILLAINOUS NPCS

d8	Villain
1	***Cackling Gorehounds.*** A clan of feral gnolls, hungry for blood.
2	***Company of the Blood Moon.*** A pack of forest-dwelling lycanthropes and adventurers-for-hire.
3	***Eyeless Cabal.*** A group of reckless sorcerers and warlocks seeking the lost secrets of elven high magic.
4	***Garren Pengelly.*** An unscrupulous timber merchant, who is cutting down vast swaths of the woodlands.
5	***Guardians of the Green Mantle.*** Fanatical elven warriors who keep non-elves away from their ruined cities.
6	***Myendra Dhesridal.*** Drow rebel seeking a foothold in the surface world.
7	***Tylzagaroth the Miasmic.*** An ancient dragon that is losing their mind.
8	***Ulgu Havocwreaker.*** Bloodthirsty warlord and leader of a band of orcs and other forest dwellers whose hatred of the elves has come to a breaking point.



Moonlight Peaks, the forest is instead inhabited by tribes of gnolls, goblins, and orcs, and a clan of dark elves occupy its once-shining cities.

Nearly 800 years ago, as warring human magocracies laid waste to the landscape, the elves of Caelevar decided they'd had enough of this world. Sounding their horns, they withdrew to the Summer Lands, leaving a small number of stalwart souls behind—known as the Stewards of Caelevar—to watch over the towering spires and sparkling fountains of their empty cities. Not all the other elves heeded the signal to abandon the mortal world though. One large group, the frostfell elves (see *Tome of Heroes*), went north to the snow-capped peaks of the Maradrim Mountains while another headed belowground to find a new home in the Underworld.

As the years became decades and then centuries, the northern woods came under attack from aggressive humanoid tribes. The stewards had long since lost contact with their cousins in the mountains and underground and were unable to call upon them for help. Orcs and goblins drove out the remaining elves and squatted in their cities. The stewards were forced to withdraw to the southern half of the forest, consolidating their power in the city of Arilaroth and a handful of treetop towns.

For the past 120 years, the smaller kingdom of Caelevar has been ruled by Her Serene Majesty, Aulmaris Ilthuryn the Queen of Feathers. A wise and benevolent ruler and a powerful druid, the queen and her stewards have kept the people safe from the depredations of their hostile northern neighbors.

More recently, a large group of elves have returned from the Underworld. After many centuries in the lightness realms, they had grown accustomed to the darkness (treat as drow but with pale skin and hair, as if devoid of color). Striking at night with sharp blades, poisoned crossbows, and mighty spells, they drove the goblins from the ruined city of Vilondeth. Now dwelling in and beneath the ruins, these "dark elves" of Vilondeth venture out only at night and have so far refused all friendly overtures from Caelevar.

Queen Aulmaris dreams of reclaiming the lost cities

and ruling the whole of Caelevar Forest one day, but she knows this will prove extremely challenging. In the meantime, she is content to rule her small kingdom. Caelevar is home to alseids, centaurs, dryads, satyrs, and treants as well as the elves, though it has a much lower population than most kingdoms its size.

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

Those familiar with Caelevar know the following information:

- Outside of the larger towns, the elves of Caelevar live in small villages hidden in the treetops. They hunt boar, deer, and rabbit and grow fruits and vegetables in orchards and plots.
- Birdlife is everywhere in the Caelevar Forest, and their singing provides a constant soundtrack. Several dozen species nest in the woods, but bright-blue forest jays are the most famous avian residents. Goblins and orcs consider it bad luck to hurt a jay. Gnolls, however, have no such qualms and enjoy eating them.
- The long-abandoned elf cities were renowned for their towering spires, glittering domes, beautiful fountains, and elegant gardens. Today, they are ruined and overgrown, and inhabited by hostile humanoid tribes and dangerous monsters. Wondrous magic and lost treasures can still be found in the ruins, but adventurers must watch out for ingenious traps and magical guardians left behind by the elves to protect the sites.
- None of the elves living in the kingdom today are old enough to remember the splendors of Caelevar's past, but there is said to be a dragon living in the ruins of Evdylwyn with firsthand knowledge of those times. Persuading her to share it is another matter.
- The dark elves living in the ruins of Vilondeth do not welcome visitors. Trespassers are typically drugged with sleep poison, stripped of their gear, and left tied up a day's travel from the city.
- The reclusive frostfell elves of the Maradrim Mountains can sometimes be sighted hunting elk on the wooded slopes on the northern edge of the forest.

SETTLEMENTS AND SITES

Caelevar's major settlements are small by most standards. Only Arilaroth has a population large enough to be considered a city, and there are only three towns: Goldleaf Grove, Mossgate, and Whisperglade. The rest of the inhabitants live in villages or isolated homesteads. The ruined cities in the northern half of the forest are much larger, but most of their buildings lie empty or remain overgrown.

Arilaroth. The capital of Caelevar is a small elven city built into the mighty beech and oak trees of the forest. Beautifully carved walkways, staircases, and bridges connect the wooden platforms and buildings high above the forest floor. The domed Chamber of the Stewards sits in the branches of the tallest oak, and its stunning stained-glass windows depict scenes of everyday life from the kingdom's past in the lost cities of the north. Queen Aulmaris's multilevel home is inside the trunk of a neighboring tree, and dozens of jays and other forest birds flock to its balconies each day to speak with her.

Clearwater Falls. Water from deep within the mountains cascades over a series of waterfalls before tumbling 100 feet from Clearwater Falls to a deep pool below, in the Cylenor River. A large area of fallen trees surrounds the small lake—the aftermath of the thunderous mating calls of a male **bukavac** (see *Tome of Beasts*). The male is long gone, but the female lairs beneath the water, guarding her clutch of eggs and ready to ambush any creature that comes too close.

Evdylwyn. This ruined elven city is located on a wooded mountainside near the forest's northern border. Nearly 3,000 orcs belonging to three rival tribes—the Bloodsoaked Banner, the Jagged Ribs, and the Marrow Gnawers—live in one section of the ruins. The orcs spend more time fighting each other than they do raiding other settlements, and all three tribes live in fear of Tylzagaroth the Miasmic, an **ancient green dragon**, who makes her lair in a part of the city overgrown with dense, tangled foliage. The orcs bring the dragon baubles found in the collapsed buildings to keep her happy.

Goldleaf Grove. As the name suggests, this small elven town is situated in a beautiful grove of goldleaf trees. Rare outside the Caelevar Forest, these splendid trees have reddish trunks and leaves that turn from warm gold to bright red before falling in winter. Most of the elves' homes are up in the forest canopy, but there are a handful of stone structures at ground level, clustered around the elegant Spiral Tower, which is home to High Mage Eriladar Starweaver. Eriladar knows more about the lost elven cities than any other elf in Caelevar and has assembled an impressive collection of maps and scrolls dating back centuries.

Lamiltas. Located on both sides of the Ealenora River, this ruined elven city is occupied by goblins (who live in the western half) and orcs (in the eastern half). The goblins outnumber the orcs two to one and have designs on the whole city, but the three collapsed bridges that once crossed the river keep the two groups separated. Fearsome **lake trolls** (see *Tome of Beasts*) dwell in the river and prey on both sides.

Maradrim Mountains. Reaching heights of up to 10,000 feet, the Maradrim Mountains are home to several dozen small villages of frostfell elves, as well as **stone giants** and a terrifying **mountain giant** (see *Creature Codex*) named Old Granitebones. **Stuhac** (see *Tome of Beasts*) prey on travelers in the passes.

Moonlight Peaks. The source of the Owlbear's Run is this trio of towering peaks, rising nearly 7,000 feet above the forest. An ancient stone circle, standing in the wooded valley between them, acts as a portal to the Summer Lands. When the majority of Caelevar's elves left the mortal world 800 years ago, they did so via this gateway. The portal activates at seemingly random intervals—but consistently remains open for nine hours at each equinox and solstice. Creatures stepping through usually arrive in Dreamwolf Meadows in Everfrost, the realm of the Holly King (see **Sample Faerie Kingdom**), though some travelers have ended up in the Meadow of Fey Revels or at the Birch Queen's Fair.

Mossgate. Named after the moss-covered monumental archway that stands at its entrance, the town of Mossgate is Caelevar's second largest population center and home to the Circle of Oaks, a druidic organization whose members bind themselves to the Caelevar Forest. The druids learn how to travel instantaneously through the forest from one tree to another and even how to become one with the trees by merging their spirits with those of the oaks.

Ruanthal. Columns of thick black smoke are a frequent sight over the ruined elven city of Ruanthal. Built at the confluence of the Cylenor and Starshine Rivers, Ruanthal is inhabited by gnoll and orc tribes who fight a constant battle against the lush vegetation that covers the city's buildings. When the elves abandoned Ruanthal, their druids cast a powerful spell to accelerate the forest's growth and enshroud the city in plant life. These ancient magics are still in effect, and attempts at burning or cutting down the foliage are short-lived. Worse still, **shambling mounds** and other plant creatures stalk the ruins.

Vilondeth. The ruins of Vilondeth mark the only fallen city under elven control, but though the elves living there can trace their ancestry back to Caelevar, they have no allegiance to the modern-day kingdom. These dark elves emerged from the Underworld and reclaimed the city half a century ago but have resisted any attempts at contact from their erstwhile cousins.

Under their leader Vamaris Gloomstrider, the dark elves have established themselves in the city but have rebuilt few buildings, instead excavating an extensive dungeon complex beneath the ruins to serve as their home.

Whisperglade. The small alseid town of Whisperglade is ruled by Prince Narondeedinore, or Nari for short—an alseid prince with impressive 13-point antlers. As well as alseids, several dozen centaurs live in the town, which is built around a very old oak. Whisperglade's two **alseid grovekeepers** (see *Tome of Beasts*) look after the tree but have grown very concerned recently as the venerable oak has become afflicted with a blight and appears to be dying.

RULER: QUEEN OF FEATHERS

Queen Aulmaris Ilthuryn is an elf of striking appearance. She has pale, almost alabaster skin, copper hair, and green eyes, and she commonly wears a long, flowing gown decorated with bright-blue feather patterns, suggestive of her affinity with the birds of the forest. She wears a delicate gold crown and wields a wand topped with an acorn—a gift from her grandmother, the Queen of Birds.

Nearly three centuries old, Queen Aulmaris was elected ruler of Caelevar 120 years ago by the Council of Stewards upon the death of the previous monarch. As a powerful druid, born to Lord Marshal Ilthuryn and Princess Merhyssa, the daughter of the **Queen of Birds** (see *Creature Codex*), one of the legendary animal lords, Aulmaris was a popular choice.

She has since proven herself to be a wise and thoughtful ruler. Under her leadership, the towns and treetop villages of Caelevar have repelled multiple incursions from the hostile humanoid tribes that occupy the kingdom's long-lost ruined cities. In addition, she inherited a remarkable affinity with jays and other birds of the forest from her mother and grandmother, and she employs them as spies and messengers, ensuring that she is aware of everything and safeguarding the kingdom from any surprises.

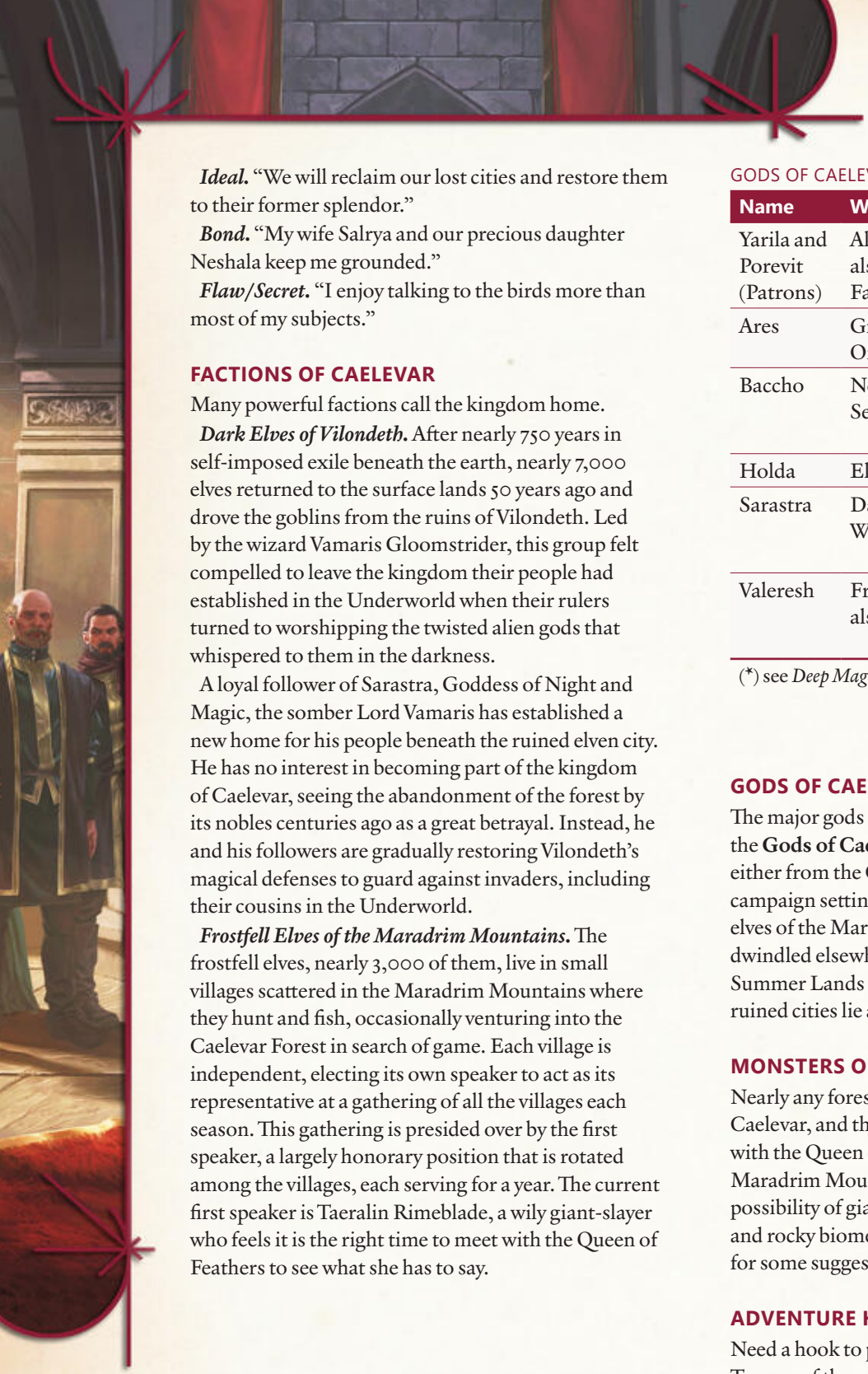
Queen Aulmaris has long-term aspirations to reclaim the ruined cities and expand the kingdom until Caelevar encompasses the entire forest again. To drive out the orcs and goblins, she needs help, and she has been attempting to contact the dark elves of Vilondeth and the long-lost frostfell elves of the Maradrim Mountains. Stubborn like her late father, she refuses to give up on her dreams.

The queen is advised by Niennlath Sylree, Lord Marshal of the Stewards, and High Mage Eriladar Starweaver. The lord marshal cautions against any attempts to dislodge the tribes from the northern cities while the high mage believes that there is much valuable elven magic to be recovered there, making the risks worthwhile.

(See also **Sample Rulers** in **Appendix** for this ruler's statistics.)

Roleplaying Queen Aulmaris. The queen is graceful and elegant but can seem aloof at first, particularly to non-elves. However, she soon warms to those who share her affinity for the birds and other creatures of the forest or who demonstrate they want to help protect Caelevar from its enemies.

Personality Trait. "If I really set my mind on it, nothing can stop me."



Ideal. "We will reclaim our lost cities and restore them to their former splendor."

Bond. "My wife Salrya and our precious daughter Neshala keep me grounded."

Flaw/Secret. "I enjoy talking to the birds more than most of my subjects."

FACTIONS OF CAELEVAR

Many powerful factions call the kingdom home.

Dark Elves of Vilondeth. After nearly 750 years in self-imposed exile beneath the earth, nearly 7,000 elves returned to the surface lands 50 years ago and drove the goblins from the ruins of Vilondeth. Led by the wizard Vamaris Gloomstrider, this group felt compelled to leave the kingdom their people had established in the Underworld when their rulers turned to worshipping the twisted alien gods that whispered to them in the darkness.

A loyal follower of Sarastra, Goddess of Night and Magic, the somber Lord Vamaris has established a new home for his people beneath the ruined elven city. He has no interest in becoming part of the kingdom of Caelevar, seeing the abandonment of the forest by its nobles centuries ago as a great betrayal. Instead, he and his followers are gradually restoring Vilondeth's magical defenses to guard against invaders, including their cousins in the Underworld.

Frostfell Elves of the Maradrim Mountains. The frostfell elves, nearly 3,000 of them, live in small villages scattered in the Maradrim Mountains where they hunt and fish, occasionally venturing into the Caelevar Forest in search of game. Each village is independent, electing its own speaker to act as its representative at a gathering of all the villages each season. This gathering is presided over by the first speaker, a largely honorary position that is rotated among the villages, each serving for a year. The current first speaker is Taeralin Rimeblade, a wily giant-slayer who feels it is the right time to meet with the Queen of Feathers to see what she has to say.

GODS OF CAELEVAR

Name	Worshippers	Domains
Yarila and Porevit (Patrons)	Alseids, Centaurs; also Druids, Farmers, Hunters	Life, Nature, Tempest
Ares	Gnolls, Goblins, Orcs	War
Baccho	Nobles, Poets, Seers	Beer (or Wine)*, Death, Lust*, Prophecy*, Travel*
Holda	Elders, Parents	Life, Light, Tempest
Sarastra	Dark Elves; also Wizards	Darkness†, Knowledge, Labyrinth†, Trickery
Valeresh	Frostfell Elves; also Warriors	Death, Justice*, Speed*, Tempest, War

(*) see *Deep Magic Volume 1* (†) see *Deep Magic Volume 2*

GODS OF CAELEVAR

The major gods of Caelevar and their domains (see the **Gods of Caelevar** table) have largely been taken either from the Greek pantheon or from the Midgard campaign setting. Valeresh is followed by the frostfell elves of the Maradrim Mountains, but his worship has dwindled elsewhere—most of his adherents left for the Summer Lands 800 years ago, and his temples in the ruined cities lie abandoned.

MONSTERS OF CAELEVAR

Nearly any forest-dwelling monster can appear in Caelevar, and those of avian origin fit especially well with the Queen of Feathers. The presence of the Maradrim Mountains to the north also opens the possibility of giants and of monsters tied more to cold and rocky biomes. See the **Monsters of Caelevar** table for some suggestions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- First Speaker Taeralin Rimeblade of the frostfell elves has finally agreed to a meeting with the Queen of Feathers. The PCs are hired to escort Queen Aulmaris safely through the forest to the Maradrim Mountains. On the way, the adventurers must fend off attacks by **gnolls**, **orcs**, and worse.

MONSTERS OF CAELEVAR

CR	Creature	CR	Creature
1/4	Boar	2	Forest Drake (see *Creature Codex*)
1/4	Drow	2	Ogre
1/4	Elk	2	White Stag (see *Creature Codex*)
1/4	Forest Falcon (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	3	Basilisk
1/4	Giant Owl	3	Duskthorn Dryad (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1/4	Goblin	3	Elvish Veteran Archer (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1/4	Swarm of Ravens	3	Manticore
1/4	Wolf	3	Owlbear
1/2	Alseid (see *Tome of Beasts*)	5	Dire Owlbear (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1/2	Black Bear	5	Shambling Mound
1/2	Foxin (see *Creature Codex*)	5	Unicorn
1/2	Gnoll	5	Vila (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1/2	Orc	5	Werebear
1/2	Satyr	6	Tatzelwurm (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1/2	Worg	6	Wyvern
1	Child of the Briar (see *Tome of Beasts*)	7	Lake Troll (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Dire Wolf	7	Stone Giant
1	Dryad	9	Bukavac (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Wampus Cat (see *Tome of Beasts*)	9	Treant
2	Alseid Woad Warrior (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	10	Chameleon Hydra (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
2	Ankheg	13	Stuhac (see *Tome of Beasts*)
2	Awakened Tree	19	Ancient Green Dragon
2	Centaur	21	Mountain Giant (see *Creature Codex*)

- High Mage Eriladar Starweaver has been puzzling over an ancient scroll that contains an illustration of a mage's tower in the city of Vilondeth. He believes the murals inside the tower hold the secrets of a long-lost elven ritual. Can the PCs sneak into Vilondeth without being captured by the dark elves (**drow**) in order to study and copy the paintings?
- Whisperglade's alseid grovekeepers are worried that the great oak at the center of the town is dying from a mysterious blight. All their attempts to heal the tree have failed, but the elven druids of the Circle of Oaks in Mossgate believe the magic that protects Ruanthal may hold the answer to saving the tree. Unfortunately, the only living creature in the forest old enough to know how the spell was created is the **ancient green dragon** Tylzagaroth the Miasmic. Are the PCs brave enough to parley with the dragon and save the oak?

FAERIE KINGDOMS

Faerie kingdoms, also known as fey courts, can be found in other planes, such as the Summer Lands or the Shadow Realm, or even in the mortal world. Certain faerie kingdoms even exist simultaneously across multiple planes, allowing visitors to cross over from one world to the other, whether intentionally or unwittingly. For example, Corremel, the City of Lanterns, in the Shadow Realm is linked to its "mirror twin" in the mortal world, Corremel, the City of Ale, in Midgard's Southlands.

Fey courts vary in size but are typically smaller than mortal kingdoms. The smallest are tiny fiefdoms, consisting of the lord's castle and a handful of surrounding villages while even the biggest domains are usually only a few hundred miles across. In the Summer Lands, the high king and queen have supremacy over the lesser faerie kingdoms, and in the Shadow Realm, the

Queen of Night and Magic—who once ruled cyclically with her embittered husband, the Moonlit King—now reigns unopposed, and lesser courts pay her fealty.

While sylvan forests, secluded valleys, and gleaming fairy castles most often spring to mind when picturing a typical faerie kingdom, the fey can be found in all climates and terrain types, from freezing arctic wastes and dark, mysterious caverns deep underground to blazing hot deserts and sweltering jungles. Wherever they are located, faerie kingdoms are enchanted places of magic and story, whimsy and darkness.

The bright fey, also known as the sidhe or summer elves, are related to the elves of the mortal world but have lived in the Summer Lands for centuries. They are widespread throughout the realms of Faerie, and their nobles are the fey lords and ladies who rule many of the courts and cities. Elves and others who have abandoned the Material Plane for the Summer Lands are found here—as well as dryads, hags, sprites, and dozens of other fey. Kingdoms in the Summer Lands are also home to gnomes, halflings, goblins, erina, talking animals, and awakened plants. In the Shadow Realm, the shadow fey dominate, but there are bearfolk, darakhul, shadow goblins, and umbral humans among the major races as well (see also *Book of Ebon Tides* for more on the Shadow Realm).

Government. Fey are capricious and mischievous creatures with chaotic reputations, but there is a distinct hierarchy in fey society with the fey lords and ladies at the top—they are eldritch creatures of high station and immense personal power—ruling over the kingdoms and great cities. Beneath them are the fey and the elves while lesser creatures, such as talking animals, gnomes, halflings, and goblins, are at the bottom of this "societal pyramid."

Fey society is strictly feudal, and the inhabitants are expected to follow the complex rules and regulations laid down by the illustrious fey nobility. Whatever the extent of a fey ruler's domain, within their realm their word is law—no matter how baffling their edicts might be to outsiders. Ignorance or lack of comprehension are no defense against the harsh penalties that await those who break such a kingdom's laws.

Most faerie kingdoms are monarchies or fiefdoms ruled by a single entity, usually—though not always—a fey lord or lady. Courts can also sometimes be ruled by a centaur or treant, by a hag coven, by a fey council, or by almost anyone in the right (or wrong) place at the right (or wrong) time. The tiny realm of Twinklefell, for instance, is governed by the chaotic Pixie Parliament, and there are even minor courts ruled by gnomes and goblins.

Religion. Many fey claim to have better things to do than waste their time worshiping gods, and instead, they pay tribute to the powerful High King and Queen of the Summer Lands, the Queen of Night and Magic, the Moonlit King, or another fey sovereign.

Those that do honor the gods are drawn to deities of music and dance, beauty and love, magic, nature, and trickery. Suitable faerie gods include Aphrodite, Apollo, Balder, Bes, Dionysus, Hecate, Loki, Math Mathonwy, Pan, and Silvanus from both fantasy and historical pantheons and Baccho, Sarastra, and Yarila and Porevit from the Midgard campaign setting.

Magic. Magic permeates faerie kingdoms, and nearly all their inhabitants are spellcasters or innately magical creatures of some sort—or both. Enchantments and charms, illusions and trickery, and curses that range from harmless pranks to deadly banes are widespread.

Travelers in fey kingdoms are advised to be wary. A hapless mortal who eats food or drinks wine offered by a mischievous fey at a picnic might wake up the following morning with donkey ears and tail, and those who renege on a bargain with a hag could find themselves turned into frogs. Bags of fairy gold also tend to change into sacks of worthless leaves after a day, a week, or on return to the mortal world.

While formal organizations of wizards are rare in the faerie realms, like-minded sorcerers, warlocks, and witches will gather in small groups under the full moon or on important days of the faerie calendar to enact powerful rituals or exchange news. Warlocks who form pacts with the fey lords and ladies are sometimes given tasks to perform by their patrons at these gatherings.

Enemies and Allies. Faerie kingdoms and their rulers have little interest in most mortals and largely regard humans, dwarves, and such creatures as foolish and beneath their notice. They do make an exception for the elves of the mortal world as they share an ancestry, along with a smattering of others, such as gnomes, halflings, and goblins, which are all regarded as very useful servants.

Of course, most of a faerie kingdom's enemies and allies come from within the Summer Lands or Shadow Realm. Like mortal nobles, fey lords and ladies are prone to intense rivalries and petty disputes with others of their kind, particularly when vying for the favor of their high king or queen. The fey courts of the Summer Lands are often at odds with the shadow fey, and vice versa, and the refined "seelie" fey of the courts regularly come into conflict with hags, redcaps, gremlins, and other troublesome "unseelie" fey.

FAERIE CHARACTERISTICS

d12	Characteristic
1	Enchanted roads run through the kingdom, allowing travel at double, triple, or quadruple normal speed.
2	Enchantment spells and abilities are harder to resist—saving throws are made at disadvantage.
3	Every day is sunny. Colors are twice as vibrant, and nothing is black, gray, or white. The flowers even sing.
4	Illusion spells are more convincing—ability checks to determine that something is an illusion are made at disadvantage.
5	It is always nighttime, and the kingdom is constantly dark and gloomy. Fireflies flit among the twisted branches of the trees.
6	The kingdom doesn't want anyone to leave. Visitors who try to exit the realm find themselves back where they started after 2d4 hours of travel.
7	The kingdom's borders grow and shrink as the seasons turn.
8	The kingdom's flora and fauna are unwelcoming, rude, or downright hostile to visitors.
9	The kingdom's season never changes.
10	Time moves faster. For each day spent in the kingdom, a week, a month, or a year passes in the mortal world.
11	Time moves slower. For each day spent in the kingdom, an hour, a minute, or a second passes in the mortal world.
12	Travel in the kingdom is bewildering. It is easy to get lost—ability checks to navigate are made at disadvantage.

FAERIE CHARACTERISTICS

Every faerie kingdom has its own unique characteristics. Roll 1d12 and consult the **Faerie Characteristics** table or choose something appropriate.

FAERIE RULERS

Faerie kingdoms are typically ruled by fey lords and ladies, beings of ancient power, but this is not always the case. Sometimes other creatures can ascend the throne of a fey court. Roll 1d20 on the **Faerie Kingdom Rulers** table or choose an appropriate ruler.

Also, though designed for mortal rulers, many of the suggestions and tables for titles, backstory, physical description, and personal characteristics presented earlier in **Designing a Ruler** still work for faerie rulers. In addition, the ruler might have a particular quirk: roll 1d20 on the **Faerie Ruler Quirks** table or choose something appropriate.

Here are sample faerie rulers, ready to be slotted into a campaign (see also **Sample Faerie Kingdom** for the Holly King).

BIRCH QUEEN

Her Gracious Majesty Selastri, the Birch Queen, is an influential fey lady who once owed fealty to the River King (see *Tome of Beasts*) but now answers only to the High King and Queen of the Summer Lands. Known for her cruel humor and untrammeled ambition, current gossip among the fey lords and ladies is that she has designs on the Oberon Throne.

The queen's kingdom of forests and meadows, the Birch Court, borders both the River Court and the Oak Court (see below) and is renowned for its annual fair. Held in a large fairy ring in the very center of the realm, the Birch Queen's Fair serves as a neutral meeting place where the fey—including their shadow fey cousins—can conduct their business without the usual feuding and sniping. The vast, open clearing is filled with brightly colored tents, stalls, and wagons, and it is attended by fey, elves, talking animals, gnomes, giants, and various monsters. Fairgoers can buy or sell just about anything, from spells and magic items to memories, skills, and luck.

FAERIE KINGDOM RULERS

d20	Ruler
1	Centaur
2	Dryad
3	Elf or Shadow Fey (see *Tome of Beasts*)
4	Erina (see *Tome of Beasts*)
5	Gnome or Halfling
6	Goblin
7	Hag
8	Pixie or Sprite
9	Ratatosk (see *Tome of Beasts*)
10	Satyr or Selang (see *Tome of Beasts*)
11	Treant
12–20	Fey Lord or Fey Lady

FAERIE RULER QUIRKS

d20	The Ruler . . .
1	Always speaks in rhyme.
2	Carves beautiful animals and birds from wood.
3	Dresses head to toe in a single bright color.
4	Giggles at childish pranks.
5	Glows with a soft golden light.
6	Has a cruel smile and a warm heart.
7	Has a passion for exotic food—the weirder, the better.
8	Has a very ostentatious mustache.
9	Has eyes that change color with their mood.
10	Is happiest when surrounded by fawning mortals.
11	Is surprisingly humble.
12	Loves hearing spiteful gossip.
13	Makes wonderful, life-size ice sculptures.
14	Prefers to spend their time in animal or bird form.
15	Takes advice from a talking fox.
16	Trades favors for memories.
17	Was born a kobold.
18	Wears their blue (or green) hair in tall spikes.
19	Wields a huge sword—a trophy from a defeated forest giant.
20	Will only speak to "unworthy" mortals through their chamberlain.

The highlight of the fair is the annual contest to win the Birch Queen's favor, becoming her consort for a year. Contestants must compete in tests of archery and entertainment (such as poetry, music, or juggling) and then demonstrate a talent for sparkling conversation in order to win. Last year's winner, the monocled goblin noble Froggy Mossbottom, has proved a somewhat amusing if unconventional consort, but the Birch Queen is looking forward to having a fresh face at her side soon. For his part, Froggy cannot wait to be relieved of his duties and allowed to return home to Tumbleshacks (see **Sample Faerie Kingdom**).

The Birch Queen is a beautiful elven woman with golden eyes and reddish-gold hair, wearing a crown of red and gold birch leaves and a long, flowing dress in shimmering autumnal colors. An amused, condescending smile plays across her face whenever she meets mortals, which soon turns to a disapproving glare if she is not shown the proper respect.

Personality Trait. "Is that long-winded anecdote supposed to amuse me?"

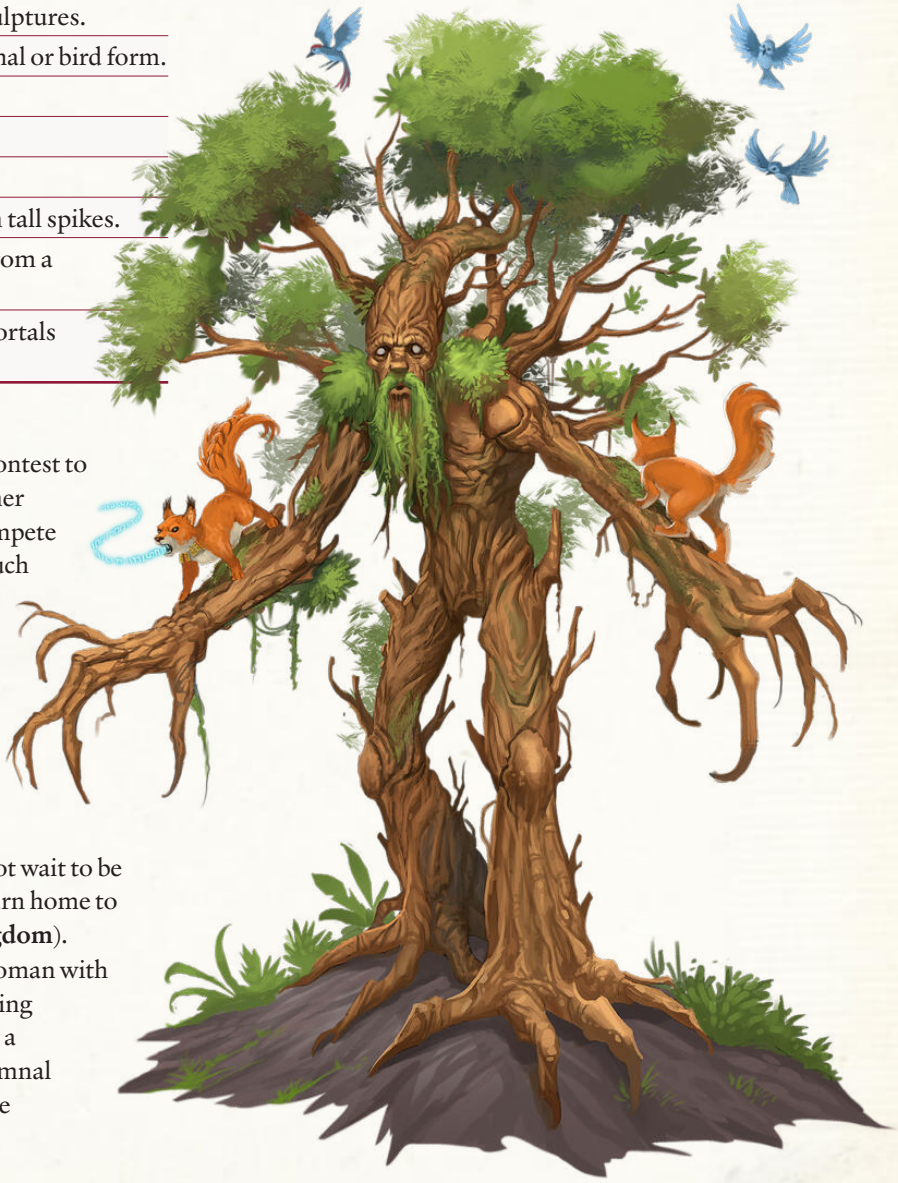
Ideal. "I will stop at nothing to achieve my dreams."

Bond. "Although she causes me endless trouble, Jenny Greenteeth is still my daughter."

Flaw/Secret. "I take great pleasure in tormenting my consorts."

OAK KING

His Solemn Majesty, Magneiros the Most Ancient Oak King, is an enormous treant who rules over a densely wooded kingdom in the Summer Lands, known as the Oak Court, which is inhabited by summer elves, satyrs,



talking animals, and many fey. The Oak Court borders on Everfrost, the Holly King's realm (see **Sample Faerie Kingdom**), and for centuries, the two sovereigns have been locked in an endless battle for supremacy that reflects the seasons of the year: as they turn, a swath of land changes hands between the two rulers as their individual powers wax and wane.

Despite their rivalry, the Oak King bears no ill will toward the Holly King. Magneiros takes little interest in the politicking that goes on among the fey lords and ladies, rarely attending gatherings in the Silver City of Palsarian unless the high king and queen insist on his presence. Instead, the Oak King focuses his attention on the trees, animals, and fey living in his own kingdom, ensuring that all living things under his care are able to

FEY LORDS AND LADIES

Fey Lord/Lady	Names & Titles	Kingdom	Source
Bear King	Mesikammen the Bear King, "Old Honey Paws"	Bjeornheim, Kingdom of the Bear, Northlands	*Tome of Beasts*
Berchta	Berchta the Guide, Grandmother of the Wood, Bright Swan, and the Endless Spindle	A Remote Mountain Valley	*Creature Codex*
Commander of Horn and Gold	Kaedrin Blackwing	Tower of Horn and Gold, Shadow Realm	*Book of Ebon Tides*, *Tome of Beasts 2*
Coral Queen	Her Glittering Majesty Kirana, Coral Queen of the Seven Seas	Anemone Palace, Summer Lands	*Tome of Beasts 3*
Countess of Garlands	Lizbet Anthur, the Countess of Garlands, the Summer Lily	Hollyhock Chateau, Summer Lands	*Tome of Beasts 3*
Lord of the Hunt	Master of the Wild Hunt	A Roving Encampment	*Tome of Beasts*
Mistress of Midnight Teeth	Phylomara Gladrienne	Court of Midnight Teeth, Shadow Realm	*Book of Ebon Tides*, *Tome of Beasts 2*
Moonlit King	His Lunar and Royal Majesty, Ludomir Imbrium the XVI	Court of the Moonlit King, Shadow Realm	*Book of Ebon Tides*, *Courts of the Shadow Fey*, *Tome of Beasts*
Mother Moth	Duchess Calpe Belinapter	Silken Sanctuary, Shadow Realm	*Tome of Beasts 3*
Pumpkin King	Pumpkin King	A Hidden Patch in the Summer Lands	*Tome of Beasts 2*
Queen of Night and Magic	Her Celestial and Royal Majesty, Sarastra Aestruum	Court of Night and Magic, Shadow Realm	*Book of Ebon Tides*, *Courts of the Shadow Fey*, *Tome of Beasts*
Queen of Witches	Nicnevin the Moon Weaver, Lady of the Dolorous Mountain	Court of the Witch Queen, Shadow Realm	*Book of Ebon Tides*, *Tome of Beasts*
Rainforest King	King Kashama, Lord Protector of the Rainforests	A Mahogany Grove in the Summer Lands	*Tome of Beasts 3*
Reynard	Reynard the Fox Lord, Laughing Trickster	Malperdy, Summer Lands, or Court of Mice and Ravens, Shadow Realm	*Book of Ebon Tides*, *Creature Codex*
River King	His Rippling Majesty, Ulorian the River King, Master of the Arbonesse	River Court, Arbonesse Forest and Summer Lands	*Tome of Beasts*, *Wrath of the River King*
Snow Queen	Her Crystalline Majesty, Morrinn of Grokeheim, Daughter of Boreas	Grokeheim, Frozen Reach, Northlands	*Tome of Beasts*
Tarkun the Desiccated	Tarkun the Desiccated	Castle Halcyon, Crescent Desert, Southlands	*Tome of Beasts 2*

thrive. He also gets on well with the **Rainforest King** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*), who likewise eschews fey politics, and welcomes him to his Oak Court—a clearing of oaks and leafy shelters in the middle of the woods—once or twice a year, and occasionally travels the fey roads to pay a return visit to the jungle.

King Magneiros resembles a mighty oak tree. He has a wizened, kindly face, a long, mossy beard, and large, sad-looking eyes. Several **ratatosk** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and a wide assortment of forest birds all nest in his branches. He is bemused by mortal visitors to his court but will let them stay in one of the shelters if they keep any axes or cold iron weapons out of sight.

Personality Trait. "Why are you in such a hurry? Take your time, little ones."

Ideal. "Nature is precious and must be protected."

Bond. "What happens in the forest is 100 times more important than what goes on at the fey courts."

Flaw/Secret. "I have no interest in what happens beyond my kingdom's borders."

KNOWN FEY LORDS AND LADIES

Over a dozen fey lords and ladies have been presented in Kobold Press's *Tome of Beasts* series of monster books—and expanded upon in others—and could be of use in a campaign featuring one or more faerie kingdoms (see **Fey Lords and Ladies** table).

ADVENTURES IN FAERIE KINGDOMS

Faerie kingdoms—whether in the Summer Lands or the Shadow Realm or elsewhere—are enchanted, mysterious places, rife with opportunities for adventure. Here are some suggestions for potential adventures.

ADVENTURE PLOTS

Political intrigue and skullduggery abound in fey courts, and nobles might send PCs to spy on rivals, steal or plant items, or deliver coded messages. They might also ask them to deal with marauding monsters or other troubles among the lesser folk. Or the PCs might fall afoul of trickery and need to turn a polymorphed companion back into a dwarf again. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Faerie Kingdom Adventure Plots** table for possibilities (see also the kingdom's **State of the Nation** for more plot ideas) or choose something appropriate.

FAERIE KINGDOM ADVENTURE PLOTS

d8	Plot
1	Baba Yaga's hut has taken up temporary residence in the kingdom. Deliver a gift to Grandmother from the kingdom's ruler.
2	Follow the White Stag to find the fey crossing.
3	Infiltrate the fey lord/lady's summer ball and steal the host's favorite goblet.
4	Retrieve the swamp hag's singing teapot from the marsh pixies who stole it.
5	Save a unicorn from the Wild Hunt.
6	Travel magically through a dozen different trees to seek the counsel of the Queen of the Dryads.
7	Wake up the prince, who has been asleep for 100 years, by moistening his lips with mead made from honey from the Bear King's bees.
8	Win a duel against the Commander of Horn and Gold on a narrow bridge over a deep ravine.

ADVENTURE SITES

Faerie kingdoms are home to dozens of wondrous sites—some are dark and terrifying, others are charming and whimsical, many are dangerous. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Faerie Kingdom Adventure Sites** table for some suggested locales to add to the kingdom map or choose something appropriate to use as inspiration.

FAERIE KINGDOM ADVENTURE SITES

d8	Site
1	***Cavern Complex.*** Dank, underground home to a coven of three troll witches who share a single eye.
2	***Earth Mote.*** Floating mound of earth, overgrown with orchids and lush foliage.
3	***Fey Picnic.*** Fey nobles' picnic, complete with a vast spread of gourmet foods and fancy silk pavilions.
4	***Gleaming Castle.*** Its shining towers are surrounded by an enormous wall of sharp thorns and guarded by flying monkeys.
5	***Goblin Market.*** Market bustling with peoples from all over the multiverse.
6	***Hollow Ash.*** Giant hollow ash tree that works as a fey crossing. Doorways lead to various kingdoms in the Summer Lands, in the Shadow Realm, and in the mortal world.
7	***Mushroom Forest.*** Giant mushrooms and various sentient fungal creatures.
8	***Topiary Garden.*** Beautifully tended formal garden filled with topiary animals that come to life.

EVERFROST

Symbol: Crown of holly with crossed staff and rapier

Ruler: His Remarkable Magnificence, Holly King Dalthynnon the Valiant (CN fey lord, see **Ruler: Holly King**)

Important Personages: Arumgal Moonsparkle, mayor of the Burrows (NG gnome **noble**); Florian Driftfoot, Steward to the King (NE **fraughashar**, see *Tome of Beasts*); Gertrude Bogwillow, Duchess of the Crone Marsh (NE **green hag**); Kuki Sowsear, mayor of Tumbleshacks (CN goblin **merchant captain**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Lady Birgitta Sternbrook (LN bright fey **veteran**); Sir Vaenen Ivyleaf, Lord Commander of the Iceblades (CN bright fey **field commander**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Traed Silverbelly, Lord Mayor of Woodsend (CG **satyr**)

Population: 43,500 (17,200 bright fey, 4,600 elves, 3,900 frostfell elves, 3,000 gnomes, 1,700 goblins, 900 lycanthropes, 12,200 others)

Capital: Winterburn, population 5,500 (3,600 bright fey, 1,900 others)

Towns: Burrows (2,700), Tarvik (1,900), Tumbleshacks (3,300), Woodsend (4,200)

Great Gods: Silvanus (patron), Boreas, Dionysus, Dunatis, Loki

Trade Goods: Furs and pelts, fish, pine, mushrooms, silver, herbs and medicinal plants (in order of importance)

VILLAINOUS NPCS AND FACTIONS

Unseelie fey, hag covens, scheming shadow fey enchantresses, and malicious fey nobles are all perfect villains for adventures based in faerie kingdoms. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Faerie Kingdom Villainous NPCs** table (see also the kingdom's **Enemies and Allies** for more plot ideas) or choose some appropriate villains.

FAERIE KINGDOM VILLAINOUS NPCS

d8	Villain
1	***Baba Yaga.*** Grandmother herself, or just **Baba Yaga's Horsemen** (see *Tome of Beasts*).
2	***Balnard the Headless.*** A **dullahan** (see *Tome of Beasts*), bringing doom to all those who offended its fey lord/lady.
3	***Hobnail Stompers.*** A gang of bloodthirsty **redcaps** (see *Tome of Beasts*).
4	***Kludvrog.*** An underground-dwelling, mutated giant capable of bestowing terrible curses.
5	***Lord Flashheart and His Dashing Whirlwinds.*** A gang of **quickstep** (see *Creature Codex*) blades and rogues.
6	***Shadow.*** A talking black cat who murdered her former mistress.
7	***Sir Saelin Tergarin.*** An infamous **shadow fey knight of the road** (see *Creature Codex*) who rides a **shadhavar** steed (see *Tome of Beasts*).
8	***Zerzunni Talonhoof.*** A cruel, grinning **selang** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and their mob of leering satyr thugs.

SAMPLE FAERIE KINGDOM: EVERFROST

Everfrost is a small, wintry domain in the Summer Lands—a land of snow-capped mountains, pine forests, lakes and rivers of cold, fresh water, bleak moors, and freezing bogs. The northern part of the kingdom is dominated by the Rime Peaks, a range of high mountains that border the Snow Queen's frozen realm of Grokeheim. To the south lies the Hibernal Forest and the twin lakes of Eelswater and Crystalmere, the latter being home to Winterburn, the icy castle of Everfrost's ruler, the Holly King. Beyond, the desolate Mizzlemoor and gloomy Crone Marsh eventually give way to the densely forested domain of the Oak King (see also **Faerie Rulers**).

Everfrost is ruled by the Holly King, Dalthynnon the Valiant, a fierce and arrogant fey lord who is locked in a never-ending battle over territory with his rival, the Oak King. For as long as anyone can remember, Everfrost's borders have grown and shrunk with the seasons, expanding in the autumn and winter before contracting again in the spring and summer.

When Autumn approaches, the Holly King's strength grows, and he marches south into the Oak King's territory at the head of his forces, shining banners held high. As the winter elves of Everfrost cross the border, the treants of the Oak Court awaken the trees of the forest and command the invaders to yield. With each passing day, the frozen moors of Everfrost expand, and the dense forests of the Oak Court contract. By the Winter Solstice, Everfrost has reached its fullest extent, expanding into the Oak King's realm by 30 miles or so. Then, as the Oak King's leaves begin to regrow in spring, the ancient treant regains his vigor, and the trees march forth until all the lost territory is regained. The Oak King reaches the height of his power at Midsummer, just before the cycle begins again.

The Oak Court is not Everfrost's only rival. The quarrelsome Holly King is also a bitter enemy of the Rowan King, a powerful centaur who rules over the Rowan Circle, a nearby fey kingdom populated by larger creatures such as bugbears, ogres, and a handful of giants, as well as centaurs. A year ago, minor skirmishes between the knights of Everfrost and the Rowan Circle escalated into a full-scale battle between the two fey lords and their forces. After fierce fighting in the Dreamwolf Meadows, the Holly King was victorious, and the Rowan King was humiliated. Even worse, the Rowan King lost his place at the high king and queen's court to the Holly King. Furious, the Rowan King is busy plotting his revenge.

Bright fey (see **Monsters** in **Appendix**, also **Kingdom Characters** in **Chapter 1**) make up the largest proportion of Everfrost's inhabitants, but there are also elves and frostfell elves (see *Tome of Heroes*) and many different types of fey, including dryads, hags, satyrs, and sprites. Unseelie frost fey like beli and fraughashar are common. Gnomes, goblins, and lycanthropes round out the population.

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

Those familiar with Everfrost know the following:

- The bright fey of Everfrost are known as winter elves (rather than summer elves). Many have blue hair and pale-blue skin. They live in small towns and villages in the forests and valleys of the kingdom, hunt deer and elk with the aid of their **blink dog** companions, and fish in the rivers and lakes for giant iridescent trout.
- When spring comes and the ice melts, the mayor of Woodsend holds a great race on the Crystalmere.

Fey contenders riding on **gerridae** (see *Tome of Beasts*) race around the islands in the lake before returning to Woodsend. Racers use all sorts of tricks and magic to hinder their opponents in order to reach the town first, where a handsome prize gifted by the Holly King awaits the winner.

- The Holly King was once married to a beautiful shadow fey princess, but she left him and returned to the Shadow Realm because she grew to find him insufferable. Woe betide anyone who mentions the Holly Queen to the king.
- All manner of wondrous things can be purchased at famous goblin market in Tumbleshacks, but beware of making a bargain that seems too good to be true.
- Fell creatures wander the Mizzlemoor and the Crone Marsh while **werewolves** and **dire wolves** are known to attack travelers in the Dreamwolf Meadows. Marauding **centaurs** and **ogres** serving the Rowan King sometimes cause trouble in the hills and forests west of Eelswater.

SETTLEMENTS AND SITES

Everfrost's population is divided between its five small towns and the tiny villages and hamlets scattered among the pines of the Hibernal Forest and nestled in the valleys between the snowy Rime Peaks.

Amanita Grove. Located in the southwestern section of the Hibernal Forest, Amanita Grove is a dank and dingy expanse of giant toadstools that grow in the shadows of the tall pines and firs. These fungi range in height (5–25 feet tall) and are of many different types, including gargantuan **mulcher fungi** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) and species that are normally only found underground like **shriekers** and **violet fungus**. A village of **fragrant ones** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*) lies at the heart of the grove, and these playful, slug-like fey are experts on the different fungi species and can help visitors identify those with magical or medicinal properties.

Burrows. Most of Everfrost's gnome population and around 300 halflings live in the small forest town known as the Burrows. This friendly community consists

of several hundred cozy cottages and underground dwellings, well-kept vegetable gardens, and a large amphitheater used for musical performances and town celebrations. Arumgal Moonsparkle is its mayor and a fine singer who is always ready to take to the stage.

Crone Marsh. This freezing bog beyond the forest is the domain of Gertrude Bogwillow, who lives in a hut built on the back of a giant turtle that drifts slowly around the marsh. Though she's considered a member of fey nobility, the Holly King finds Gertrude distasteful and rarely invites her to attend his gatherings at Winterburn. This suits Gertrude just fine as she can't stand the arrogant monarch. The goblins of Tumbleshacks make occasional trips into the marsh to gather herbs and other rare plants and know to avoid both the hag and the **will-o'-wisps** that lurk in the mists.

Crystalmere. Icy streams flowing from the Rime Peaks feed the Crystalmere, a beautiful lake about 10 miles across. Two large islands lie near its center: the larger is the site of Winterburn, the Holly King's fortress, while the smaller is home to half a dozen **lorelei** (see *Tome of Beasts*), luring travelers to their doom. Crystalmere freezes in the autumn and remains frozen until spring.

Dreamwolf Meadows. Only the howling of wolves penetrates the mists that seem to descend without warning on these rolling hills and meadows. The Rippleflow Valley is home to a pack of elven **werewolves** that live in a village built around a fey crossing. Here, travelers sometimes arrive from the Moonlight Peaks (in the kingdom of Caelevar, see **Sample Elven Kingdom**), appearing through a rune-covered stone arch. The villagers seem welcoming at first but turn feral when the moon is full. Captured visitors are given as offerings to the **Son of Fenris** (see *Tome of Beasts*), the huge demonic wolf that wanders the meadows. The werewolves pay homage to the monstrous creature in exchange for its unseelie wisdom.

A year ago, a great battle was fought in Dreamwolf Meadows between the Iceblades of Everfrost and the army of the Rowan King. Those willing to risk being eaten by **dire wolves** or worse can sometimes find magical elven blades or centaur spears left behind on the battlefield.

Eelswater. This icy, crystal-clear lake is inhabited by a large number of ferocious **eel hounds** (see *Tome of Beasts*) that a huge, blue-skinned **ogre** named Cracktusk commands. Anyone coming too close to his log cabin on the western shore is attacked by several of the savage beasts. Otherwise, Cracktusk is using the hounds to search the bottom of the lake for a legendary magical blade on behalf of his master, the Rowan King.

Indomitable Fir. Towering over the rest of the forest, this ancient fir tree is a staggering 500 feet tall. Anyone climbing far enough up it reaches the branches of Yggdrasil, the World Ash, and might stray into another plane entirely. **Ratatosk** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be found among its leaves, and if offered nuts or other gifts, they can sometimes be hired as guides.

Mistletoe Lodge. Sir Malory Brightspear (**werebear**), a vassal of the Holly King, runs this welcoming hunting lodge in the middle of the Hibernal Forest. Fey nobles, their mounts, and their hounds can stay here in comfort and join hunting expeditions in the surrounding woods. Mistletoe Lodge is considered neutral ground, so it is often used as a meeting place between rival fey lords.

Mizzlemoor. Constantly beset by rain—drizzling at best or freezing cold and driving at worst—the desolate Mizzlemoor is dotted with tors. These craggy hills are home to small groups of hardy fey that dwell in burrows around their base or in simple log cabins out on the moors.

Fey living in Mizzlemoor must fend off attacks from dangerous beasts, such as **dire wolves** and **winter wolves**, and are often outcasts, whether from a nearby town or the Holly King's court. Many are considered unseelie, though there are some surprises too of those in exile merely for upsetting the Holly King or his vassals.

Pinetangle. Those who wish to visit the Holly King must make their way through the Pinetangle, a bewildering maze of trees and bushes that covers the island where the castle of Winterburn sits. The forest seems to know who is welcome at court and who isn't, parting for invited guests and transforming into an impenetrable morass of spiky holly bushes and poison ivy for ill-intentioned intruders.

Rime Peaks. This lofty mountain range remains covered in snow all year round. Frostfell elves live in small villages throughout its wooded valleys while spiteful **snow hags** (see *Creature Codex*) and **fraughashars** (see *Tome of Beasts*) plague those trudging through the drifts between settlements. **Wintergrims** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*) and other kindly fey sometimes help beleaguered travelers, offering them bowls of hot soup and warm beds for the night.

Tarvik. Clustered around an icy lake high in the Rime Peaks, the small town of Tarvik lies at the head of the pass to Grokeheim, the realm of the Snow Queen—a kingdom that exists simultaneously in the fey realms and in the mortal world. Only the foolhardiest of travelers are willing to risk the journey into the Snow Queen's realm, but fugitives fleeing the cold-hearted monarch and her ice maidens often end up here.

The town is riddled with her spies, so Lady Birgitta Sternbrook, local commander of the Iceblades garrison, must remain ever vigilant to root them out.

Tumbleshacks. Largely inhabited by goblins, the town of Tumbleshacks consists of a rickety collection of wooden shacks piled on top of one other, several stories high and seemingly defying gravity. It is known as the site of one of the best goblin markets in the Summer Lands, well-stocked with a tempting panoply of succulent fruits, enchanted candies, and magical knickknacks. Dozens of market stalls fill the town square and its maze of surrounding streets, and they are frequented by fey and other peculiar individuals from far and wide.

Winterburn. The icy castle of the Holly King stands in the middle of an island in the Crystalmere, surrounded by the Pinetangle. Sporting nearly a dozen slender spires, the palace is constructed from shining crystal and gleaming blue-white marble. Sprigs of holly, laden with bright-red berries, and pine and fir branches bring the odd splash of color into Winterburn's otherwise joyless halls and austere corridors. The Holly King is attended by members of his court and guarded by the Iceblades. He also commands a large staff of lowly goblins and other servants, who are all confined to a series of subterranean chambers beneath the castle when not required elsewhere.

Woodsend. The lakeside town of Woodsend is a joyous place—all thanks to its mayor, Traed Silverbelly, a rotund hedonist who is determined to bring as much merriment to the citizens as possible. Traed even managed to persuade the Holly King that he should offer a prize for the Crystalmere Challenge, the annual spring race around the lake, and has added many other celebrations to the calendar, including Wear a Very Big Hat Day, the Summer Frolic (a drunken picnic), and Pinecone Pandemonium (a pinecone juggling contest that inevitably turns into a free-for-all). Boats can be hired in Woodsend to take travelers across the lake to Winterburn, when it isn't frozen, but visitors must still find their way through the Pinetangle.

RULER: HOLLY KING

The Holly King, Dalthynnon the Valiant, is a cruelly handsome fey lord with elven features, pale-green skin, and a small pair of horns. His dark-green hair is intertwined with his berry-covered holly crown, making it hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. He dresses in fur-lined winter robes and bears a gnarled wooden staff.

His Remarkable Magnificence, Holly King Dalthynnon the Valiant, rules Everfrost from his icy palace of Winterburn in the middle of the Crystalmere. Known for his arrogance and his fierce demeanor, the Holly King is respected and feared, rather than loved, by his subjects.

He is ambitious and argumentative and enjoys battle, often leading his knights, the Iceblades, into the fray, wielding his gnarled staff and flashing blade with panache. Tired of riding into the Oak King's territory each autumn only for the trees to yield gracefully before his army, he fought a real battle a year ago on Dreamwolf Meadows against the equally strong-willed Rowan King and won. The Holly King's victory allowed him to take the centaur's place in the fey hierarchy, advancing to one step below the High King and Queen of the Summer Lands, alongside the River King and other powerful fey lords and ladies.

Despite his triumph, the Holly King is not happy. He was once married to the Holly Queen, a beautiful shadow fey enchantress, but she walked out on him over a decade ago for his insufferable arrogance. His repeated attempts to win her back have failed, and any hope that his newfound status at court would impress her have been dashed. He spends a lot of his time brooding in his icy castle, occasionally sending his spies to the Shadow Realm to report on his estranged wife's activities.

Meanwhile, he must put up with the indignity of losing half his kingdom to the Oak King every summer. And he knows the Rowan King is looking for an opportunity for revenge. His occasional attempts to form an alliance with the Snow Queen to the north have met with a frosty response. Nevertheless, the Holly King believes he is destined for higher things.

(See also **Sample Rulers** in **Appendix** for this ruler's statistics.)

Roleplaying the Holly King. The Holly King comes across as arrogant, cruel, and quick to anger when first encountered, but those who spend enough time with him might realize that the fey lord is, at heart, insecure and rather sad. Despite his flaws, he genuinely cares for the inhabitants of Everfrost, though he rarely shows it.

Personality Trait. "One day, I will be high king, and the Holly Queen will rule by my side."

Ideal. "I will do whatever it takes to safeguard my kingdom."

Bond. "I love my wife with all my heart and would do anything to get her back."

Flaw/Secret. "I'm afraid that one day summer will not end, and I will lose my kingdom."

FACTIONS OF EVERFROST

Many powerful factions call the kingdom home.

Notable Members of the Holly Court. The following NPCs can often be encountered at the Holly Court at Winterburn:

- Florian Driftfoot, a hunched, obsequious **fraughashar** (see *Tome of Beasts*), is the Holly King's steward and seemingly devoted constant companion. Unbeknownst to his master, Florian has been spying on behalf of the Snow Queen for decades, but his overconfidence is making him sloppy.
- Sir Vaenen Ivyleaf is the Lord Commander of the Iceblades, Everfrost's winter elf knights. Sir Vaenen is missing his left eye and has a long scar across his face, injuries inflicted by the spear of the Rowan King himself. A level-headed and brave fighter, he is the Holly King's oldest friend and most trusted advisor.

GODS OF EVERFROST

Name	Worshippers	Domains
Silvanus (Patron)	Bright Fey, Elves; also Hunters	Nature
Boreas	Giants, Ogres, Unseelie Frost Fey	Frost*, Tempest, Travel*
Dionysus	Gnomes	Beer (or Wine)*, Life
Dunatis	Frostfell Elves	Mountain*, Nature
Loki	Goblins, Rogues	Trickery

(*) see *Deep Magic Volume 1*

- The troubadour Evallin Duskpine (**azeban**, see *Creature Codex*) is a popular figure at court and in the inns and taverns of Woodsend. Evallin's bawdy songs and hilarious japes can make even the too somber Holly King laugh, though his jokes are sometimes a bit too close to the bone. Recently, the azeban was lucky to escape the castle unscathed when a wisecrack about the king's love life was met with frosty silence.
- Verglas Bitterchill and Maeve Sleetwind, a pair of menacing **frostjack** siblings (see *Tome of Beasts 3*), work for the Holly King as spies and assassins. The cold-hearted pair delight in mayhem and murder.

GODS OF EVERFROST

The major gods of Everfrost and their domains (see **Gods of Everfrost** table) have been taken from a mix of pantheons: Silvanus and Dunatis are Celtic, Dionysus is Greek, and Loki is Norse. Boreas is a dark god of the North Wind in the Midgard campaign setting.

MONSTERS OF EVERFROST

Nearly any monster that might dwell in frosty mountains, dark forests, or bleak wildernesses might call Everfrost its home. See the **Monsters of Everfrost** table for some suggestions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- Desperately lonely without the Holly Queen at his side, the Holly King becomes convinced Gertrude Bogwillow must know the secret of love charms that will work on fey lords and ladies. He hires the PCs to hand-deliver to Gertrude an invitation to the Midwinter Ball at Winterburn. Can the PCs track down the antisocial hag deep in the frozen Crone Marsh and persuade her to attend?

MONSTERS OF EVERFROST

CR	Creature	CR	Creature
0	Awakened Shrub	2	Wind Weasel (see *Creature Codex*)
1/4	Blink Dog	3	Fragrant One (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
1/4	Elk	3	Green Hag
1/4	Goblin	3	Korrigan (see *Creature Codex*)
1/4	Musk Deer (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	3	Snow Hag (see *Creature Codex*)
1/4	Sprite	3	Werewolf
1/4	Wolf	3	Winter Wolf
1/2	Black Bear	4	Azeban (see *Creature Codex*)
1/2	Corrupted Pixie (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	4	Ettin
1/2	Fraughashar (see *Tome of Beasts*)	4	Wereboar
1/2	Juniper Sheriff (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	5	Quickstep (see *Creature Codex*)
1/2	Satyr	5	Unicorn
1/2	Wintergrim (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	5	Vila (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Brown Bear	5	Werebear
1	Bugbear	6	Green Knight of the Woods (see *Creature Codex*)
1	Dire Wolf	6	Nightgarm (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Dryad	6	Redcap (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Gerridae (see *Tome of Beasts*)	6	Wilderness Crone (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
2	Awakened Tree	9	Pine Doom (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
2	Beli (see *Tome of Beasts*)	9	Treant
2	Centaur	10	Frostjack (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
2	Eel Hound (see *Tome of Beasts*)	11	Dullahan (see *Tome of Beasts*)
2	Ogre	12	Son of Fenris (see *Tome of Beasts*)
2	White Stag (see *Creature Codex*)		

- Sir Malory Brightspear, Lord of Mistletoe Lodge, was expecting a visit from his cousin Myrellin, an elf from Caelevar (see **Sample Elven Kingdom**), whom has failed to arrive. Sir Malory asks the PCs to travel to the fey crossing from Caelevar, in Dreamwolf Meadows, and investigate. The missing elf has indeed been captured by **werewolves** and has been left out on the moor as a tribute to the **Son of Fenris** (see *Tome of Beasts*). Will the PCs find Myrellin in time to save him from the great wolf's slavering jaws?
- The Holly King sends the PCs to the mountain town of Tarvik to uncover and capture the Snow Queen's spies. Unfortunately, the traitorous Florian Driftfoot has tipped off the Snow Queen, and the PCs are walking into a trap. Can they survive a deadly assassination attempt and complete their mission?

INFERNAL KINGDOMS

The various hells are planes of malign influence and strange fiefdoms. And devils are nothing if not orderly, so these infernal realms are devoted to a strict hierarchy with a precise chain of command, a neatly nested set of fiefdoms, and a carefully constructed set of duties, powers, and obligations. While outward appearances might neatly match that of human, dwarven, and elven kingdoms, realms with diabolical rulership are rather different.

Infernal kingdoms are inhabited by fiends, sydereans, infernal outsiders, and others—primarily lawful and evil—and devoted to their local ruler. Most such kingdoms, from the filthiest barony to those shiniest, most sulfurous realms of the archdukes, are organized and run very much like a traditional medieval kingdom: lesser devils and souls act as the peasants; other devils

INFERNAL CHARACTERISTICS

d12	Characteristic
1	Fire spells and abilities are harder to resist—saving throws are made at disadvantage.
2	Humanoids killed in the kingdom are reborn as either **skeletons** or **zombies**—fiends are the only creatures that stay dead.
3	Illusion spells are more convincing—ability checks to determine that something is an illusion are made at disadvantage.
4	Sulfurous hot springs and steaming rivers offer warmth even in the dead of winter.
5	Surprising numbers of insects roam the realm in swarms that block out the sun: hornets, roaches, locusts, and flies.
6	The kingdom is strangely silent—no birds call, no wind blows. Sounds echo for great distances.
7	The kingdom's animals are all black, scarlet, or hues of orange.
8	The kingdom's food and drink all taste of sulfur, ash, or smoke.
9	The kingdom's rivers are filled with flesh-eating fish, and its streams are filled with poisonous frogs.
10	The kingdom's weather is always rainy, gloomy, or foggy. It is never sunny.
11	The sky is an eternal brassy orange, and the moon a welcome dot of blackest night.
12	Treasures in the kingdom turn to dust when they leave its borders. The *mending* cantrip restores them for a day.

act as unholy wardens, soldiers, and workers; and greater devils act as the nobles and aristocrats. Titles are the same as those common in the mortal world.

Unlike mortal kingdoms though, infernal kingdoms trade in souls and flesh more than they do in oats, timber, or iron. This provides a way of measuring heroic success for the valiant and the brave: saving souls from literal hell and restoring them to a better afterlife, reincarnation, or other journey, leaving their hellish torment behind.

Government. Dictatorial monarchy is the favored system of government among devils: arch-devils rule the various hells, and princes/princesses, dukes/duchesses, and barons/baronesses rule the kingdoms, duchies, and baronies within, in an intricate system of vassalage and fealty—with frequent betrayals and reshufflings. Succession is usually a matter of a coup, regicide, assassination, or revolt by generals or marshals. The annals of infernal history are violent and ruthless, and they run with the blood and souls expended in the pursuit of power.

Though monarchies are common, devils sometimes operate as pure dictatorships and rarely as anarchic mercenary companies driven purely by greed.

Religion. Infernal gods value darkness, death, fire, trickery, and war in their portfolios. Suitable infernal gods include Arbeyach, Asmodeus, Loki, Parzelon, and other arch-devils from both fantasy and historical pantheons and Baal-Hotep, Boreas, Chernobog, Mammon, Marena, and the White Goddess from the Midgard campaign setting.

Magic. Devils excel at war, trickery, and deception. Their magic is specialized in pyromancy (see *Deep Magic Volume 2*) and illusion, to the degree that these are second nature to many devils, and even among human or at least mortal visitors to the realms, these spells often come easily. They use fire and deception in warfare, and their orderly ranks of soldiers are often preceded by *walls of fire*, waves of *fireballs*, and a final blast of *burning hands* generated by devilish war mages, enchanted spears, and even from the generals and lords of hell themselves. Magic is commonplace, though healing magic is scarce.

Enemies and Allies. Infernal kingdoms are usually small worlds or demiplanes of their own, though certainly some exist in the mortal world as well, run by devil-worshippers and ruled by literal devils, fiendish sydereans, or the like. They are rarely allied with anyone except other infernal kingdoms, though sometimes goblins, hobgoblins, orcs, or even gnomes might ally with devils for a time.

Infernal kingdoms sell enchanted items, potions, and other luxury goods, but their merchants are cunning and often cheat. They trade well or at least respectfully with selang, satarre, derro, and chol (see *Monster Vault*).

INFERNAL CITY CHARACTERISTICS

Every infernal kingdom has its own unique characteristics. Roll 1d12 and consult the **Infernal Characteristics** table or choose something appropriate.

INFERNAL RULERS

Infernal kingdoms are typically ruled by powerful fiends, beings of fell power, but this is not always the case. Sometimes other creatures can ascend the throne of an infernal court. Roll 1d20 on the **Infernal Kingdom Rulers** table or choose an appropriate ruler.

INFERNAL KINGDOM RULERS

d20	Ruler
1	Devil, Bone
2	Devil, Chain
3	Devil, Horned
4	Devil, Ice
5	Devil, Maelstrom (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
6	Devil, Orobas (see *Tome of Beasts*)
7	Human Warlock
8	Night Hag
9	Rakshasa
10	Selang (see *Tome of Beasts*)
11	Syderean
12–20	Arch-Devil

Also, though designed for mortal rulers, many of the suggestions and tables for titles, backstory, physical description, and personal characteristics presented earlier in **Designing a Ruler** still work for infernal rulers. In addition, the ruler might have a particular quirk: roll 1d20 on the **Infernal Ruler Quirks** table or choose something appropriate.

Here are sample infernal rulers, ready to be slotted into a campaign (see also **Sample Infernal Kingdom** for the Initiate of Sulfurous Fire).

KETTAS, MARQUISE OF VESHROT

Even among devils, the esteemed Kettas, Lady of Chains—Marquise of Veshrot and Baroness d'Ombers—has a sinister reputation. While rumors of cannibalism are surely posited for shock value, she clearly has a taste for forbidden pleasures, especially those that involve using chains to subjugate victims. Her dark and gloomy residence, Chateaux d'Ombers, is enfolded in a pocket dimension near the Shadow Realm, not far from the River Styx, but no roads lead to it reliably, and other devils avoid it. Only the most desperate seek it out deliberately. Most "guests" are abducted and held against their will by Kettas.

She appears in public as a tall and imposing woman with a piercing gaze, a deep, gravelly voice, and cold, pale skin. She wears elegant black clothing and is widely assumed to be either a **horned devil** or a **pit fiend** in disguise. She is always accompanied by silent **chain devils** within her home and by **automata devils** (see *Tome of Beasts*) when traveling. In either case, at least one of her servants is always rattling chains and shackles (reinforcing her fondness for enslaving others).

Some believe that she uses her lavish parties as cover to collect blackmail material or to spy on rivals. While there may be some truth to that, for the most part, she genuinely just seems to enjoy being the center of attention and controlling those in attendance: her guests, her minions, her followers, and her imprisoned souls. Of course, she is always happy to negotiate with spies, gossips, and malicious rumormongers, those who seek information from her archives or her secret portfolios of extortion, theft, and blackmail material.

Personality Trait. "You will hear me, and you will obey."

Ideal. "Ah, to spend more time at the summer palace with the servants."

INFERNAL RULER QUIRKS

d20	The Ruler . . .
1	Burns with a crown of blue fire.
2	Collects beetles, wasps, and scorpions.
3	Counts coins obsessively.
4	Grins when anyone stutters, pauses, or hesitates.
5	Has a deep-black halo.
6	Has a habit of staring through people.
7	Has a tiny imp familiar that always whispers in their ear.
8	Has bright-red horns tipped with purple flames.
9	Has eyes that contain tiny flames.
10	Is susceptible to outrageous flattery.
11	Keeps several juggling knives at hand.
12	Lusts for gold, silver, and jewels, especially taken from tombs.
13	Makes all visitors kneel to address them.
14	Performs small jigs and dances and sings unholy hymns.
15	Tortures souls and spirits while holding audience.
16	Trades power and wealth for souls.
17	Wears antique armor studded with bone spikes.
18	Always wears smoldering and smoky clothing.
19	Wields a trident with a human head on one tine.
20	Will never address a visitor directly. Their servants speak instead.

Bond. "I treat my servants far better than most suppose. They are the root of power."

Flaw/Secret. "I can resist everything except temptation. And I have so many temptations."

MAMMON, ARCHDUKE OF HELL

Known as the Duke of Greed and Lord of Wealth, Mammon is a major figure in all things related to bribery and corruption and in the acquisition and hoarding of wealth. His particular realm is filled with **gilded devils** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and greedy, grasping souls of all kinds. He corrupts by giving generously to his followers in exchange for a permanent hold on their future and their souls. Some consider him a lesser evil god rather than a powerful fiend, but the distinction is best left to scholars.

Most interactions between PCs and servants of Mammon involve making bribes—such as to a particular general or bishop—or simply looting tombs of their long-lost treasures. The servants of Mammon always seem quite generous, requiring only a small percentage of a given haul. So long as they encourage greed and the hoarding of coin, their master is pleased.

Personality Trait. "I'll make you a deal: give me that gold right now, and you may live."

Ideal. "The world should be measured in bars of gold and columns of accounts."

Bond. "My treasury and my counting-devils have my trust. All others pay up front."

Flaw/Secret. "If there's profit in it, I must know more about it."

ROSEVANA, PRINCELY RAJ OF PELADOKUSH

Also known as the Raj of Diamonds or the Lord of the Purple Wastelands, this powerful **greater rakshasa** (see *Creature Codex*) rules a desert fiefdom of rakshasas and evil spirits, including elementals and dangerous beasts. His power comes from his command of blood magic and his control over a legion of **myrmidon rakshasas** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) and **bearded devils**.

Most adventures offered by Rosevana involve hunting down his enemies or occasionally searching for particularly obscure scrolls of wisdom or magical gems. His tastes are very expensive, and he occasionally commissions adventurers to steal gems—those that he cannot obtain through legitimate means—or to take over claims of gold or gem mines, thereby gaining direct access to their wealth.

He also has a fierce temper that has led to the death of many a servant, follower, pet, or guest—though he often regrets such outbursts later. He suffers no perceived insult though and, at a minimum, will demand an apology with a dangerous snarl on his lips. Perhaps this temper is why he's so fascinated with barbarians, and he sometimes captures them to study their rages in his desert fortress. He also enjoys pitting animals and warriors against each other for sport.

Personality Trait. "My bloodline is pure, and my magic is far from common. You may bow."

Ideal. "Hunting and stalking one's enemies is the ideal pastime for a worthy ruler."

Bond. "I am entirely smitten with the great animals of the arena. Bloody mayhem defines the ruling class."

Flaw/Secret. "Occasionally my rage gets the better of me, but I have servants to clean up afterward."

ADVENTURES IN INFERNAL KINGDOMS

Infernal kingdoms—whether actually in the hells or elsewhere—are disturbed, dangerous places, rife with opportunities for adventure. Here are some suggestions for potential adventures.

INFERNAL KINGDOM ADVENTURE PLOTS

d8	Plot
1	Capture a certain massive wild scorpion for the ruler's annual parade.
2	Deliver new orders to the border guards to stop decapitating everyone—without getting beheaded in the process.
3	Find a rare golden goose to entertain a visiting baron when the hunt's called off because plague has spoiled the peasant stock.
4	Help a minor devil steal their sergeant's cap. All the better then to get promoted by "finding" it.
5	Hold onto a famous night hag's **nightmare** while she's away. But it doesn't wish to stay in the stable under any circumstances and hungers for flesh.
6	Locate seven antique silver coins to square the books of Mammon's accountants.
7	Pose as kitchen staff and underlings at a formal event, at ruler's request, to root out an assassin.
8	Travel to a wishing well to draw a bottle of unholy water for the ruler.

LESSER DUCHY OF GLASSMIRE

Symbol: A red scorpion on a white field

Ruler: His Sulfurous Excellence, Duke Ostromus the Transparent (LE **bone devil**)

Important Personages: Azure Paragon Penemunda Crookclaw (LN syderean **archmage**); Captain of Smoke (LN human **field commander**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Fizzarin Star-blessed, Reeve of Ambroze (N human **mage**); Gardemar the Belcher (NE syderean **bandit lord**, see *Tome of Beasts*); Handrik the Wanderer, assassin's guildmaster (LE human **assassin**); High Priest of Parzelon, Tresim Magrimann (LE human **first servant**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); Keep Commander of Allephon and Warden of the River, Hexregar Frostfinger (LE **horned devil**); Lady Kilanya the Sweet, Mayor of Torimetto (LE human **noble**)

Population: 199,000 (88,000 humans, 78,000 sydereans, 30,300 devils, 1,100 hobgoblins, 1,600 others)

Capital: Glassmire, population 16,500 (7,400 humans, 5,000 sydereans, 3,000 devils, 600 hobgoblins, 500 others)

Towns: Ambroze (1,500), Smoke (200 to 500, always variable), Torimetto (3,200)

Villages: Barsted (1,080), Ignisfalda (650), Marwick (740), Ush-Kerr (455), Ynglo (371)

Fortifications: Castle Allephon, Castle Calebal, Castle Markfire, Castle Otretto, Malheen Keep

Great Gods: Parzelon (patron), Arbeyach, Chernobog, Mammon, White Goddess

Trade Goods: Oil, oats and barley, soul gems, goat meat, wine, parchment (in order of importance)

ADVENTURE PLOTS

A dangerous populace and damnable politics lead to few easy options in an infernal kingdom. PCs are likely to have a very good reason for needing to be there, whether braving the villainy to save loved ones or being called to court by Mammon himself. There is no shortage of adventure to be had, but it is certainly not a place for the unprepared. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Infernal Kingdom Adventure Plots** table for possibilities (see also the kingdom's **State of the Nation** for more plot ideas) or choose something appropriate.

ADVENTURE SITES

The very nature of infernal kingdoms can vary significantly, but they are typically dangerous in one way or another—perhaps fiery sands or acid rain or any number of not completely normal effects. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Infernal Kingdom Adventure Sites** table for some suggested locales to add to the kingdom map or choose something appropriate to use as inspiration.

INFERNAL KINGDOM ADVENTURE SITES

d8	Site
1	***Hellfire Club.*** Courtiers, gamblers, and rogues, all dancing, drinking, and gambling. The doorman is kindly and begs the more innocent patrons to stay away.
2	***Night Market.*** Soul gems, blood coins, forbidden tomes, and angel-killing scimitars! Devils and diabolists selling their wares.
3	***Sulfur Lake.*** Nobles fishing the hellish yellow waters by barge. Catfish are the size of dogs. And a **chuul** named "Old Lobster" resides within.
4	***Tar Pits.*** Popular attraction, watching peasants, imps, and other scavengers get stuck and slowly die.
5	***Temple of Darkness.*** Shrine to a dark god. Windows are partially blacked out and lit with red tapers. Excessive number of live chickens, goats, and dogs mill about, ready for sacrifice.
6	***Whitebone Castle.*** Home to a **death knight** and their devil servants. White stone walls stained with blood and mold. Trespassers are thrown into a boiling well.
7	***Wyvern Plains.*** Huge herds of infernal warthogs and hellcows that attract nesting **wyverns**.
8	***Zephyr Hills.*** Foothills and canyons infested with zephyrweed, which produces a soporific poison. Many devils find it addictive. Clans of gearforged tend and harvest the plant.

VILLAINOUS NPCS AND FACTIONS

Infernal fiends, planar vagabonds, power-hungry syderean nobility, and deranged cultists are all perfect villains for adventures based in infernal kingdoms. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Infernal Kingdom Villainous NPCs** table (see also the kingdom's **Enemies and Allies** for more plot ideas) or choose some appropriate villains.

SAMPLE INFERNAL KINGDOM: LESSER DUCHY OF GLASSMIRE

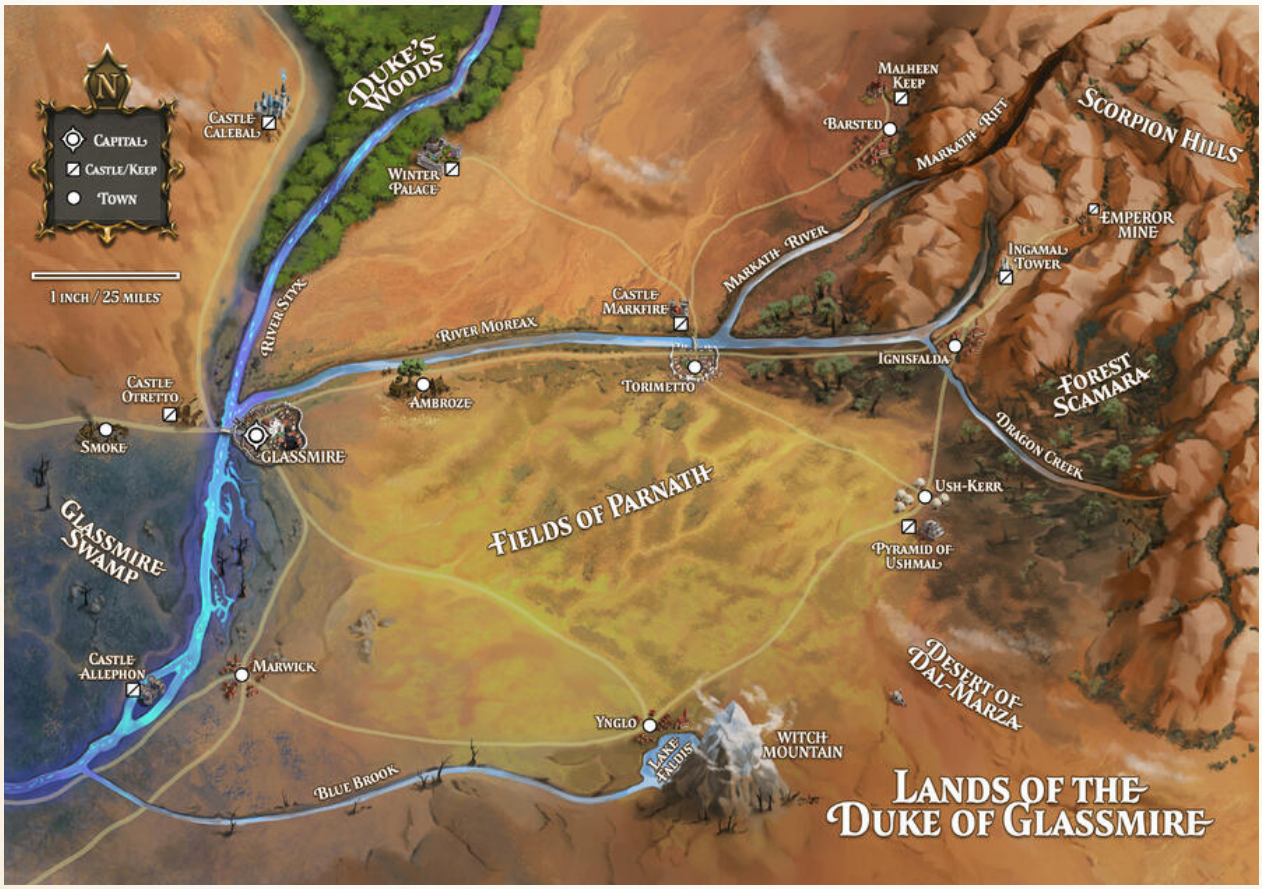
The Lesser Duchy of Glassmire is one of the "lesser hells," meaning it's an infernal realm that does not devour the souls of all its visitors and that it is only moderately drenched in blood. It is famous for its scorpions and its oils, but few people visit it via the tunnels and portals of the Great Labyrinth—and most avoid the place entirely as it's too full of giant scorpions, plus devils and assassins enough to make it a quite unpleasant destination.

Of course, PCs might find that its dark library is worth investigating, along with the prophets of the Blue Brotherhood and the many, many centuries of wisdom said to be found in the Treasury of Souls in the ducal palace itself.

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

Those familiar with Glassmire know the following information:

- Glassmire is best known for its sulfurous and highly combustible oils and the snows found atop its Witch Mountain. The first is quite common in the various hells, the second a bit less, outside of the frozen hells where it is entirely too common. Far more familiar to visitors is the prevalence of scorpions throughout the land, from small ones to those large enough to serve devils as mounts. This gives the duchy its more frequent name: the Lesser Hell of Scorpions.
- The duchy extends roughly from the yellow-green canopy of Duke's Wood in the north, a pleasant riverine woodland stocked with albino boar, small scorpions, and **ibexians** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*), all the way to the Desert of Dal-Marza in the south, which leads to the Princely Raj of Peladokush. The realm of Peladokush is ruled by a rakshasa and his followers, who politely ignore the lands of Glassmire except for an annual trade caravan after the harvest, when they arrive to trade gold, perfumes, and silks for oils, wine, and gems.



INFERNAL KINGDOM VILLAINOUS NPCS

d8	Villain
1	***Brimstone Boys.*** A gang of **barbed devils**, always setting buildings on fire and dancing in the ruins.
2	***Inkrot.*** A free-spending and gossip-loving **scribe devil** (see *Tome of Beasts* 2) who seeks ever-stranger ingredients for their infernal contracts.
3	***Insligar the Cruel.*** An ancient and increasingly paranoid **pit fiend** with failing memory and growing rage. Enjoys tormenting everyone around him but rarely leaves his red-stone castle—rather sending devils and heroes to fetch what he wants.
4	***Klanky the Seeker.*** An **automata devil** (see *Tome of Beasts*), seeking their missing memory gear. They will kill and torture anyone to get back their lost memory of rich yellow roses.
5	***Lady Kopp-Wahod.*** A cheerfully malevolent **night hag** who poses as a grandmotherly sort while she collects soul gems and provides buyers with weapons, amulets, and information on celestials.
6	***Master Mischief.*** A **devilflame juggler devil** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*), kicked out of an arch-devil's court. He now operates as an assassin, spy, and executioner—though he still performs for audiences in any infernal town that will tolerate him.
7	***Pearface Fetch-and-Carry.*** An **imp** who is looking for a new mechanist or wizard to serve—who will audition by bringing its adopted "master" various corpses or stolen items.
8	***Styrikos, Chol Lord of the Lower Styx.*** An **icthol** with a gang of syderean rogues who work the Styx as toll-takers, bandits, spies, and smugglers across the planes.

- The eastern and western limits of the duchy are both marked by the River Styx (which provides excellent planar transport to the Shadow Realm, to other hells, and to the mortal world. It is also the source of water for Glassmire Swamp, filled with exuberant and hostile plant and animal life among the black cypress trees and yellow-leafed river oaks. The River Moreax feeds into the Styx from the Scorpion Hills, carrying silt that helps maintain the fertile marsh. Dragon Creek at the headwater of the Moreax lives up to its name as home to many **black dragons** and **wyverns**.
- The majority of the duchy's settled lands are in the Fields of Parnath, a remarkably fertile grassland, for the hells, dotted with small villages and Witch Mountain. This lone peak—always draped in clouds and covered in bluish snow—is visible from anywhere within the Fields of Parnath. Lake Faldis stands chill and deep in its foothills, and rumors claim that an enormous blackfire demon is chained in its depths.
- The Forest Scamara is a dry pine forest of craggy trees with black trunks. Many are dead, but some are still surprisingly green or dusty olive. Occasionally, travelers might find juniper shrubs, abandoned olive groves, or spiky desert brush.
- The Scorpion Hills are littered with thorny scrub, growing from its reddish soil, and overgrown with juniper shrubs and tumbleweeds. Its canyons and caverns are home to a particularly fertile breed of red-furred rabbit that provides the primary food source for the horse-sized emperor scorpions and giant hill scorpions of the region.
- The Markath Rift, which splits the Scorpion Hills, is a canyon inhabited by wind demons and the arcane cult called the Blue Star Brotherhood, who mine soul gems for the duke at the Emperor Mine in exchange for being left alone to pursue their vile rituals. During their pilgrimages to the Pyramid of Ushmal, the brotherhood kidnaps visitors for its diabolic sacrifices, and the resulting piles of skulls and other bones attract **zoogs** (see *Creature Codex*), vultures, and enormous rats.

SETTLEMENTS AND SITES

Syderean and human peasants and servants do the majority of the work in the duchy, primarily during the day. After nightfall, a vast array of fiends and monstrosities lurk in the shadows and snatch mounts, children, and unattended gear.

Capital City of Glassmire. The eponymous capital city of Glassmire has a bridge over the River Styx and some docks. More of a large town in terms of population, it sits along the edge of the marsh and contains a small, maze-like marina and harbor, homes with tile roofs, a city wall occasionally festooned with the bodies of criminals, and at its center, the fortified ducal palace of Uffanto Majore. The palace is made of pink and brown brick and stone with plentiful arrow slits, rooftop

gardens, and one enormous tower along the river. This tower is officially called Turmo Draconis, though everyone calls it the Duke's Tower—it is fully 60 feet across and 90 feet tall with plenty of room to land a dragon on top.

Somewhere within the palace is the Treasury of Souls, where Duke Ostromo keeps his collection of soul gems and soul-infused weapons, wands, and similar items of diabolical magic. The treasury itself is said to be such a nexus of power that even its enormous steel door mutters and moans from the power of the arcane energies it contains. The duke wears its key on a chain around his neck during the day, and entry is said to be restricted to his most trusted lieutenants and a few magically compelled death knights and constructs.

A black cathedral called the Ebony Palace of Parzelon stands in the city center across from the palace, flames atop the spires. The extensive library within, the Abbot's Library, contains diabolical, necromantic, and orgiastic books, all available to visiting warlocks, diabolists, and servants of Parzelon or the duke. The library is maintained and kept organized by a combination of **ink devils** and **library automatons** (see *Tome of Beasts* for both).

A poisoner's guild operates in Glassmire, not far from the palace. Its guildmaster, Handrik the Wanderer, has information on most anything related to the realm, including the secrets of its nobles, mages, and major devils. However, he rarely sells information cheaply. He also suffers from a wasting disease that leaves him unable to travel or take on assignments, so instead, he works through a team of six highly skilled scouts, assassins, and spies.

Castles. The realm's five major castles are all inhabited and functional, and the inhabitants hold them in the duke's name:

- ***Castle Allephon.*** An island castle with a single main tower, tile roof, and a drawbridge that connects to both sides of the river and is used to collect tolls. Commander Hexregar often collects bridge tolls personally. Two enormous emperor scorpions often keep watch along with human guards.
- ***Castle Calebal.*** A hilltop castle of green-black stone, possessing one particular tower topped by a bluish-purple flame. Held in fief by Fizzarin Star-Blessed, Reeve of Ambroze. It's occasionally the site of military drills and hunting expeditions with the duke and his entourage, and from time to time, it hosts tournaments of magic or banquets, for which the Marquise of Veshrot and the Raj of Peladokush are often in attendance.
- ***Castle Markfire.*** The personal residence of Lady Kilanya the Sweet, Mayor of Torimetto. It is primarily a place for the nobles and devils of the realm to gather and plot—and Kilanya then shares most of their secrets with the duke. While the mayor enjoys her role as spymistress and rumormonger, most nobles of the realm consider her overbearing and crass. She keeps an enormous stable of racing scorpions and has commissioned a set of three mossy gargoyles to sit and spy on visitors. By night, they leave their perches around the castle and report to their mistress. Occasionally, she sends one to spy on another castle or to the Ebony Palace of Parzelon.
- ***Castle Otretto.*** A castle of three towers, just outside the city of Glassmire, this well-run garrison answers directly to the duke. With blue-tile roofs and a reputation for keeping a very active torture chamber, its dungeons are stocked with insufficiently trustworthy visitors to the realm, overly bold peasants, and nosy visitors. While Duke Ostromus finds it pleasant to maim and question these unfortunates, ultimately, their bones often wind up in the River Styx, and inhabitants all know its sinister reputation. The commander of the guard, the **barbed devil** Grylljinx who's paranoid about losing his position, treats all visitors with suspicion, so no one is allowed in or out without either the duke's personal invitation or an interview with the commander or with Jhigopu (**fire imp**, see *Creature Codex*), the Night Watch Captain.
- ***Malheen Keep.*** A small castle overlooking vineyards near Barsted. It's home to the archmage Penemunda Crookclaw and her love, Gardemar the Belcher. They keep to themselves, discuss banditry and the arcane, and make enough wine to send a few barrels to the duke every year.

Emperor Mine. A large, horizontal mining shaft and tailings in the hills. A nearby village of small mud-brick shacks services the miners, which are primarily human and syderean, serving sentences of hard labor to dig for soul gems. Soul gems are highly sought-after gemstones that shine with an inner light from the living souls they contain. They are quite valuable and a source of the duchy's relative prosperity—but the souls within them can only be freed by destroying the gemstones. Most often, this is done in conjunction with using them to fuel a magical ritual.

Ingamal Tower. A somewhat ruined tower in the Scorpion Hills. It's haunted by an **adult blue dragon** with the **dragon lich** template (see *Game Master's Guide*) named Umberheart who mostly just wants to

be left alone, though they do seem to enjoy killing giant scorpions and dropping the remains on the Emperor Mine. From what little can be gleaned about Umberheart, the dragon lich is seeking particular goods stolen from them long ago, and they sometimes commission visitors to bring particular skulls or bones for questioning. Occasionally, these bones must be dug out of a crypt or recovered from the waters of the River Styx.

Pyramid of Ushmal. This step pyramid, made of white stone with a skull motif, serves as a place of worship for the arch-devil **Parzelon, Lord of Secrets** (see *Creature Codex*). The temple was conceived and built by his unholy high priest, Ushmal, who is remembered by a blood-stained statue near the altar and a series of writings and offering plates attributed to his founding of the site. Tracks of dried blood run down the topmost stairs, for the Azure Brotherhood uses this site for its rituals, seeking knowledge and power. Bowls are sometimes filled with an offering of scorpion venom, thought to be pleasing to Parzelon.

Smoke. A gateway town at the edge of the map, which magically connects to other planes (see also *Warlock 16: Eleven Hells*). It has some strange customs and is tightly connected to at least a dozen infernal and mortal planes.

Torimetto. A small town—but with a city-sized wall—houses a population roughly half the size of Glassmire. While its mayor spends much of her time in Markfire Castle, the wealthier residents in Torimetto live in small fortresses of their own built with huge ochre stone towers that serve partly as status symbols and partly for defense against assassins, rioters, and other everyday dangers.

Villages & Towns. The foundation of the duchy is its smaller villages and towns, some of which are superficially quite quaint and pleasant—tile roofs and syderean peasants abound. However, each has at least one disquieting element:

- ***Ambroze.*** Possesses abundant olive groves and a black **behir** that lolls under the central oak of the village square.
- ***Barsted.*** Boasts black-grape vineyards.
- ***Ignisfalda.*** Home to herds of sulfurous-yellow goats.
- ***Marwick.*** Known for its two wells: one for water and one for casting in sacrificial animals.
- ***Ush-Kerr.*** Near enough to the Pyramid of Ushmal that the screams of bloodshed and growls of the infernal can be heard when the wind is right.
- ***Ynglo.*** A village with tile roofs and small fields of corn or oats. Sits on the banks of Lake Faldis. (It appears all too normal to actually be altogether normal.)

Winter Palace at Varjemeaux. The duke's lavish retreat and hunting chateau provides an escape from the crowded palace at Glassmire. It features formal gardens of man-eating plants and even rather aggressive roses. Its formal architecture includes lewd statuary, arches of pale-green stone, wide-open staircases, an armory for hunting and skinning game, and a plethora of small courtyards, balconies, and towers. Its gardens are planted with dangerous foliage, including **gloomflowers**, **vines of nemthyr**, and **warlock's trumpetblooms** (see *Creature Codex* for these plants).

RULER: INITIATE OF SULFUROUS FIRE

Duke Ostromus the Transparent, Initiate of Sulfurous Fire, Warden of the Witches, and Master of Scorpions, often appears as human, hiding his true form with a *hat of disguise*. He is a canny though often very violent ruler, eager for the adulation of greater dukes and barons and keen to please his master, Parzelon, Lord of Secrets. To that end, he maintains a series of five

great castles with the wealth his fiefdom generates and sends his hobgoblin troops to put down any attempts at rebellion. He often wears a golden horn modeled on Parzelon's *Horn of Nessus* (see *Creature Codex*), as a sign of his loyalty—and allowed as a special favor from the arch-devil.

The duke's hobby is the cultivation and breeding of gigantic scorpions, and at this, he has seen some success, creating the enormous emperor scorpion (a giant scorpion big enough for goblins to ride) as well as the especially deadly **night scorpion** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and the small but highly venomous **stygian fat-tailed scorpion** (see *Tome of Beasts*), used to guard the ducal palace. Colorful parade breeds such as the scarlet fancy, the embellished gothic, and the blue titan are also popular in arena fights, on display at gates, or simply when providing an offering at the Temple of Ushmal.

Roleplaying the Initiate of Sulfurous Fire. While in his own mind he believes his rule is best for the duchy, most of his subjects find him overbearing at best and actively malign at worst. He complains and whines to his nobles and servants about how difficult things are

MONSTERS OF GLASSMIRE

CR	Creature	CR	Creature
0	Scorpion	5	Arachnocrat Devil (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
1/4	Lemure	5	Barbed Devil
1/2	Blood Imp (Devil) (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	5	Bouda (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1/2	Execrable Shrub (Planar Flora) (see *Creature Codex*)	5	Chemosit (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1/2	Fire Imp (Devil) (see *Creature Codex*)	6	Ibexian (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1/2	Hobgoblin	6	Xecha (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1/2	Servitor Rakshasa (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	7	Gilded Devil (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Imp	7	Lesser Infernal Tutor (Devil) (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
1	Serpentine Lamia (see *Creature Codex*)	7	Young Black Dragon
2	Giant Constrictor Snake	8	Chain Devil
2	Ink Devil (see *Tome of Beasts*)	9	Bone Devil
2	Wyrmling Black Dragon	11	Horned Devil
3	Bearded Devil	12	Infernal Swarm (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
3	Giant Scorpion	13	Devilflame Juggler (Devil) (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
3	Hell Hound	13	Infernal Tutor (Devil) (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
3	Myrmidon Rakshasa (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	13	Malaabit (Fiend Lord) (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)
3	Night Scorpion (see *Tome of Beasts*)	16	Infernal Knight (Devil) (see *Creature Codex*)
3	Nightmare	25	Parzelon (Arch-Devil) (see *Creature Codex*)
4	Infernal Centaur (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)		

for him, though indeed he commands all the resources of the realm. And while he himself may be cruel and unforgiving, at least he is also lazy and indifferent to the cares of anyone but himself—meaning he could be much worse if he put his mind to it.

Personality Trait. "My plotting and scheming are transparent and simple compared to my cousins."

Ideal. "I wish I were a scorpion of massive size and that the world were mine to sting."

Bond. "I will defend my people and my subjects from all threats and insinuations."

Flaw/Secret. "My kingdom is not the least bit 'lesser.' Gossip troubles me only slightly, but Glassmire is eternal."

GODS OF GLASSMIRE

The major gods of Glassmire (and of the hells in general) and their domains (see the **Gods of Glassmire** table) are arch-devils and dark gods from the Midgard campaign setting.

GODS OF GLASSMIRE

Name	Worshippers	Domains
Parzelon (Patron)	Devils; also Scholars, Spies	Knowledge, Travel*
Arbeyach	Devils, Tosculi	Fire, Hunger*
Chernobog	Devils; also Night Watchmen	Darkness†
Mammon	Devils; also Merchants	Crafting, War
White Goddess	Lesser Devils, Orcs	Strength, War

(*) see *Deep Magic Volume 1* (†) see *Deep Magic Volume 2*

MONSTERS OF GLASSMIRE

Any monster can appear in the Infernal Duchy of Glassmire, but diabolical fiends, scorpions, and subtropical creatures of hills and plains are an especially great fit. See the **Monsters of Glassmire** table for some suggestions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- A human merchant at the local night market, who has been threatened by the city guard for failing to provide sufficient bribes, needs safeguarding.
- A syderean wizard is being targeted by Untrefas, a powerful **lunar devil** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and servant of the arch-devil Parzelon, and the party is hired to protect them. The wizard found a powerful artifact that Parzelon desires, so the arch-devil sends infernal minions to claim the item.
- An ancient tome is discovered, and it contains the secrets of how to make infernal contracts—and break them. However, PCs must be careful not to fall victim to the **orobas devil** (see *Tome of Beasts*) who is trying to reclaim the book.
- An **imp** has learned to conjure the sound of incredibly loud howling via magic and is delighted to keep entire towns and villages away. When challenged, he usually turns into a bat and flies away, but the local magistrate, captain, or mayor has now put a bounty on its head—but the imp responds by making it appear that one of the PCs is responsible for the noise.

- The party is hired to track down and capture a rare and elusive breed of giant scorpion, called the purple bandit, for a wealthy collector. The scorpion lives only in a remote part of the Desert of Dal-Marza.

SPACE KINGDOMS

Scattered throughout the seemingly empty vastness of space are numerous kingdoms and empires. Some are tiny city-states built on asteroids while others are huge empires that span multiple solar systems and possess the ambition to conquer all known space. Whatever its size, such a space kingdom is defined as a realm that possesses spacefaring magic and has regular contact with other worlds.

Because a given space kingdom can encompass multiple worlds, each with one or more biomes populated by a unique mix of intelligent and monstrous inhabitants, it's a good idea to start here—with the guidance below—and then go back to the more general **Building a Kingdom** section at the beginning of the chapter to add further detail.

Size and Cosmography. Decide how big the kingdom needs to be. Is it a small, isolated city-state built on a moon? Is it scattered in small settlements across an asteroid belt? Or is it a massive empire that controls dozens of worlds—or even star systems? Roll 1d20 and consult the **Space Kingdom Size** table or choose something appropriate.

Next, determine what celestial bodies make up the kingdom's primary planetary system. In the case of huge kingdoms, this will be the system where the capital is located. Here are some helpful questions to ask:

- ***Celestial Bodies.*** How many planets or other celestial bodies are in this system, and how far apart are they? Most systems have up to 10 planets, though larger systems can exist with as many as 20 planets. How big is each? Roll 1d100 and consult the **Celestial Body Size** table or choose something appropriate.
- ***System.*** Is it a standard system with planets orbiting a primary body, such as a star, black hole, or large planet? Or is it something more unique?

SPACE KINGDOM SIZE

d20	Size	Extent
1–2	Tiny	Asteroid or Moon
3–6	Small	Planet
7–12	Medium	2–6 Planets
13–18	Large	Planetary System
19–20	Huge	Multiple Planetary Systems

Inhabitants. Depending on what kind of planets make up the space kingdom, the inhabitants might be standard, see the **Prominent Lineages** table, or they might be creatures better suited to each planet's environmental conditions. For example, undead might inhabit a world that is devoid of life or that possesses no atmosphere (perhaps it once did), merfolk and sahuagin could be dominant on a water world, and azer and salamanders might live on a fire world or even dwell on the surface of the sun itself.

Due to the vastness of space, almost any obscure humanoid or otherwise monstrous creature can find a home somewhere within a spacefaring campaign. Looking for the perfect place to include the frog-like cueyatl (see *Creature Codex*) or the puffinfolk (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)? Perhaps there's a suitable home planet out there for them.

Religion. Each world within a space kingdom typically has its own patron deity or pantheon (or total lack thereof), but gods of exploration, knowledge, and trade are often widely worshipped throughout the realm. Suitable space gods include Hermes, Lugh, Odin, Ptah, and Thoth from both fantasy and historical pantheons and Azuran, Ceres, Mammon, and Rava from the Midgard campaign setting.

Magic. Traveling through space between worlds would be impossible without magic—the distances are just too vast. Ships powered by arcane helms can travel at unimaginable speeds, covering 100 million miles in a single day. Such a helm is a rare wondrous item typically shaped like an ornate ship's wheel or tiller and fashioned from glyph-inscribed wood with crystal inlays. These devices create a bubble of breathable air with its own gravity around the vessel and allow a creature attuned to the helm to pilot and maneuver the ship through space.

Spacefaring spellcasters have devised spells to make traveling easier, including those for navigation, for dealing with toxic air envelopes, and for repairing starships (see also *Reach for the Stars* for examples).

Enemies and Allies. Just as with any other kingdom, consider who its neighbors are—whether that means on the other planets in the same system or in a nearby star system. What trade routes exist, and do enemy ships or pirate vessels prey on the kingdom's merchants? Do the unnerving folk of Leng (see *Tome of Beasts*) pay regular visits to its space ports? Is it a plucky little kingdom in danger of being absorbed into the warm embrace of the Enlightened Imperium for its own protection, or a sprawling realm whose outlying planets are under constant attack by the alien ahu-nixta (see *Creature Codex*) or the arachnid voidships of the spiders of Leng (see *Tome of Beasts*)? Can the kingdom call upon its lizardfolk allies when in trouble or are the reptilians too wrapped up in their own problems?

PLANETARY CHARACTERISTICS

Are most or all the planets in the kingdom spherical worlds, like Earth, or do they have unusual characteristics? For standard worlds, use the tables in **Building a Kingdom** to determine the climate and geographical features of each major region or continent—or even the whole planet. A planet can contain a mix of biomes, or the entire world could be

CELESTIAL BODY SIZE

d100	Size Class	Diameter (Miles)	Example
01–05	A	Less than 10	Small Asteroid
06–10	B	10–100	Comet or Large Asteroid
11–20	C	100–1,000	Moon (Triton)
21–40	D	1,000–4,000	Small Planet or Large Moon (Luna, Mercury, Pluto)
41–60	E	4,000–10,000	Medium Planet* (Earth, Mars, Venus)
61–80	F	10,000–40,000	Large Planet (Neptune, Uranus)
81–90	G	40,000–100,000	Massive Planet† (Jupiter, Saturn)
91–00	H	Greater than 100,000	Star‡

(*) planets of Size E or greater may have moons or other satellites: roll 1d6 – 2 to determine how many or choose something appropriate

(†) planets of Size G or H are likely to be gas giants, also known as air worlds: composed entirely of gas, they lack solid surfaces to walk on, so creatures need to be able to fly, either naturally or with magic, to avoid plummeting toward the planet's core

(‡) a star within the system will typically be Size H, but this can vary greatly

the same all over, such as a blazing hot desert, arctic wasteland, or murky swamp. Roll 1d20 and consult the **Planetary Characteristics** table or choose something appropriate. Make this roll any number of times.

PLANETARY CHARACTERISTICS

d20	The Planet . . .
1	Consists entirely of plant matter.
2	Has a poisonous or corrosive atmosphere.
3	Has a surface entirely covered by a vast city.
4	Has an irregular orbit.
5	Has either very high or very low gravity.
6	Has no atmosphere.
7	Is a fiery world.
8	Is a frozen cube.
9	Is a watery world.
10	Is amorphous.
11	Is carried on the back of a massive space whale.
12	Is constantly beset by powerful winds.
13	Is devoid of all life.
14	Is flat.
15	Is hollow, and only the interior is inhabited.
16	Is incredibly hot, and its seas boil.
17	Is made up of two hemispheres bisected by a fiery curtain.
18	Is shaped like a pyramid.
19	Is surrounded by a ribbon of fire.
20	Is surrounded by a ring of asteroids.

SPACE RULERS

Someone's got to rule. For standard rulers, use the tables in **Designing a Ruler** to create a human, dwarven, elven, or faerie ruler for the space kingdom. Alternatively, for something a little different, roll 1d12 and consult the **Space Kingdom Rulers** table or choose something appropriate.

Here are sample space rulers, ready to be slotted into a campaign (see also **Sample Space Kingdom** for the Three Excellencies).

EMPEROR OF THE ENLIGHTENED IMPERIUM

Ruler of a vast elven empire that spans several solar systems, Their Imperial Majesty, Emperor Rynnather the Innocent, came to the throne less than a year ago, following the assassination of their predecessor and nearly every other member of the imperial family at the hands of dwarven revolutionaries. The Enlightened Imperium believes it has a moral responsibility to bring every world in the galaxy under its aegis to enjoy peace and harmony forever. Unsurprisingly, not every planet welcomes being assimilated like this, so the empire employs a large navy and military to bring recalcitrant worlds to heel.

Although Emperor Rynnather supposedly rules the Enlightened Imperium, they are little more than a figurehead, wielding no real power and having only a modicum of influence over strategic direction. Instead, the empire's first ministers, admirals and generals, and its extensive bureaucracy make all the important decisions, reducing the emperor's role to someone who presides over a half dozen quasi-religious ceremonies each year, cheered by their adoring public.

The position of emperor is hereditary, and elves are very long-lived, so it is unusual for someone as young as Rynnather to ascend the throne. Unprepared for a role that they were not meant to assume for several centuries, the emperor has come to realize they are little more than an extremely well-pampered prisoner in their own luxurious palace, only allowed out for state functions, including touring worlds newly admitted into the imperial fold.

Rynnather is a slender, bald young elf with striking features and lively blue eyes, typically dressed in ornate robes of blue and gold, embroidered with tiny stars, planets, and moons. When seated on the Astral Throne, the emperor holds the crystal orb and scepter that come with the position, which flicker and glow in constantly

SPACE KINGDOM RULERS

d12	Ruler	d12	Ruler
1	Broodmother of Leng (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	7	Lizardfolk Pharoah (or Dragonborn Sultan)
2	Elder Aboleth	8	Nebulii (see *Reach for the Stars*) or Intelligent Ooze
3	Exiled Angel or Fiend	9	Queen of the Merfolk
4	Genie Lord	10	Star Drake (see *Tome of Beasts*)
5	Gnome Matriarch	11	Vampire Overlord or Lich
6	Great Khan of the Mimics	12	Void Dragon (see *Tome of Beasts*)

changing colors. Though coming across as somewhat naive, Rynnather is bright and sharp. Resolved to have an active role in ruling the empire, they know that their best chance of survival is to play a careful, long game. Recently, Rynnather has started to ask a few awkward questions about imperial policy, and the first ministers are unsure how best to respond.

Personality Trait. "I'm not prepared to sit on this throne all day, smiling and waving."

Ideal. "The Enlightened Imperium needs to start living up to its name."

Bond. "I will do whatever it takes to keep my little sister Belsandra safe from those who wish us ill."

Flaw/Secret. "I sneak out of the palace at night to wander incognito among my people."

PIRATE QUEEN OF THE SHATTERED ROCKS

The Shattered Rocks are a cluster of almost 200 asteroids located close to several well-traveled trade routes in a busy planetary system. Her Audacious Majesty, Queen Shelzug Sharkstooth, rules over several thousand space pirates that live in concealed settlements inside several of the larger asteroids.

Shelzug's pirates prey on fat merchant ships passing near the Shattered Rocks as they head to and from major trading centers. Well-organized and nearly always in the right place at the right time, the pirates are a constant thorn in the side of the system's wealthy elite and have largely avoided capture or defeat by the local navies. This is thanks to the extensive intelligence network built up by the wily pirate queen.

Shelzug does have a strong altruistic streak, insisting on sharing the pirates' ill-gotten gains with the poor and needy of the system's worlds. In return, sailors and longshoremen pass on useful information to the pirates, reporting where the biggest merchant prizes are headed, so the pirates are always one step ahead.

But the queen does not rule unchallenged. Captain Tomlin "Bloody" Marth, trollkin governor of the asteroid town of Grog's End and captain of a dozen heavily armored starships, is her chief rival for the crown. Marth argues that the pirates of the Shattered Rocks should be keeping all their booty and not sharing it with a bunch of freeloaders, a position that has support among some of his fellow captains. A few years ago, Queen Shelzug took the crown from her predecessor by winning a vote by the 13 pirate captains of the Shattered Rocks. As things stand, Marth doesn't have enough

SPACE KINGDOM ADVENTURE PLOTS

d8	Plot
1	Deliver a valuable package to a contact at a remote outpost on the very edge of the system.
2	Escape from the stomach of an enormous space worm.
3	Infiltrate the hollowed out asteroid where enemies are constructing a doomsday weapon.
4	Investigate the weird ruins of an ancient civilization recently discovered on the dark side of the moon.
5	Recover divine fluids from the body of a dead god that drifts in the farthest reaches of space.
6	Rescue the princess's stolen pet hamster from the floating castle of the Emir of Rhoseron.
7	Sneak into the pirate haven of Grog's End and kidnap Captain Tomlin "Bloody" Marth.
8	Travel through the Phantom Nebula on the back of a giant space manta.

support to win, so he is biding his time before making a formal challenge.

Shelzug is a tall, burly, green-skinned warpbreed orc (see *Reach for the Stars*). She wears tight-fitting leather trousers, a white silk blouse, and an oversized, broad-brimmed red hat decorated with a golden phoenix feather. Her constant companion is a **ratatosk** (see *Tome of Beasts*) named Nino who supplies her with regular news and gossip from across the system. Flamboyant, courageous, and unafraid to bite her enemies when the need arises, Shelzug is loved by her crew, her subjects, and most of her fellow captains.

Personality Trait. "I enjoy nothing better than standing on the deck of my ship as she bears down on a prize."

Ideal. "The common folk of this system are all my shipmates."

Bond. "I was rescued by my old captain. I have never forgotten her."

Flaw/Secret. "Ten years ago, I tore out my bosun's throat in a drunken brawl over a chest of loot and threw his body into the harbor."

ADVENTURES IN SPACE KINGDOMS

The vastness of space offers infinite possibilities amid the stars. Here are some adventures suggestions.

ADVENTURE PLOTS

Denizens of space kingdoms are always in need of adventurers to undertake tasks on their behalf. These missions might involve exploring new worlds, hunting down pirates (or joining their ranks), battling enemy starships, or sneaking into hidden bases to steal secret plans. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Space Kingdom Adventure Plots** table for possibilities (see also the kingdom's **State of the Nation** for more plot ideas) or choose something appropriate.

ADVENTURE SITES

Spacefaring adventurers need mysterious asteroids, alien ruins, and deserted starships to explore. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Space Kingdom Adventure Sites** table for some suggested locales to add to the kingdom map or choose something appropriate to use as inspiration.

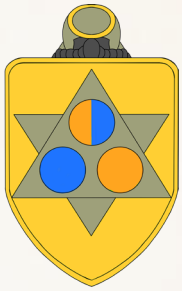
SPACE KINGDOM ADVENTURE SITES

d8	Site
1	***Asteroid Mining Facility.*** An asteroid riddled with tunnels dug by micrograv dwarves (see *Reach for the Stars*), goblins, or kobolds.
2	***Floating Hulk.*** A drifting or crashed alien ship.
3	***Interplanetary Trading Post.*** Built on (or inside) a small moon or asteroid.
4	***Luxurious Floating Casino.*** Hidden in the colorful clouds of a gas giant.
5	***Moon Mimic.*** Massive creature, posing as an asteroid or moon.
6	***Secret Pirate Base.*** Constructed inside the abandoned shell of a massive mollusk.
7	***Skeleton Ship.*** Built from the bones of a star dragon or space whale, the ship is crewed by undead sailors.
8	***Space Ooze.*** The inside of an enormous, sentient space ooze.

VILLAINOUS NPCS AND FACTIONS

Tyrannical empires, shapeless alien horrors, and bloodthirsty reavers all make great villains for space kingdom campaigns. Roll 1d8 and consult the **Space Kingdom Villainous NPCs** table (see also the kingdom's **Enemies and Allies** for more plot ideas) or choose some appropriate villains.

STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE



Symbol: Three spheres, one blue, one green, and one half-blue/half-green, arranged in an inverted triangle

Rulers: The Three Excellencies: Her Excellency Queen Mayim Vanisei (NG merfolk **noble**), Minister of Internal Affairs; His Excellency Lord Turam Barseen (CG human **merchant captain**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*), Minister of Trade; Their Excellency Pharaoh Ah-Ixbalenque (LN lizardfolk **apostle**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*), Minister of Defense

Important Personages: Gralnyn Starblaze, High Priestess of the Burning God (LN dwarf **first servant**, see *Tome of Beasts 3*); His Luminous Magnificence Johangir, Emir of Rhoseron (CG **djinni**); Magnus Astrophel, Dark Doyen of the League of Eternal Night (LE **vampire**)

Inhabitants: Humans (34% population), lizardfolk (26%), merfolk (22%), dwarves (8%), others (10%)

Capital: Conclave Rock, population 18,400 (5,200 humans, 4,700 lizardfolk, 3,600 merfolk, 2,300 dwarves, 1,700 elves, 900 others)

Major Cities: Choben (on Kegantoo, 58,200), Meroge (on Philex, 28,400), Tenegalu (on Vaitrune, 44,600)

Great Gods: Hermes (patron), Amphitrite, Monreth, Rava, Veles

Trade Goods: Spacefaring magic, spaceborne materials (see *Reach for the Stars*), technological items, common and precious metals, timber, food, rare plants (in order of importance)

SAMPLE SPACE KINGDOM: STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE

Located at the center of a planetary system known as Godfire, the Stellar Triumvirate is a space kingdom consisting of three planets: jungle-covered Kegantoo, the steamy water-world of Vaitrune, and the Earth-like world of Zeboros. These three worlds orbit Monreth, the fiery body of a near-dead god, which provides light and heat as a star.

Though Zeboros is claimed by the Stellar Triumvirate, its millions of inhabitants are largely oblivious to what is going on in the starry skies above their heads, and it is the citizens of Philex—Zeboros's moon—that play an active role in the kingdom's affairs. Philex is surrounded by a ring of asteroids, the largest of which, named Conclave Rock, acts as the Stellar Triumvirate's capital, where representatives of all three worlds come together to govern.

The triumvirate's members are known as the Three Excellencies, a ruler from each world. Though considered equals, each has their own portfolio and represents their home world's best interests: the Vaitruni ruler, Mayim Vanisei, holds the position of Minister of Internal Affairs; the Zeboran ruler, Turam Barseen, is the Minister of Trade; and the Kegantooan ruler, Ah-Ixbalenque, is the Minister of Defense, controlling the navy. Important decisions made by the Three Excellencies must be unanimous, but for less serious matters, a simple majority is deemed sufficient.

SPACE KINGDOM VILLAINOUS NPCS

d8	Villain
1	***Captain Dorthuzol.*** **Barbed devil** and his fiendish crew of cutthroats and reavers aboard their vessel, the *Crimson Carnage*.
2	***Ilno-Grat.*** Dimensional merchant and captain of a ship crewed by the **folk of Leng** (see *Tome of Beasts*).
3	***League of Eternal Night.*** A **vampire** cabal plotting to destroy the sun.
4	***Mi-Go.*** Brain-collecting aliens, the **mi-go** (see *Tome of Beasts*), become active in the region.
5	***Qy'ennyoss the Immemorial.*** An unhinged **ancient void dragon** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and hoarder of forbidden knowledge.
6	***Rangdool Crystalseeker.*** Gnome thief and his gang of grifters, smugglers, and thieves.
7	***Taranath Shadowspark.*** Ambassador and spy for the Enlightened Imperium, seeking new worlds to assimilate.
8	***The Shoth.*** An aberrant race of oozing humanoids, the **Shoth's** (see *Creature Codex*) purpose is to dissolve willing, sentient life in their bubbling pools.

The Stellar Triumvirate is vast—over 300 million miles across (dwarfing the other sample kingdoms in this book). Each solid ring on the map represents 100 million miles, or 1 day's travel by starship, while the dotted ring in the center showing Vaitrune's orbit is 50 million miles from Monreth.

Beyond the borders of the Stellar Triumvirate are four additional major celestial bodies: the artificial Iron Husk, the gas giant Rhoseron, the alien Web of Leng, and the ice world of Cubix. These outer planets orbit Monreth in a counterclockwise direction (opposite that of the other worlds). Cubix is the farthest away from Monreth at around 700 million miles.

The edge of the Godfire system lies another 700 million miles beyond Cubix's orbit. Farther beyond, amid the emptiness of space, are other solar systems, including many controlled by the Enlightened Imperium (see also **Space Rulers**)—and perhaps even the realms of the gods themselves.

CELESTIAL BODIES

The major celestial bodies of the Godfire system are described here, starting with the primary body, Monreth, and moving outward.

Monreth. The fiery body of the god Monreth, measuring 10,000 miles from head to foot, is the system's source of light and warmth. Thousands of years ago, Monreth angered Apep, the god of fire (and some say a dark aspect of Veles), who cursed him to burn for all eternity. Still vaguely conscious, Monreth is in constant pain as his body burns brightly without being consumed. **Solar elementals** (see *Reach for the Stars*) and other fire creatures are the body's only inhabitants.

Monreth's priests have been searching for centuries for a way to end the Burning God's suffering and believe they are close to discovering a ritual that might work. What they don't realize is that bringing Monreth peace will plunge the system into darkness, destroying all life on its worlds. This is the goal of the vampire cabal known as the League of Eternal Night, who are aiding Monreth's priests in their research and manipulating them to their own ends.

Vaitrune. Surrounded by a ribbon of fire, the elliptical water world of Vaitrune is 4,500 miles in diameter. Located 50 million miles from Monreth, it has a warm and steamy climate all year round. Though there are caverns and coral fortresses below the waves and a few islands on the surface, nearly the entire world is composed of water.

Merfolk are Vaitrune's predominant inhabitants and also members of the Stellar Triumvirate. They mastered the art of creating arcane helms centuries ago, traveling to other planets in fish-shaped crystal vessels filled with water. The biggest merfolk city is Tenegalu, a vast complex built into the coral walls of a deep rift and home to a magnificent temple to the Sea Goddess Amphitrite. Tenegalu is situated a mile beneath a large island that serves as a space port and trading post for visitors from the other worlds of the Stellar Triumvirate.

The merfolk share Vaitrune with the **sahuagin**, and their cities remain ever vigilant against frequent raids by bloodthirsty sea devil clans. Colossal, awakened whales swim majestically through Vaitrune's warm waters while deep beneath the surface, where the water is cooler, the **aboleth** scheme in the darkness.

Kegantoo. Dominated by dense jungle filled with weird-looking, dangerous monsters and alien plants, Kegantoo is the system's smallest planet, just 2,000 miles in diameter and 100 million miles from Monreth. Inhabited by spacefaring **lizardfolk** who have constructed step pyramids and domed dwellings throughout the rainforest, Kegantoo is a member of the Stellar Triumvirate. Their largest settlement is the sprawling city of Choben, situated on the banks of the great river that flows through the Matucao Jungle. Visiting starships can land on the river and dock at its many jetties.

Kegantoo's jungles are a source of valuable tropical hardwoods, rare plants with medicinal and magical properties, exotic birds and beasts, and other trade goods. Gathering these riches brings the lizardfolk into conflict with their bitter enemies, the frog-like **cueyatl** (see *Creature Codex*), who live along the rivers and coasts and attack their villages.

Kegantoo was once home to a lost race of giants who built huge, columned temples deep in the jungle. Most of these buildings have long since been swallowed by the rainforest, but explorers have found great riches in those that have been rediscovered.

Zeboros. The third member of the Stellar Triumvirate, Zeboros is an Earth-like spherical world 7,000 miles in diameter and 200 million miles from Monreth. The planet holds a wide variety of climates and biomes and is home to several dozen small kingdoms, including the Island Realm of the Alchorades (see **Sample Human Kingdom**), Stoneheart Canyon (see **Sample Dwarven Kingdom**), and Caelevar (see **Sample Elven Kingdom**). Only a tiny percentage of the people living in these lands, mostly wizards and scholars, are aware of starships and space travel though. Spacefaring merchants, mostly humans and dwarves, land their strange-looking starships in the sea and sail into Zeboros's harbors to trade before continuing on to Philex.

Philex. Philex is Zeboros's moon, measuring 1,200 miles across and surrounded by the Philex Cluster, a ring of large asteroids. Blessed with a breathable atmosphere, it's the location of Meroge, a bustling city and trading center with docking facilities for several dozen starships. Merchants come from Rhoseron, Cubix, and more distant worlds to buy and sell goods in Meroge's vibrant Grand Bazaar. The sinister **folk of Leng** (see *Tome of Beasts*) are frequent visitors. Meroge's many bars and cantinas are the ideal place for spacefaring adventurers to pick up jobs or share interesting rumors.

Conclave Rock. The largest asteroid in the Philex Cluster, Conclave Rock is the seat of the Stellar Triumvirate and the base for its navy. Animated magical statues of the Triumvirate's greatest heroes are mounted atop obsidian obelisks throughout the city, including the gnome mechanist who invented the first Zeboran arcane helm and the lizardfolk admiral who led the navy to victory against the alien **ahu-nixta** (see *Creature Codex*) armada almost a century ago.

The Three Excellencies share an impressive palace built on an artificial hill in the middle of the city. The palace is arranged in a triangle with soaring towers at each point, one for each minister and their ministry. When they are all in residence, the Three Excellencies convene in Conclave Hall, the domed meeting chamber at the center of the triangle, to discuss the affairs of the day beneath a stunning mosaic of the Godfire System made from lapis lazuli and other precious stones.

Iron Husk. Supposedly abandoned 97 years ago when the ahu-nixta were defeated by the Stellar Triumvirate's navy, the Iron Husk is an artificial planet, 100 miles in diameter, situated 400 million miles from Monreth. The metal surface of the planet is rusted and pitted, but its hollow interior contains several hundred miles of tunnels and subterranean chambers. Although the ahu-nixta are thought to have been driven from the system, adventurers that have made expeditions to the Iron Husk have encountered **ahu-nixta mechanons** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) and even a handful of **ahu-nixta cataphracts** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*). Several lucky survivors have returned to Meroge with various weird technological devices and weapons.

Rhoseron. Situated 500 million miles from Monreth, Rhoseron is a gas giant—specifically an amorphous air world of purple gas—75,000 miles in diameter and surrounded by a ring of asteroids. The purple gas is poisonous to non-indigenous creatures but not to

Rhoseron's inhabitants, who include several clans of **cloud giants**, living in fortresses floating among the indigo clouds. From time to time, one of these reclusive giants will steer their castle to Meroge to purchase goods at the Grand Bazaar. Rhoseron is ruled by His Luminous Magnificence, Emir Johangir, a powerful if eccentric **djinni** lord, who has collected an extensive, monstrous menagerie that he keeps within a magical bubble of air in the elegant grounds of his cloud palace.

Web of Leng. The Web of Leng is a group of six moons connected by enormous, sticky strands that form a vast web over 5,000 miles across. Spun by hundreds of the alien **spiders of Leng** (see *Tome of Beasts*), this Web is located 600 million miles from Monreth. It is given a wide berth by those aware of its presence but has been known to ensnare starships that travel through Godfire at high speed and without due care and attention. Any ship unfortunate enough to become trapped in the Web of Leng, or unwise enough to land on its moons, finds itself under attack by an arachnid voidship full of bloated spiders of Leng under the command of a **broodmother of Leng** (see *Tome of Beasts* 2).

Cubix. This huge, frozen water-world is the biggest celestial body in the system. Cubix is a cube of ice, 90,000 miles in diameter and 700 million miles from Monreth. Its atmosphere is thin, but its inhabitants—including white-furred **bearfolk** (see *Tome of Beasts*), **frost giants**, **mammoths**, **remorhazes**, and **winter wolves**—have adapted to the hostile conditions. None of these creatures possess spacefaring capability, but occasionally, a bearfolk or frost giant ends up aboard a starship.

Cubix has two moons. Auroza, larger of the two, is surrounded by a vacuum. Its distant location means it gets very little light from Monreth, making it the perfect location for the forbidding fortress of the **vampires** of the League of Eternal Night.

Nogion, the second moon, is inhabited by micrograv dwarf prospectors (see *Reach for the Stars*) that mine it for its mineral deposits. They remain oblivious to the **tarrasque** that lies sleeping far beneath the surface, but their excavations are beginning to disturb its slumber.

RULERS: THREE EXCELLENCIES

The Three Excellencies who rule the Stellar Triumvirate are described below. Each typically spends two-thirds of their time on Conclave Rock and the remainder on their own worlds.

Lord Turam Barseen. Dark-skinned, young, and handsome, Lord Turam Barseen dresses to impress in only the finest silks and latest fashions. His black hair is cropped short, his beard and mustache are neatly trimmed, and he walks with a noticeable swagger, grinning from ear to ear. A rapier with a silver hilt hangs from his hip.

His Excellency Lord Turam Barseen is the Zeboran Minister of Trade. His origins are somewhat mysterious, but he is believed to have left Zeboros aboard a visiting starship when he was very young. After spending several years as a swashbuckling scoundrel and privateer, he became a legitimate space merchant, going on to become one of the Stellar Triumvirate's richest and most successful traders. He was elected to his current position by the people of Philex two years ago, and his laissez faire attitude toward trade has seen the government's finances go from strength to strength. However, certain citizens are becoming nervous about the increased presence of the curious and unsettling folk of Leng in Meroge.

- ***Personality Trait.*** "Everything will be alright if the coin keeps flowing."
- ***Ideal.*** "Have a good time, all the time."
- ***Bond.*** "My mother still lives back on Zeboros. I have someone watching over her."
- ***Flaw/Secret.*** "I owe the folk of Leng a debt I must repay."

Queen Mayim Vanisei. Queen Mayim Vanisei is a striking figure. She has a curvaceous humanoid upper body with deep-blue skin and the lower body of a fish with shimmering scales, patterned with blue and gold stripes. A tall greenish-gold crest grows from her forehead and runs down her back to where her tail begins. Small fins grow from the backs of her humanoid arms. She wears a necklace of brightly colored coral over a shirt made from hundreds of golden shells, and she wields a golden trident.

Her Excellency, Queen Mayim Vanisei, is the Vaitruni representative and Minister of Internal Affairs. Solemn-faced and older than her co-rulers, she takes her role very seriously, ensuring that the officials and bureaucrats in her ministry carry out their duties to the letter and that the Stellar Triumvirate's government runs like clockwork. She takes a balanced view of interstellar politics, often acting as a mediator in the occasionally feisty exchanges between Lord Turam and Ah-Ixbalenque. While on Conclave Rock, Mayim prefers to receive visitors at the top of her tower from inside a large tank filled with warm water from her home world.

- ***Personality Trait.*** "Though the folk of Vaitrune are particularly dear to me, the well-being of all our subjects is equally important."
- ***Ideal.*** "The smooth running of the government must come first."

- ***Bond.*** "I miss my family back home in Tenegalu whenever I'm on the Rock."
- ***Flaw/Secret.*** "An awakened whale warned me that the aboleths in the ocean depths are plotting to seize control of Vaitrune."

Pharaoh Ah-Ixbalenque. A tall lizardfolk warrior-priest with iridescent turquoise scales, Pharaoh Ah-Ixbalenque wears an ornate gold breastplate decorated with geometric patterns, gold pauldrons carved to resemble snakes, and a gold sheath on the end of their muscular, swishing tail. A necklace of large teeth, trophies from some of the many strange beasts they have killed in the jungles of Kegantoo, hangs around Ah-Ixbalenque's neck. They carry a ceremonial spear, golden tipped and the haft inlaid with turquoise.

Their Excellency, Ah-Ixbalenque, is the Kegantooan Minister of Defense and the Stellar Triumvirate's admiral, commanding its stellar navy. A devoted high priest of Veles, the Great Serpent, Ah-Ixbalenque is a hawkish politician, advocating military strikes against the Web of Leng and constant vigilance lest the ahu-nixta return to plague the system. Ah-Ixbalenque often ends up disagreeing with Lord Turam in meetings of the Three Excellencies, and exchanges can become heated.

- ***Personality Trait.*** "It's better not to trust anyone."
- ***Ideal.*** "The wisdom of the Great Serpent guides me."
- ***Bond.*** "Hunting wild beasts in the jungles of Kegantoo is my passion."
- ***Flaw/Secret.*** "Some people say I am too blunt. I call it being honest."

FACTIONS OF THE STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE

Many powerful factions call the kingdom home.

Church of the Burning God. Though the god Monreth has been cursed to lie burning at the center of the Godfire System for all eternity, a small but zealous group of worshippers have not given up on him. Orange-robed clerics and paladins of the Church of the Burning God can be found throughout the Stellar Triumvirate and beyond, constantly searching for the means to free their god from his curse and restore him to his rightful place in the heavens. Their high priestess is the phlegmatic, shaven-headed dwarf Gralnyn Starblaze. She can usually be found studying the holy scriptures at the Cathedral of Blessed Peace in the city of Meroge on Philex. The splendid temple and its great library are surrounded by tranquil gardens and reflecting pools.

League of Eternal Night. Far from the Stellar Triumvirate, on the dead moon of Auroza, stands a brooding fortress, bristling with tall, thin towers that jut skyward like spikes. This is the headquarters

of the League of Eternal Night, a cabal of 13 ancient **vampires** who have been plotting for centuries to cast the entire Godfire System into darkness. The grotesque, sunken-eyed Magnus Astrophel is the mastermind at the center of the group, but all are powerful vampires with spellcasting abilities.

After several failed blood rituals, the vampires have begun using mortal spies to feed long-forgotten lore to the Church of the Burning God, hoping to manipulate the priests into lifting Monreth's curse and thereby snuffing out the light from the god's body. Occasionally, members of the cabal, disguised and warded against detection, accompany the church on expeditions to retrieve ritual components or esoteric manuscripts.

GODS OF THE STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE

The major gods of the Stellar Triumvirate and their domains (see the **Gods of the Stellar Triumvirate** table) have been taken from a mix of pantheons: Hermes and Amphitrite (wife of Poseidon) are Greek and Rava and Veles are from the Midgard campaign setting.

A wide variety of additional deities are worshipped by the various worlds' peoples, but those listed are the most popular across the whole system—at least to those that view themselves as part of the spacefaring kingdom.

GODS OF THE STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE

Name	Worshippers	Domains
Hermes (Patron)	Zeborans; also Explorers, Merchants	Speed*, Travel*, Trickery
Amphitrite	Merfolk, Vaitruni	Ocean*, Tempest
Monreth	Church of the Burning God	Mercy‡, War
Rava	Dwarves; also Crafters, Mechanists, Merchants	Clockwork†, Knowledge, Travel
Veles	Kegantooans, Lizardfolk	Dragon*, Nature, Prophecy*

(*) see *Deep Magic Volume 1* (†) see *Midgard Heroes Handbook* (‡) see *Tome of Heroes*

MONSTERS OF THE STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE

There's no limit to what creatures might be found in space—somewhere—but some will feel more at home than others. See the **Monsters of the Stellar Triumvirate** table for some suggestions.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story? Try one of these:

- The eccentric Emir of Rhoseron (**djinni**) is looking for new creatures to add to his menagerie and is willing to pay top prices for interesting specimens—the more fearsome, the better. The jungles of Kegantoo, the seas of Vaitrune, and the frozen wastelands of Cubix are all home to suitable beasts.
- While traveling between worlds, the PCs encounter a deserted boneship—a giant whale skeleton that has been converted into a starship by an undead spellcaster—drifting slowly through space. Crewed by **vampire spawn** in the service of the League of Eternal Night, the ship was attacked by space pirates and looted. On board, the PCs can find the remains of the undead crew as well as a scroll tube containing coded orders to one of the league's mortal agents, a spy posing as a paladin of the Burning God. Can the PCs crack the code and warn the church that there are vampire spies in their midst?
- Recent reports of strange starships in the vicinity of the Iron Husk have reached Conclave Rock. When the Ministry of Defense sends the PCs to investigate, it soon becomes apparent that something is stirring deep within the artificial planet. The PCs will face attacks by **ahu-nixta drudges** (see *Tome of Beasts 2*) and **ahu-nixta mechanons** (see *Tome of Beasts 3*) as they explore the planet before discovering the deadly weapon hidden at its core. Can they deactivate the device before it's too late?

MONSTERS OF THE STELLAR TRIUMVIRATE

CR	Creature	CR	Creature
1/8	Merfolk	7	Spider of Leng (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1/2	Ahu-Nixta Drudge (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	8	Ahu-Nixta Cataphract (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
1/2	Lizardfolk	8	Astral Devourer (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
1/2	Sooze (Shoth) (see *Creature Codex*)	8	Lunar Devil (see *Tome of Beasts*)
1	Eonic Drifter (see *Tome of Beasts*)	9	Cloud Giant
1	Nebulii Traveler (see *Reach for the Stars*)	9	Xhkarsh (see *Tome of Beasts*)
2	Ahu-Nixta Mechanon (see *Tome of Beasts 3*)	9	Young Void Dragon (see *Tome of Beasts*)
2	Folk of Leng (see *Tome of Beasts*)	10	Liosalfar (see *Tome of Beasts*)
3	Ahu-Nixta (see *Creature Codex*)	11	Broodmother of Leng (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
3	Far Wanderer (see *Creature Codex*)	11	Voidling (see *Tome of Beasts*)
5	Mi-Go (see *Tome of Beasts*)	12	Droth (Shoth) (see *Creature Codex*)
5	Oth (Shoth) (see *Creature Codex*)	12	Stellar Rorqual (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)
5	Solar Elemental (see *Reach for the Stars*)	13	Vampire
5	Vampire Spawn	15	Star Drake (see *Tome of Beasts*)
5	Void Elemental (see *Reach for the Stars*)	15	Star-Spawn of Cthulhu (see *Tome of Beasts*)
7	Eonic Savant (see *Tome of Beasts 2*)	19	Living Star (see *Creature Codex*)

APPENDIX

MONSTERS

This section contains statistics for various creatures commonly found in and around courts, the castles that keep them, or the nobility that inhabit them. The stat blocks are presented alphabetically.

ANIMATED ARTILLERY

Lurching forward on mechanical legs, this hulking siege weapon clearly operates itself. Arms of wood and metal reload its armaments while others adjust its aim.

Animated Siege Weapons. Much like other animated objects, animated artillery consists of a nonmagical object brought to life by a spellcaster. Though little more than their mundane counterparts, animated artillery can follow basic instructions indefinitely or until given new instructions by those they are compelled to obey. Most animated artillery can change the configuration of their mechanical parts, allowing them to adopt the forms of various siege weapons. However, they are limited to tension-based siege weapons, such as catapults and ballistae, and they can't adopt the forms of bombards or cannons.

Magical Battlefield. Animated artillery is a staple of many clashes between forces commanding the most powerful magics, and they march tirelessly and operate with little support. Typically, these constructs are instructed by their creators to obey anyone wearing certain insignia or uniforms, rather than specific individuals.

Unlimited Ammunition. The magic that animates this construct also creates a slow but steady amount of ammunition that appears, ready to be fired. The ammunition disappears shortly after being fired, leaving destruction often without a clear source.

Animated Artillery **CR 10**

Large Construct

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 215
Speed 20 ft.
Perception 8 **Stealth** 8
Vulnerable acid
Resistant bludgeoning
Immune blinded, deafened | Construct Resilience
Senses keensense 500 ft. (can't sense beyond this radius)
Languages —

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+5	–2	+8	–5	–2	–5

Antimagic Susceptibility. The artillery is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the artillery must succeed on a CON save against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

Construct Nature. The animated artillery doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Construct Resilience. The animated artillery is immune to poison and psychic damage, and it is immune to exhaustion and the charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, and poisoned conditions.

Magical Ammunition. The ammunition created by the animated artillery is magical, appearing and ready to fire. When the animated artillery hits with Artillery Shot, the shot deals an extra 2d8 force damage (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The animated artillery makes four Loading Claw attacks, or it makes two Artillery Shot attacks.

Loading Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Artillery Shot. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 500/1,000 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d10 + 5) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage (the artillery's choice) plus 9 (2d8) force damage. When the animated artillery makes this attack, it can choose to target a point on a surface it can see within range instead. If it does so, each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 17 DEX save, taking half the attack's normal damage on a failed save, or a quarter of the attack's normal damage on a successful one.

BONUS ACTIONS

Steadied Launch. The animated artillery digs its clawed feet into the ground, steadying itself. Until the start of its next turn, its keensense increases to 1,000 feet, and it has advantage on Artillery Shot attacks. In addition, its speed is reduced to 0 feet, and it can't use the Skuttle reaction.

REACTIONS

Skuttle. When the animated artillery is in the area of a spell or effect, such as *fireball* or a dragon's breath weapon, it can move up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks. If this movement puts the artillery outside that area, it isn't affected by the spell or effect.

BRIGHT FEY

A gleaming figure with pointed ears and sparkling eyes flashes a daring smile before drawing a rapier with the fluidity and grace of a dancer.

Summer Elves. In the realms of summer and night, the fey and their elven brethren stand divided. The shadow fey inhabit the dusk and darkness of the shadow while the bright fey inhabit lands of summer and light. Sometimes known as sidhe, seelie, or summer elves, bright fey are the light to the shadow fey's shadow. Similar to elves from the Material Plane, they are typically tall, slender, and graceful beings whose movements are almost disturbingly fluid.

Sunlit Hues. Bright fey exhibit all the hues of spring and summer with eyes, hair, and skin in shades of gold, silver, green, yellow, red, and brown. Regardless of the color, their eyes always sparkle with tiny flecks of light like speckled sunlight on a forest floor. They can tap into this innate connection with light and with their fey homeland to cause their bodies to glow with sunlight, drawing the attention of all those nearby.

Truth Speakers. The blood of fey runs in the veins of the bright fey, and with it comes the magic of the fey. Their fey ancestors were paragons of honesty and champions of truth, and that magic carries into the bright fey to this day. When bright fey tell direct lies, they experience intense pain, and many have learned to either endure this pain or find ways around the limits of their compelled honesty.

Bright Fey — CR 1/4

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 14
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 13 **Stealth** 12
Resistant Fey Ancestry
Senses —
Languages Common, Elvish

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+2	+0	+0	+1	+1

Fey Ancestry. The bright fey is resistant to the charmed condition, and magic can't put the bright fey to sleep.

Magical Honesty. If the bright fey speaks a deliberate lie, it is incapacitated until the end of its next turn, as it is wracked with pain.

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Distracting Sunlight (Recharge 5–6). While in bright light, the bright fey's body shines with light toward up to three creatures it can see within 30 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 12 CHA save or be compelled to look at the bright fey until the start of the bright fey's next turn. While compelled to look at the bright fey, a creature has disadvantage on WIS (Perception) checks to perceive anything other than the bright fey.

BONUS ACTIONS

Glint of Light. While in bright or dim light, the bright fey can twirl its blade or flick the tip of an arrow, sending a small flash of light toward a creature it can see within 15 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 12 DEX save or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

FEY VIZIER

A noble and elegant fey in ornate clothing smiles thinly and pays obeisance with one hand while surreptitiously forming a mystical gesture with the other.

Bargaining Fey. Haughty and manipulative, fey viziers serve as advisors and ambassadors for the fey courts, negotiating deals between various lords, and they craft the complicated bargains of which the fey are so fond. As with many powerful fey, viziers delight in games and bargains. They are magically unable to break the terms of a bargain, though they are masters of loopholes and the bending of terms of bargains.

Lust for Power. The fey vizier hungers for control and power as others might thirst in the desert. Some satisfy this need by serving a mighty fey monarch, commanding influence in that lord's name, while others travel to the mortal realm to establish a network of servants, spies, and attendants. Accustomed to the dangers of holding power in a court, fey viziers quickly build a tolerance for the various poisons commonly used in assassinations.

Mortal Manipulators. In the mortal realm, fey viziers often secretly act on behalf of their fey leaders to manipulate mortal nobles, monarchs, and other rulers. Fey viziers typically disguise themselves as wizards, sages, or other individuals of learning.

Fey Vizier — CR 9

Medium Fey

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 135
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 17 **Stealth** 12
Resistant bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks | Fey Resilience
Immune poison | poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., truesight 10 ft.
Languages Common, Sylvan

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+7	+3	+4	+3	+9

Fey Resilience. The fey vizier is resistant to the charmed and unconscious conditions.

Honest Bargainers. The fey vizier can't speak a deliberate lie, and its word is a magically binding promise. It can't ever break its word.

Magic Resistance. The fey vizier has advantage on saves against spells and other magical effects.

Phrenic Weapons. They fey vizier's weapon attacks are magical. When the vizier hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 3d6 psychic damage (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fey vizier makes three Fey Blade attacks, or it makes four Mind Thorn attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting.

Fey Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 CHA save or have disadvantage on saves against the vizier's spells and features until the start of the vizier's next turn.

Mind Thorn. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) psychic damage.

Spellcasting. The fey vizier casts one of the following spells, using CHA as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17).

At will: *dancing lights, disguise self, minor illusion, prestidigitation*

3/day each: *detect thoughts, hold person, invisibility* (self only), *silent image*

1/day each: *bestow curse, nondetection* (self only), *slow*

BONUS ACTIONS

Beguiling Words. The fey vizier magically whispers words only one creature it can see within 30 feet of it can hear. The target must succeed on a DC 17 CHA save or be charmed until the start of the vizier's next turn. While charmed, the target obeys the vizier's verbal commands. The vizier can have only one target charmed in this way at a time.

REACTIONS

Charmed Defense. When the fey vizier is attacked by a creature it can see, it can command a creature charmed by it to use its reaction to step in the way of the attack and become the new target of the attack. The vizier can use this only if the charmed creature is within 5 feet of it or is directly between the vizier and the attacker.

GARGOYLE, SNITCH

Small, crudely carved, and highly stylized gargoyles sit on a stone ledge atop an intricately carved column. One of their number leans half-hidden behind the others, a spyglass in hand.

Lesser Gargoyles. Snitches are tiny, lesser gargoyles that delight in observing and reporting goings-on around them. The first snitch gargoyles were created from the cornerstones of castles or walled cities, and they were magically bound to those structures. Though their original creators are gone, snitches carve offspring from the castles where they live, continuing this magical bond.

Castle Bound. Snitches are bound to the castles or walled cities that make up the foundational stone of their bodies. They can't venture more than a mile from the structure and always know whenever it suffers harm, such as from a boulder flung by a trebuchet.

Monarch-Saving Gossips. Snitches observe all happenings within the grounds of their bound structures, including listening to and repeating rumors. Humanoids that befriend the gargoyles are inundated with excitedly delivered reports on the gargoyles' observations—for the gargoyle describes in painstaking detail even the most mundane of activities. The average person might not care much for how many times the baker visits the florist's shop, but many castle gossips make a point to befriend the gargoyles for exactly such information. Kingly advisors often keep at least one or two snitch gargoyles in their confidence, and several assassination plots have been revealed or thwarted thanks to the observations of snitches.

Snitch Gargoyle — CR 1/2

Tiny Elemental

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 21

Speed 15 ft., fly 30 ft.

Perception 16 **Stealth** 15

Resistant bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Immune poison | exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, Terran

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
–1	+2	+4	–2	+2	–2

False Appearance. While the snitch remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

Flyby. The snitch doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Uncomfortable Observation. The snitch speaks a socially uncomfortable observation, such as a clothing stain, mucus hanging from a nose, or an unraveling sword grip, to one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear and understand the snitch, the target must succeed on a DC 12 CHA save or be unable to take a bonus action on its next turn, as it attempts to correct or cover up the issue.

ROYAL TUBEWORM

Erupting out of the murky water, a circular gaping maw with three rows of jagged teeth surges upward as eight tentacles with bifurcated ends reach out to pull its next meal into the murky depth.

Beast of Legends. Tavern tales and bard's songs featuring a monster within a castle's moat are typically based on the royal tubeworm. The creature's long, wormlike body has fins to propel it through the water and tentacles around its mouth to gather food. Few who have seen it have lived to tell the tale, leading to many stories that exaggerate its size and number of tentacles or that describe it as being able to eat a horse and rider in one gulp.

Bred by Royals. The royal tubeworm gets its name from its common use as a moat guardian for nobles. Tubeworms lay eggs without mates each year, but the limited environment of moats means that most offspring are consumed by the parent or each other. Royals encourage this cycle, for it ensures only the strongest tubeworms protect their moats, though they also collect and share the eggs among their peers.

Drawbridge Training. Royal tubeworms quickly learn, thanks to prods from spear-wielding guards, to avoid the lowered drawbridge and any easy meals it might contain. They are omnivores who primarily subsist on algae and moss growing in the moat or on spoiled vegetation tossed in the moat by the guards. In times of war, the supply of vegetation stops, prompting the tubeworm to seek meals among the invaders.

Royal Tubeworm — CR 8

Large Monstrosity

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 166
Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.
Perception 15 **Stealth** 12
Resistant poison | Monstrosity Resilience
Senses keensense 60 ft. (can't sense beyond this radius)
Languages —

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+2	+4	–4	+2	–1

Amphibious. The royal tubeworm can breathe air and water.

Monstrosity Resilience. The royal tubeworm is resistant to exhaustion and to the frightened condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The royal tubeworm makes one Maw attack and four Tentacle attacks. It can replace its Maw attack with a use of Swallow.

Maw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the royal tubeworm can't use the same Tentacle on another target. The royal tubeworm can grapple up to four creatures at one time.

Swallow. The royal tubeworm makes one Maw attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the tubeworm, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the tubeworm's turns. The royal tubeworm can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the tubeworm takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the tubeworm must succeed on a DC 14 CON save at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 5 feet of the tubeworm. If the tubeworm dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

BONUS ACTIONS

Reel. The royal tubeworm pulls up to two creatures grappled by it up to 15 feet straight toward it.

ROYAL WIGHT

A desiccated corpse blocks the mausoleum arches, dressed in the long-decayed trappings of a once-regal lord. Gleaming light spills from its empty eye sockets as it raises a bejeweled scepter crafted in an ancient style.

Undead Nobility. Royal wights haunt the crypts of long-forgotten dynasties. Once the revered ancestors of the ruling family, they were bound upon death to their crypts by arcane rituals to serve as eternal advisors and protectors of their living successors. Though its preserved body has now desiccated and decayed, the royal wight's consciousness remains present, preserving wisdom and knowledge from centuries past.

Eternal Guardians. A royal wight's soul is bound to the regalia it once held as a living noble. For most, that regalia is a bejeweled scepter. When a royal wight is slain, its scepter teleports to its resting place, and the wight revives shortly thereafter. Destroying the scepter ends this cycle but risks the wrath of the noble house associated with that wight.

Demand Obedience. Royal wights were once nobles, often monarchs, and are accustomed to being obeyed. Most give leeway to petulant successors, but few tolerate insubordination from those not of a noble house. Royal wights are also prone to attack first and ask questions later when encountering people not of their house—or at least not wearing heraldry of their house. Wise supplicants without a blood connection to the royal wight keep such heraldry visible when visiting an area protected by one.

Royal Wight — CR 6

Medium Undead

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 107
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 16 **Stealth** 11
Resistant necrotic
Immune charmed, frightened | Undead Resilience
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Languages any languages it knew in life

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+1	+3	+2	+3	+7

Royal Regalia. If the royal wight is slain, its royal scepter teleports to its resting place, and the royal wight gains a new body in 1d6 days, regaining all its HP and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the scepter. Destroying the scepter prevents this trait from functioning.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the royal wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, and its Perception is 11 when perceiving by sight.

Turn Resistance. The royal wight has advantage on saves against any effect that turns undead.

Undead Nature. The royal wight doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Undead Resilience. The royal wight is immune to poison damage, to exhaustion, and to the poisoned condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The royal wight makes two Royal Scepter or Necrotic Bolt attacks. If both Royal Scepter or Necrotic Bolt attacks hit one creature, the target must succeed on a DC 15 WIS save or be frightened until the end of its next turn.

Royal Scepter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

Necrotic Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) necrotic damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Royal Decree. The royal wight issues one of the following demands at one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must make a DC 15 WIS save. On a failure, it must obey the demand, spending the entirety of its next turn acting as described. On a success, it takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage but doesn't have to obey the demand. A creature can choose to fail the save.

- **Begone.** The target moves as far as it can away from the royal wight by the safest available route, unless there is nowhere to move.
- **Prostrate.** The target falls prone, and its speed is reduced to 0.
- **Silence.** The target is unable to speak or cast spells with verbal components.

VOID TUMOR

A tiny dark-purple lump of gelatinous flesh throbs slowly as it extends wiggling, vein-like tendrils.

Void Parasites. Void tumors are tiny parasites from the Void, where they are nuisances at best, barely surviving in that environment by clinging to other creatures for sustenance and protection. In the mortal world, however, they act like a virulent disease capable of wiping out entire populations in months. They come to the Material Plane through small rifts in reality or as stowaways aboard other creatures from the Void.

Legendary Plagues. A void tumor propagates by budding off a small part of itself and depositing the offspring on another creature near its host. The harsh environment of the Void, and the less frequent interactions between creatures within it, limit the tumor's ability to spread its offspring in its home environment, keeping tumor populations low. The mortal realm has few such limiters, allowing void tumors to spread exponentially. The spread of these tumors looks similar to a plague, and many of the world's most famous, ancient plagues, particularly those that involved tumors or buboes, were actually the rapid spread of void tumors.

Void Tumor CR 3

Tiny Aberration

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 74
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.
Perception 10 **Stealth** 15
Vulnerable radiant
Resistant necrotic | Aberrant Resilience
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Languages understands Common and Void Speech but can't speak, telepathy 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
–3	+3	+1	+1	+0	–1

Aberrant Resilience. The void tumor is resistant to the charmed, frightened, paralyzed, and stunned conditions, and it has advantage on saves against spells or effects that would alter its form.

Empowered Host. While the void tumor is attached to a creature, the host creature is resistant to the charmed and frightened conditions and to necrotic damage, unless that damage is dealt by the tumor.

Parasite Camouflage. While attached to a creature, the void tumor's Stealth is 20, as it hides in a cluster of hair or fur, at the joining of two limbs, or under clothing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The void tumor can make an Attach attack if it isn't already attached to a creature. It then makes two Pseudopod attacks.

Attach. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The void tumor attaches to the target. While attached, the void tumor moves with the target whenever the target moves, requiring none of the tumor's movement. It can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement on its turn. A creature, including the target, can take its action to detach the tumor by succeeding on a DC 13 STR check. When the tumor is removed, the target takes 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

For every 24 hours a void tumor remains attached to a creature, that creature must make a DC 13 CON save. On a failure, its HP maximum is reduced by 5 (2d4). On a success, its HP maximum is reduced by half that amount. A creature native to the Void has advantage on this save.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Drain Host (41 HP or Fewer). While attached to a creature, the void tumor drains vitality from its host. The host must make a DC 15 CON save, taking 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The void tumor regains HP equal to the necrotic damage taken.

REACTIONS

Influence Host. When the creature to which the void tumor is attached starts its turn, the void tumor can attempt to direct the host's movement or action on that turn. The host must succeed on a DC 13 WIS save or the tumor decides where and how the host moves that turn or it decides the action the host takes during that turn.

XYPTH

The small worm-like creature swims through the air of the dank dungeon, its rows of sharp teeth gleaming in the torchlight.

Piscine Fiends. Xypths are fish-like minor fiends found primarily in the mortal realms. They are equally at home in damp caverns, dripping dungeons, city sewers, and stagnant ponds, where they hunt fish and vermin much like mortal predators. Scholars believe xypths are distantly related to imps or quasits, though imps and quasits scoff at the suggestion. Xypths for their part are content with their existence outside the lower planar hierarchies and have little concern for the opinions of imps, quasits, or scholars.

Dungeon Companions. Many xypths ally with dungeonkeepers, guards, and executioners, feasting on dungeon and castle vermin and on the psychic anguish of prisoners. Seemingly docile—due in no small part to their quiet nature—xypths become possessive and protective toward creatures they view as "theirs," attacking intruders, pushy family members, insolent prisoners, and aggressive superior officers alike.

Xypth — CR 1

Small Fiend

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 36
Speed 15 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover), swim 30 ft.
Perception 12 **Stealth** 15
Resistant cold, fire, lightning
Immune poison | poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
–2	+3	+1	–2	+2	–1

Accustomed to Filth. The xypth has advantage on saves against contracting diseases.

Amphibious. The xypth can breathe both air and water.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) poison damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Slithering Strike. The xypth slithers quickly around the limbs of a creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 13 DEX save or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Fin Flare. When a creature the xypth can see attacks it, the xypth can suddenly flare its fins and hiss to startle the attacker. The attacker has disadvantage on the attack roll.

NPCS

This section contains statistics for various humanoids typically encountered within the noble courts or upon the battlefield. The stat blocks are presented alphabetically and assume no lineage. To make an NPC of a specific lineage, add that lineage's traits, such as darkvision, to the stat block. For more in-depth guidance or to create NPCs of other types of humanoids, see **Appendix: NPCs** in *Monster Vault*.

ARCANE PAINTER

The arcane painter is an artist who has studied magic and learned to infuse paint with arcane power. These painters keep paint, pigments, and painting tools on them at all times and alternate between using the tools to entertain others and defend themselves.

Arcane Painter **CR 4**

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 90

Speed 30 ft.

Perception 12 **Stealth** 12

Senses —

Languages any three languages

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+2	+0	+3	+2	+5

Painted Weapons. The arcane painter's weapon attacks are magical. When the painter hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 1d8 acid damage (included in the attack).

Magic Resistance. The arcane painter has advantage on saves against spells and other magical effects.

Tools of the Trade. The arcane painter is proficient with painter's supplies and doubles its proficiency bonus for any ability check it makes with that set of tools.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The arcane painter makes three Rapier or Paint Bolt attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Paint Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) acid damage.

Sketched Creature (1/Day). The arcane painter paints a crude sketch of one or more creatures, bringing the sketch to life as creatures under the painter's control. The creatures act as allies of the painter, obeying its spoken commands, and they act on the painter's initiative count, taking their turn immediately after the painter's. The creatures use the statistics of 2 worgs, 1 brown bear, or 1 Beast or Monstrosity of CR 1 or lower (the painter's choice), and they remain for 1 hour, until the painter dies, or until the painter dismisses them as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. The arcane painter casts one of the following spells, using CHA as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13).

At will: *dancing lights, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation*

3/day each: *color spray, mage armor, silent image*

1/day each: *dispel magic, hypnotic pattern, major image*

BONUS ACTIONS

Cloud of Pigment. The arcane painter flings a handful of dust or paint pigments at a point it can see within 15 feet of it. The dust or pigments burst into a 10-foot-radius cloud centered on that point. The cloud spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts until the start of the painter's next turn.

REACTIONS

Sketched Obstacle. When a creature the arcane painter can see within 30 feet of it attacks it, the painter can quickly paint a sketch of an object in the air, interposing the object between themselves and the attacker. The painter's AC increases by 2 against that attack.

DIPLOMAT

The diplomat is an even-tempered humanoid proficient in speaking with a wide variety of peoples, diffusing tense situations, and negotiating agreements between nations. They learn how to weave subtle, enchanting magic into their words, and they wear finery that often includes a fan, ornate sash, or similar fashion accessory that doubles as a weapon when the diplomat is in danger.

Diplomat — CR 6

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 126
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 12 **Stealth** 13
Senses —
Languages any four languages

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+3	+2	+3	+2	+7

Phrenic Weapons. The diplomat's weapon attacks are magical. When the diplomat hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 3d6 psychic damage (included in the attack).

Reasonable Tone. The diplomat has advantage on CHA (Persuasion) checks made to debate issues, calm violent emotions, or convince others to talk. In addition, if a creature has listened to a diplomat speak for at least 1 minute, it has disadvantage on its next save against the diplomat's *calm emotions*, *charm*, or *suggestion* spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The diplomat makes three Fan Slash attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting. If at least two Fan Slash attacks hit one creature, the target must succeed on a DC 15 DEX save or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

Fan Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Spellcasting. The diplomat casts one of the following spells, using INT as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14).

At will: *mage hand, message, prestidigitation*
3/day each: *charm, comprehend languages, mage armor*
2/day each: *calm emotions, see invisibility, suggestion*
1/day: *nondetection*

BONUS ACTIONS

Fan Twirl. The diplomat twirls its fan and swipes at the legs of one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 DEX save or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Diplomatic Immunity. When a creature the diplomat can see attacks it, the diplomat can remind the creature of its diplomatic immunity. The target must succeed on a DC 15 WIS save or the attack fails. A creature that doesn't understand any languages is immune to this effect.

DUNGEONKEEPER

The dungeonkeeper is a curiously unsettling individual tasked with watching over prisoners locked away in a castle's deepest dungeons. They live in dark isolation with little interaction with anyone other than prisoners, guards, and rats. They have an innate sense for the prisoners in their care and a subtle connection to the rats that dwell in their dungeons.

Dungeonkeeper — CR 1

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 40
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 14 **Stealth** 14
Resistant charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 30 ft.
Languages any one language (usually Common)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+3	+2	+2	–1	+2	+0

Accustomed to Filth. The dungeonkeeper has advantage on saves against contracting diseases.

Dungeon Sense. The dungeonkeeper can perfectly recall any path it has traveled in a dungeon, sewer, or similar humanoid-made underground environment.

Prisoner Sense. If the dungeonkeeper has interacted with a prisoner within a dungeon for at least 1 minute, the dungeonkeeper can pinpoint, by scent, the location of that prisoner and can sense the general direction of that prisoner within 1 mile of it for the next 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dungeonkeeper makes two Jailer's Whip or Rusted Chain attacks. If both Rusted Chain attacks hit one Large or smaller creature, the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the dungeonkeeper can't make Rusted Chain attacks.

Jailer's Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 STR save or be pulled up to 10 feet closer to the dungeonkeeper.

Rusted Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) poison damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Children of the Dungeons (1/Day). While underground, the dungeonkeeper whistles for 1 swarm of rats to aid it. The rats arrive on initiative count 20 on the next round. The swarm acts as an ally of the dungeonkeeper but otherwise doesn't obey its commands. The swarm remains for 1 hour, until the dungeonkeeper dies, or until the dungeonkeeper dismisses it as a bonus action.

MASTER ASSASSIN

Master assassins are the spymasters of kingdoms and the killers of kings. They have mastered the art of avoiding notice and of finding and slaying their chosen marks. They command the highest prices and have the influence and power to take only the jobs they want.

Master Assassin **CR 12**

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)

Hit Points 212

Speed 40 ft.

Perception 18 **Stealth** 23

Resistant poison | poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., keensense 10 ft.

Languages Thieves' Cant plus any two languages

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+9	+3	+3	+4	–1

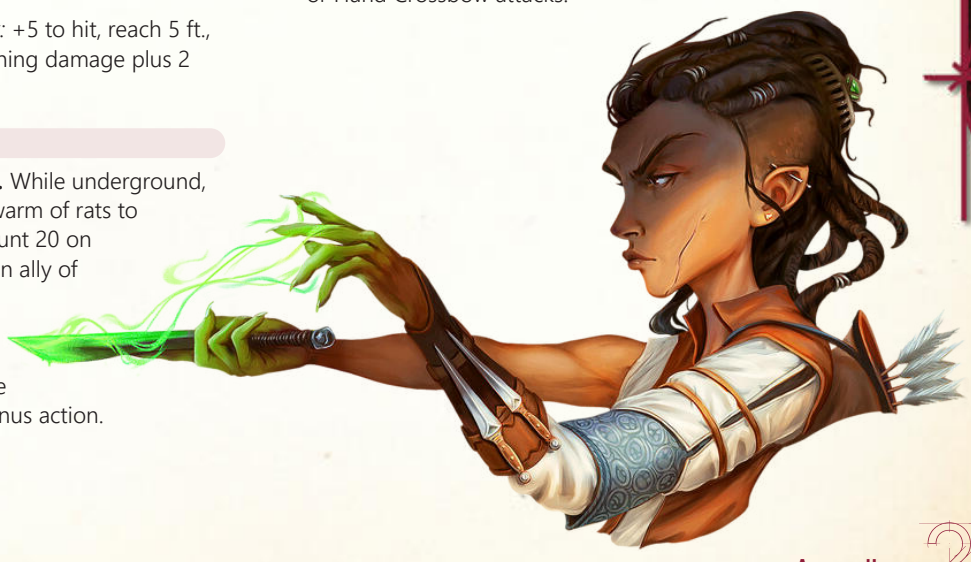
Concealed Emotions. The master assassin has advantage on checks and saves against any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, and it has advantage on saves against divination spells it refuses. WIS (Insight) checks made to ascertain the assassin's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Evasion. If the master assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a DEX save to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the save, and only half damage if it fails.

Poisoned Weapons. The master assassin's weapons are coated in poison. When it hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 4d8 poison damage (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Mulitattack. The master assassin makes three Shortsword or Hand Crossbow attacks.



Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 CON save or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 CON save or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

BONUS ACTIONS

Death Mark. The master assassin magically marks a creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 17 WIS save or be marked for death for 1 minute. While it is marked, the assassin's attacks against the target have advantage, and if the assassin scores a critical hit against the target, the target must succeed on a DC 17 CON save or be reduced to 0 HP. When the target is reduced to 0 HP in this way, the assassin can decide if the target is stable or dying. The target can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The assassin can have only one target marked at a time.

Hidden Step. The master assassin magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see and takes the Hide action.

REACTIONS

Choking Dust. When a creature the master assassin can see within 15 feet of it attacks it, the assassin can fling dust into the creature's face. The attacker must succeed on a DC 17 DEX save or have disadvantage on the attack roll.

REANIMATOR

Reanimators are alchemists who specialize in crafting golems and other constructs by infusing dead flesh with alchemical substances. Their dangerous work exposes them to a myriad of substances and rampaging half-formed constructs, and many reanimators die in the process of progressing their research. Those who survive are masters of alchemy and of animating constructs.

Reanimator **CR 12**

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 180
Speed 30 ft.

Perception 14 **Stealth** 13
Resistant acid, fire, poison
Immune poisoned
Senses —
Languages any two languages

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+3	+5	+9	+2	+1

Alchemical Weapons. The reanimator's weapons are coated in magical, alchemical substances, and its weapon attacks are magical. When the reanimator hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 4d10 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage (included in the attack), the reanimator's choice.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The reanimator makes three Scalpel or Alchemical Splash attacks.

Scalpel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage plus 22 (4d10) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage (the reanimator's choice).

Alchemical Splash. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage (the reanimator's choice), and each creature within 5 feet of the target must succeed on a DC 17 DEX save or take 5 (1d10) damage of the type dealt by Alchemical Splash.

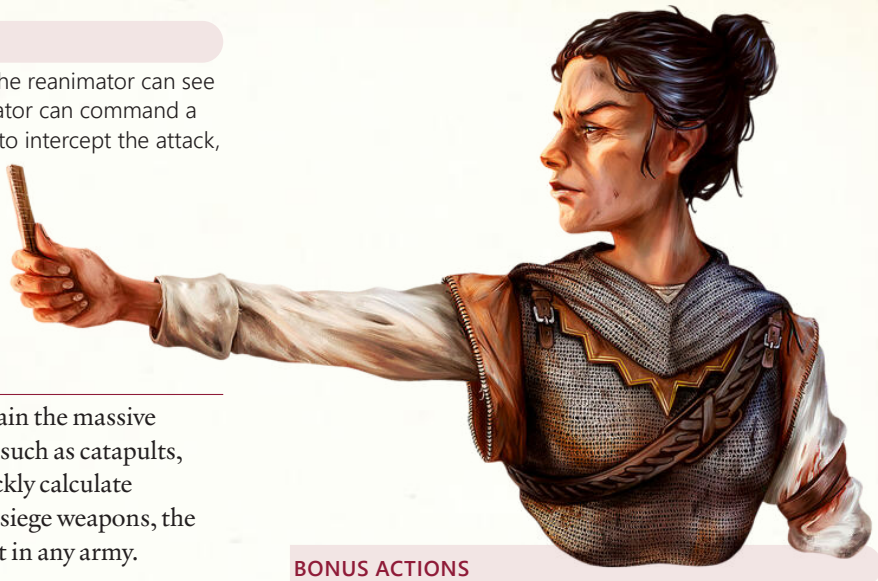
Reanimated Servants. The reanimator magically creates 2d4 alchemical zombies, 1d6 alchemical ghouls, or 1 flesh golem. The creatures appear in unoccupied spaces of the reanimator's choice within 15 feet of it, becoming active on the reanimator's initiative immediately after it, acting as allies of the reanimator, and obeying its spoken commands. Alchemical zombies and ghouls use the statistics of zombies and ghouls, except they are Constructs instead of Undead. The Constructs remain for 1 hour, until the reanimator dies, or until the reanimator dismisses them as a bonus action. The reanimator can have any number of these Constructs under its control at one time, provided the combined total CR of the creatures is no higher than 5.

BONUS ACTIONS

Quick Repair. The reanimator touches one friendly Construct it can see. The target regains 7 (2d6) HP and is freed from any effect that gives it the grappled or restrained condition. This effect can't restore a target to above half its HP maximum.

REACTIONS

Construct Shield. When a creature the reanimator can see targets it with an attack, the reanimator can command a friendly Construct within 5 feet of it to intercept the attack, becoming the new target.



SIEGE ENGINEER

Siege engineers operate and maintain the massive weapons of war utilized by armies, such as catapults, ballistae, and cannons. Able to quickly calculate trajectories and patch up damaged siege weapons, the siege engineer is an invaluable asset in any army.

Siege Engineer **CR 3**

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 80
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 12 **Stealth** 11
Senses —
Languages any two languages

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4	+2	+3	+4	+2	–1

Siege Monster. The siege engineer deals double damage to objects and structures.

Siege Weapon Expert. The siege engineer can load a siege weapon and attack with it as part of the same action. In addition, the engineer has advantage on attack rolls with siege weapons.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The siege engineer makes three Mace or Light Crossbow attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Naphtha Orb (Recharge 5–6). The engineer throws a flask of flammable liquid at a point it can see within 60 feet of it. The flask bursts into a ball of fire on impact. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 14 DEX save. On a failure, a creature takes 18 (4d8) fire damage and catches on fire. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and doesn't catch on fire. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, a creature on fire takes 4 (1d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

BONUS ACTIONS

Call Siege Fire. The siege engineer magically calls down siege weapon fire on a point it can see within 30 feet of it. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must succeed on a DC 14 DEX save or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage (the siege engineer's choice).

Quick Repair. The siege engineer pulls out some tools and quickly patches up one damaged siege weapon it can see within 5 feet of it. The siege weapon regains 5 (2d4) HP.

SNAKE WHISPERER

Snake whisperers are humanoids with a magical connection to serpents and reptiles. They regularly consume potions and brews made of venom, which allow them to enter a dreamlike state and see possible futures. Though many snake whisperers live alone and away from civilization, several find work in courts as advisors and seers. Some even operate as intermediaries between humanoid and draconic nations, their innate connection to serpents and reptiles often putting dragons more at ease around them than when around other humanoid diplomats or negotiators.

Snake Whisperer **CR 5**

Medium Humanoid (Any Lineage)

Armor Class 16 (Serpent Hide)
Hit Points 114
Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft
Perception 12 **Stealth** 17
Immune poison | poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common Draconic

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+7	+2	+1	+2	+6

Envenomed Weapons. When the snake whisperer hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 2d8 poison damage (included in the attack).

Serpent Hide. The snake whisperer's magical connection with snakes and exposure to snake bites and venoms toughens its skin. The snake whisperer adds its CON modifier to its AC (included above).

Venom Visions. The snake whisperer drinks poison, lets a snake bite it, or inhales poisonous fumes, then spends 1 minute experiencing visions brought on by the poison. At the end of the minute, one creature that remained within 10 feet of the snake whisperer while it experienced the visions can ask a single question concerning a specific goal, event, or activity to occur within 7 days, and the snake whisperer pronounces the result of the inquiry in a sibilant whisper. This trait works like the *divination* spell, except it can't be used to answer a specific creature's question more than once each day, regardless if the creature asks a different question.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The snake whisperer makes three Dagger or Poison Bolt attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Poison Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) poison damage.

Spellcasting. The snake whisperer casts one of the following spells, using CHA as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14).

At will: *comprehend languages, guidance, minor illusion*

3/day each: *fog cloud, detect thoughts, levitate*

1/day each: *clairvoyance, hypnotic pattern*

REACTIONS

Prescient Defense. When a creature the snake whisperer can see targets it with an attack or a spell, the snake whisperer can briefly glimpse into the immediate future to affect the outcome. The creature has disadvantage on the attack roll, or the snake whisperer has advantage on the save (the snake whisperer's choice).

SAMPLE RULERS

This section contains statistics for the sample rulers found within **Chapter 5**.

HIGH KING TORRGATH BOULDERFIST (STONEHEART CANYON)

Presenting Torrgath Boulderfist, His Indomitable Majesty, the Hammer of Justice.

High King Torrgath Boulderfist **CR 7**

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 120
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 14 **Stealth** 6 (11 without armor)
Resistant prone | Dwarven Resilience
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Dwarvish

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+1	+7	+2	+4	+3

Arcane Fist. Torrgath's Crystal Fist attacks are magical. When he hits with a Crystal Fist attack, the Crystal Fist deals an extra 3d6 force damage (included in the attack).

Dwarven Resilience. Torrgath is resistant to poison damage and to the poisoned condition.

ACTIONS

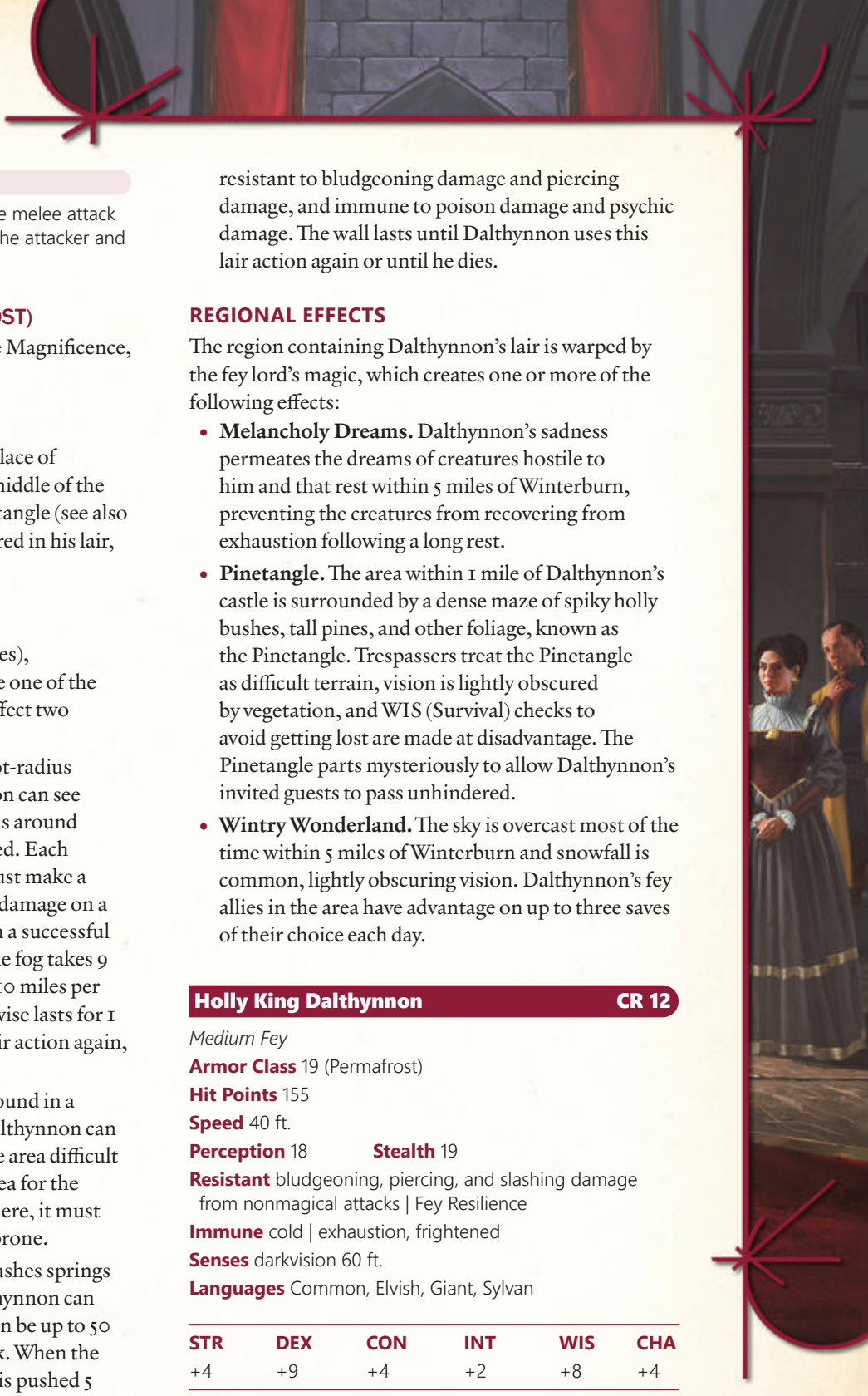
Multiattack. Torrgath makes two Crystal Fist attacks, or he makes three Force Blast attacks.

Crystal Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) force damage.

Force Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) force damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 STR save or be pushed up to 10 feet away from Torrgath in a straight line.

BONUS ACTIONS

Tremorstrike. Torrgath strikes the ground with his crystal fist, causing it to shake violently. Each creature other than himself within 10 feet of him must succeed on a DC 16 DEX save or be knocked prone.



REACTIONS

Parry. Torrgath adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and have his crystal arm free.

HOLLY KING DALTHYNNON (EVERFROST)

Presenting Dalthynnon, His Remarkable Magnificence, the Holly King.

DALTHYNNON'S LAIR

Holly King Dalthynnon's lair is the icy palace of Winterburn, located on an island in the middle of the Crystalmere and surrounded by the Pinetangle (see also **Settlements and Sites**). When encountered in his lair, Dalthynnon has a challenge rating of 13.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Dalthynnon can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects; he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- **Frigid Fog.** Freezing fog fills a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point Dalthynnon can see within 120 feet of him. The fog spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. Each creature in the fog when it appears must make a DC 16 CON save, taking 9 (2d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that ends its turn in the fog takes 9 (2d8) cold damage. A wind of at least 10 miles per hour disperses the fog. The fog otherwise lasts for 1 minute, until Dalthynnon uses this lair action again, or until he dies.
- **Icy Ground.** Ice spreads along the ground in a 20-foot radius centered on a point Dalthynnon can see within 120 feet of him, making the area difficult terrain. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 16 DEX save or fall prone.
- **Wall of Holly.** A wall of spiky holly bushes springs into existence on a solid surface Dalthynnon can see within 120 feet of him. The wall can be up to 50 feet long, 10 feet high, and 1 foot thick. When the wall appears, each creature in its area is pushed 5 feet out of the wall's space on whichever side of the wall it wants, and it must make a DC 16 DEX save, taking 13 (3d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. While the wall remains, any creature that touches it must also make the save. Each 10-foot section of the wall has AC 5 and 20 HP and is vulnerable to fire damage, resistant to bludgeoning damage and piercing damage, and immune to poison damage and psychic damage. The wall lasts until Dalthynnon uses this lair action again or until he dies.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing Dalthynnon's lair is warped by the fey lord's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- **Melancholy Dreams.** Dalthynnon's sadness permeates the dreams of creatures hostile to him and that rest within 5 miles of Winterburn, preventing the creatures from recovering from exhaustion following a long rest.
- **Pinetangle.** The area within 1 mile of Dalthynnon's castle is surrounded by a dense maze of spiky holly bushes, tall pines, and other foliage, known as the Pinetangle. Trespassers treat the Pinetangle as difficult terrain, vision is lightly obscured by vegetation, and WIS (Survival) checks to avoid getting lost are made at disadvantage. The Pinetangle parts mysteriously to allow Dalthynnon's invited guests to pass unhindered.
- **Wintry Wonderland.** The sky is overcast most of the time within 5 miles of Winterburn and snowfall is common, lightly obscuring vision. Dalthynnon's fey allies in the area have advantage on up to three saves of their choice each day.

Holly King Dalthynnon — CR 12

Medium Fey

Armor Class 19 (Permafrost)
Hit Points 155
Speed 40 ft.
Perception 18 **Stealth** 19
Resistant bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks | Fey Resilience
Immune cold | exhaustion, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft.
Languages Common, Elvish, Giant, Sylvan

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4	+9	+4	+2	+8	+4

Cold Weapons. Dalthynnon's weapon attacks are magical. When Dalthynnon hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 4d8 cold damage (included in the attack).

Fey Resilience. Dalthynnon is resistant to the charmed and unconscious conditions.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Dalthynnon fails a save, he can choose to succeed instead.

Permafrost. While Dalthynnon is in icy or snowy terrain and wearing no armor and wielding no shield, he adds his CON modifier to his AC (included in the above).

Snow Strider. Dalthynnon can move across icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check, and difficult terrain composed of ice or snow doesn't cost him extra movement. In addition, he leaves no tracks or other traces of its passage when moving through snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dalthynnon uses his Fey Presence. He then makes one Gnarled Staff attack and two Rapier attacks, or he makes three Ice Shard attacks.

Gnarled Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) force damage, and the target has disadvantage on its next attack roll.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) cold damage.

Ice Shard. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) cold damage.

Fey Presence. Each creature of Dalthynnon's choice that is within 120 feet of him and aware of his presence must succeed on a DC 16 WIS save or be charmed or frightened (Dalthynnon's choice) for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's save is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Dalthynnon's Fey Presence for the next 24 hours.

BONUS ACTIONS

Snow Step. Dalthynnon teleports, along with any equipment he is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see. The origin and destination spaces must contain ice or snow.

REACTIONS

Parry. Dalthynnon adds 4 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Dalthynnon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. He regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Snow Blast. Dalthynnon sends a blast of snow toward a creature he can see within 30 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 16 DEX save or be vulnerable to cold damage until the end of its next turn.

Steal Warmth (Costs 2 Actions). Dalthynnon steals warmth from one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 16 CON save or take 9 (2d8) cold damage. Dalthynnon then regains HP equal to the cold damage taken.

Flash Freeze (Costs 2 Actions). A burst of ice extends out from Dalthynnon. Each creature within 15 feet of him must succeed on a DC 16 DEX save or be restrained in ice. A creature, including the restrained creature, can take its action to free the restrained creature by succeeding on a DC 16 STR check. A restrained creature is automatically freed if it takes fire damage.

QUEEN AULMARIS ILTHURYN (CAELEVAR FOREST)

Presenting Aulmaris Ilthuryn, Her Serene Majesty, the Queen of Feathers.

Queen Aulmaris Ilthuryn **CR 10**

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 193

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (bird form only)

Perception 19 **Stealth** 18

Resistant Fey Ancestry

Senses darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Gnoll, Goblin, Orc

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+5	+2	+6	+9	+4

Bird Passivism. No bird can willingly attack Aulmaris. They can be forced to do so through magical means.

Fey Ancestry. Aulmaris is resistant to the charmed condition, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Speak with Birds. Aulmaris can communicate with birds as if they shared a language.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Aulmaris makes three Acorn Wand or Storm Talons attacks, or she makes two Storm Bolt attacks. If in Humanoid form, she can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting.

Acorn Wand (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 STR save or be knocked prone.

Storm Talons (Bird Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) lightning damage.

Storm Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) lightning damage plus 14 (4d6) thunder damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 CON save or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Spellcasting (Humanoid Form Only). Aulmaris casts one of the following spells, using WIS as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At will: *druidcraft, entangle, speak with animals, thunderwave*

3/day each: *animal messenger, dispel magic, faerie fire, gust of wind*

1/day each: *dominate beast, freedom of movement, tree stride*

BONUS ACTIONS

Change Shape. Aulmaris magically transforms into a Large or smaller bird, or back into her true form, which is Humanoid. Her statistics, other than her size and speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying transforms with her. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

REACTIONS

Scolding Jays. When a creature Aulmaris can see attacks her, she can call to birds for aid. Dozens of blue jays and other birds fly in the way of the attack, reducing the attack roll by 4.

QUEEN EPIPHANIA (ISLAND REALM OF THE ALCHORADES)

Presenting Epiphania, Her Divine Magnificence, the Queen of the Islands.

Queen Epiphania — CR 4

Medium Humanoid

Armor Class 16 (Blessing of the Serpent)
Hit Points 80
Speed 30 ft.
Perception 15 **Stealth** 13
Resistant poison
Immune poisoned
Senses —
Languages Common, Terran

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+3	+1	+2	+5	+5

Blessing of the Serpent. While Epiphania is conscious and wearing no armor and wielding no shield, she adds her WIS modifier to her AC (included above). In addition, when Epiphania hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 2d8 poison damage (included in the attack).

Serpent Passivism. No serpent or snake can willingly attack Epiphania. They can be forced to do so through magical means.

Serpent Telepathy. Epiphania can magically command any serpent or snake within 120 feet of her, using a limited telepathy.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The queen can make two Hairpin or Poison Bolt attacks. She can replace one attack with a use of Call Serpents.

Hairpin. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and 9 (2d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 CON save or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

Poison Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 CON save or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

Call Serpents. Epiphania magically calls 2d4 poisonous snakes, 1d6 constrictor or giant poisonous snakes, or 1 giant constrictor snake. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, appearing in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of her. The snakes act as allies of Epiphania and obey her spoken or telepathic commands (no action required by her). The snakes remain for 1 hour, until Epiphania dies, or until she dismisses them as a bonus action. She can have any number of snakes under her control at one time, provided the combined total CR of the snakes is no higher than 2.

BONUS ACTIONS

Aspect of the Serpent. Epiphania takes on one of the following snakelike aspects until the start of her next turn:

- **Enhanced Senses.** Epiphania gains darkvision out to a range of 60 feet and keensense out to a range of 10 feet.
- **Serpent Reflexes.** The next time a creature Epiphania can see attacks her, she can use a reaction to move up to 5 feet without provoking opportunity attacks. If this movement puts her out of reach of the attack, the attack misses.
- **Slithering Form.** Epiphania can move through a space as narrow as 1 foot wide without squeezing, and she is resistant to the grappled and restrained conditions. In addition, she can spend 5 feet of movement to escape from nonmagical restraints or being grappled.

TABLES

Resources for the random determination of names, royal regalia, adventure hooks and more—or just for inspiration.

NAMING TABLES

The impact of a mighty castle, imposing fortress, glittering court, or royal family hangs upon a unique and interesting name. The haunted manor where ghostly nobles rule over a kingdom of spirits shouldn't just be called Spooky House but rather a more deserving moniker that catches the imagination of the players and drives home the narrative. The tables presented here can be used to create hundreds of names for any location, government, or noble family.

Naming a Kingdom or Building. At its core, the name of a kingdom, castle, palace, or temple is of a type that adds a descriptor to terms such as *Dutchy* or *Cathedral*. Where these descriptors are placed in the name is largely up to the creator, but a few common naming structures are provided. During this process, freely add additional words if it's helpful, such as *the* and *of*, or pluralize a name to create something fun and evocative. Additionally, if desired, roll a die in place of a descriptor and use the value rolled in the name, such as the Four Baronies or the Tower of Seven Mages.

To start, roll 1d6 and consult the **Name Structure** table or choose something appropriate. Then roll on either the **Kingdom Type** or **Building Type** table and at least once on the **Descriptor** table. After inserting the results into the rolled or chosen naming structure, add additional descriptors (or remove some) as needed, possibly rolling on more tables.

NAME STRUCTURE

d6	Name Structure	Example
1	The [Type] of [Descriptor]	The Alliance of Honor
2	The [Descriptor] [Type]	The Blue Temple
3	The [Descriptor] [Type] of [Descriptor]	The Ruby Coven of Ash
4	[Type] of [Descriptor] [Type]	Matriarchy of the Dragon Syndicates
5	[Type] of [Descriptor] [Descriptor]	Province of the Independent Roses
6	[Type] of [Type] of [Descriptor]	Bureaucracy of the Union of Blood

Naming a Noble Family. The **Noble Family Names** table includes surnames suitable to be used for a noble family but can also be used to describe members of the same court, community, or other important organization. These names are arranged by lineage. A common fantasy naming trope is to use multiple surnames to indicate an individual of noble or upper-class upbringing. For example, a human from a noble family might have a name such as Yohan Northwood Wolfe.

For another option, conjunction names can also be used for noble families. Roll 1d100 twice and consult the **Descriptor** table or choose something appropriate. Example names include Northwood and Goldbanks.

Noble family names can always have descriptors added to them to enhance the feeling of their status. For example, a dwarven family might proudly be the Right Honorable Clan McAllister, or members of a shadow fey court might be united under the name Shadeflowers of the Black Assembly.

(See also *Campaign Builder: Cities & Towns* for additional naming tables.)

BUILDING TYPE

d20	Strongholds	Palaces	Temples
1	Alcazar	Alcazar	Abbey
2	Bastille	Chalet	Acropolis
3	Bastion	Chateau	Basilica
4	Bulwark	Court	Cathedral
5	Citadel	Demesne	Chantry
6	Donjon	Estate	Chapel
7	Fasthold	Hall	Church
8	Fort	Hold	Grange
9	Fortress	House	Hall
10	Garrison	Keep	Hold
11	Hold	Lodge	Mahal
12	Keep	Mahal	Monastery
13	Outpost	Manor	Pagoda
14	Presidio	Manse	Preceptory
15	Redoubt	Mansion	Refuge
17	Safehold	Pagoda	Sanctuary
16	Schloss	Palace	Sanctum
18	Seraglio	Palazzo	Shrine
19	Stronghold	Seat	Tabernacle
20	Tower	Villa	Temple

Ancestry. For additional ancestral details—whether to further define a living ruler or to determine a significant historical figure, perhaps from a PC's family—roll and consult the **Ruler's Relationship to Character**, **Ruler's Title Sequence**, and **Ruler's Cognomen** tables or choose something appropriate. In the previous example, Yohan Northwood Wolfe might be uncle to one of the PCs, be the third of his name, and be proud of his receding hairline: so Yohan Northwood Wolfe III, also known as Yohan the Bald.

RULER'S TITLE SEQUENCE

d100	Sequence	d100	Sequence
1–15	I	79–86	VI
16–35	II	87–92	VII
36–55	III	93–96	VIII
56–68	IV	97–98	IX
69–78	V	99–100	X

RULER'S RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTER

d100	Relationship	d100	Relationship
1–2	Self	49–58	Uncle
3–9	Father	59–68	Great Uncle
10–17	Grandfather	69–78	Aunt
18–24	Mother	79–88	Great Aunt
25–32	Grandmother	89–94	1st Cousin
33–40	Brother	95–100	2nd Cousin
41–48	Sister		

KINGDOM TYPE

d100	Kingdoms	d100	Kingdoms	d100	Kingdoms	d100	Kingdoms
1	Alliance	26	Demesne	51	Imperium	76	Province
2	Archdiocese	27	Dictatorship	52	Jarldom	77	Realm
3	Archprelacy	28	Diocese	53	Justiciarate	78	Regency
4	Aristocracy	29	District	54	Khanate	79	Region
5	Assembly	30	Domain	55	Kingdom	80	Republic
6	Authority	31	Dominion	56	Land	81	Riding
7	Banner	32	Dutchy	57	League	82	Satrap
8	Barony	33	Dynasty	58	Magocracy	83	Sector
9	Block	34	Earldom	59	Mandate	84	Shire
10	Brotherhood	35	Eldership	60	Marches	85	Sovereignty
11	Bureaucracy	36	Emirate	61	Margravate	86	State
12	Canton	37	Empire	62	Matriarchy	87	Sultanate
13	Cantref	38	Enclave	63	Ministry	88	Syndicate
14	Church-State	39	Eparchy	64	Monarchy	89	Taraf
15	City	40	Exarchate	65	Municipality	90	Territory
16	City-State	41	Expanse	66	Oblast	91	Tetrarchy
17	Clan	42	Federation	67	Order	92	Theocracy
18	Commonwealth	43	Fiefdom	68	Ordinariate	93	Thranedom
19	Commune	44	Fleet	69	Palatinate	94	Tributary
20	Confederation	45	Governorate	70	Parish	95	Tsardom
21	Council	46	Hierocracy	71	Pentarchy	96	Union
22	Country	47	Hive	72	Prefecture	97	Vicariate
23	County	48	Holding	73	Prelacy	98	Viscounty
24	Coven	49	Horde	74	Principality	99	Voivodate
25	Curia	50	Hundred	75	Protectorate	100	Wastes

DESCRIPTOR

d100	Descriptors	Descriptors	d100	Descriptors	Descriptors	d100	Descriptors	Descriptors
1	Adamantine	Ale	36	Grand	Fire	71	River	Road
2	Amber	Amber	37	Greater	Foe	72	Rose	Roar
3	Amethyst	Armor	38	Green	Forge	73	Royal	Robe
4	Ancient	Barley	39	Gray	Founder	74	Ruby	Rust
5	Animal Name	Barrel	40	Gules	Goblet	75	Sable	Sage
6	Arachnid	Bear	41	High	Good	76	Sacred	Salt
7	Argent	Beard	42	Hill	Granite	77	Sapphire	Shield
8	Ashen	Bitter	43	Holy	Gravel	78	Scarlet	Ship
9	Azure	Blade	44	Honor	Hammer	79	Screaming	Slate
10	Black	Brandy	45	Honorable	Hand	80	Shadow	Slayer
11	Blessed	Bridge	46	Ice	Hawk	81	Shattered	Smith
12	Blood	Bright	47	Illustrious	Helm	82	Shining	Smoke
13	Blue	Broad	48	Independent	Hunter	83	Silent	Staff
14	Brass	Brooch	49	Indigo	Ice	84	Silver	Stone
15	Brilliant	Carbon	50	Iron	Jet	85	South/ Southern	Storm
16	Bronze	Clashing	51	Islands	Justice	86	Star	Stream
17	Burgundy	Claw	52	Ivory	Keg	87	Steel	Strong
18	City	Clay	53	Jade	Killer	88	Sun	Sword
19	Copper	Coal	54	Lake	Kind	89	Supreme	Table
20	Crimson	Coin	55	Lilac	Knot	90	Tainted	Talon
21	Crusader	Cold	56	Malachite	Lead	91	Thunder	Thud
22	Dead	Coral	57	Midnight	Light	92	Titan	Tiger
23	Death	Crunch	58	Mithral	Lightning	93	Topaz	Tin
24	Diamond	Crystal	59	Moon	Lion	94	Turquoise	Ugly
25	Divine	Dark	60	Mountain	Lumber	95	United	Vault
26	Dragon	Deep	61	North/ Northern	Mace	96	Vert	War
27	East/ Eastern	Dog	62	Ocean	Marble	97	Violet	Wave
28	Ebon	Door	63	Onyx	Moor	98	West/ Western	Wheel
29	Elder	Dough	64	Opal	Oat	99	White	Wise
30	Emerald	Drake	65	Pearl	Oil	100	Yellow	Wyrm
31	Faithful	Drum	66	Plains	Orange	98	West/ Western	Wheel
32	Forest	Dull	67	Platinum	Paper	99	White	Wise
33	Ghost	Dwarf	68	Purple	Quartz	100	Yellow	Wyrm
34	Glorious	Earth	69	Purpure	Rat			
35	Gold	Feast	70	Red	Ring			

NOBLE FAMILY NAMES

d20	Human	Dwarven	Elven	Faerie	Infernal	Space
1	Angevine	Alechanter	Aelathel	Biteflower	Ahriman	Aldavar
2	Ashworth	Anvilspine	Birlellyn	Bloodshroud	Anagnos	Arshaan
3	Barclay	Broadbraid	Caelmar	Brightvine	Baelvor	Astraeus
4	Cadogan	Coingrog	Delnar	Dawndancer	Barburos	Braylr
5	Cavendish	Duskdelver	Ephyra	Dusktear	Chixiss	Ckrix Ven
6	Clattermore	Emberaxe	Faldama	Evenshore	Damakos	Dholzu
7	Grimfallow	Frostforge	Galaren	Flitterwing	Enikuri	Dymora
8	Knighthold	Hiltkeeper	Galvathar	Gleambrow	Igixar	Emergen
9	Longville	Ironbrewer	Hahaendel	Hazelmist	Kraex	Greyza
10	Montague	Kegbreaker	Isilthren	Icemyst	Maalphas	Imixa
11	Morbarth	Krasthelm	Jaerihre	Marshblossom	Morthanos	Krahath
12	Mountbatten	Lashthorn	Kithiratheil	Moonbranch	Neshnan	Phoxiar
13	Northwood	Oakenspear	Laesrin	Pearlbeam	Orzamoth	Prashzan
14	Rosenborne	Redhammer	Mitharaden	Shadeflower	Phalavil	Quasco
15	Rostovich	Runebeard	Narelmiel	Stillmyst	Rogthonoth	Stratix
16	Rutherhall	Shalefist	Ruthaldren	Strifesong	Shadurzul	Terrathorn
17	Summeredge	Shatterspike	Sehanren	Suntouch	Thamulsu	Tychata
18	Sutcliffe	Towerguard	Taelvana	Thistlespike	Valavoth	Vanzor
19	Wentworth	Vaultbreaker	Tatholas	Vineward	Yijamau	Yedex
20	Wolfe	Warbriar	Valdane	Wyrmspinner	Zogroloch	Zeiphus

REGALIA, ICONS & EQUIPMENT

Common in the Labyrinth is the image of the noble or ruler bedecked in finery, a crown on their head, a scepter in their hand. The ceremonial items wielded by a ruler are called regalia and can be as simple as a signet ring that bears a coat of arms or as splendid as matching, jeweled, magical accoutrements. Another example of those for whom regalia is important are

INTERCHANGEABLE NAMES

Depending on the setting, the lines between elves, gnomes, halflings, and fey are blurred. When choosing a noble family name for an elven or faerie character, choose from either table.

OTHER DESCRIPTORS AND CONJUNCTION NAMES

There are myriad items that can be used to create flavorful and resonant names. The lists included in this section are only some of the choices available. A few other categories of items are included below as options to consider. These can be used in place of descriptors or types, as appropriate.

When using conjunction names, combine one element from two different categories so that the name sounds evocative and interesting:

- Animals
- Armor
- Clothing
- Food or Drink
- Gemstones
- Occupations (such as soldier, king, or poet)
- Plants
- Terrain
- Weapons

RULER'S COGNOMEN

d100	Cognomen	d100	Cognomen	d100	Cognomen
1–3	The [Animal*]	40	The Exile	73–74	The Proud
4–6	The [Color**]	41–42	The Fair	75	The Revered
7	The Accursed	43	The Fortunate	76	The Righteous
8	The Affable	44–45	The Generous	77	The Saint
9	The Aggressor	46–47	The Glorious	78	The Savior
10–11	The Avenger	48–49	The Good	79	The Seer
12	The Bald	50–51	The Great	80	The Simple
13–15	The Bastard	52–53	The Handsome/Beautiful	81	The Sorcerer
16–17	The Bearded	54–55	The Holy	82	The Stout
18–19	The Beloved	56	The Illustrious	83	The Strict
20–21	The Blessed	57–58	The Just	84–85	The Strong
22–23	The Bloody	59–60	The Kind	86	The Tall
24–25	The Bold	61	The Lame	87–88	The Terrible
26–27	The Brave	62	The Mad	89	The Tyrant
28	The Chaste	63	The Magnanimous	90	The Unlucky
29–30	The Conqueror	64–65	The Magnificent	91	The Usurper
31–32	The Courageous	66	The Martyr	92–93	The Valiant
33–34	The Cruel	67–68	The Mighty	94–95	The Victorious
35–36	The Damned	69–70	The Old	96	The Wicked
37–38	The Elder	71	The One-Eyed	97–98	The Wise
39	The Enlightened	72	The Pious	99–100	The Younger

*such as Bear, Bull, Hawk, Lion, or Viper ** such as Red, White, or Black

church or temple leaders, who wear special garments or carry reliquaries that contain the remains of saints or important figures during ceremonies. These items are far beyond normal clothing or jewelry. They are symbols of status and power.

Some descriptions of regalia are included below. The cost of these items is listed, but this is merely an average. Regalia are works of art, so their prices can fluctuate greatly, depending on the materials and decorations used by the artist.

Such regalia increases its wearer's status. For each category of regalia worn (as determined by the regalia tables in this section), add 1 to its wearer's status score (to a maximum of +5).

HEADGEAR REGALIA

d6	Regalia	Average Cost	Description
1	Bejeweled Cap	150 gp	Soft velvet cap decorated with jewels.
2	Coronet	3,000 gp	A jeweled band with pointed adornments that encircles the head.
3	Crown	7,500 gp	A full head adornment made of precious metals and jewels.
4	Diadem	1,500 gp	A semicircular, jeweled headband made of precious metals.
5	Headdress	2,000 gp	A hat set with decorations made of metal, feathers, or other exotic materials.
6	Miter	500 gp	A tall, peaked religious cap of embroidered fabric.

HAND-HELD REGALIA

d6	Regalia	Average Cost	Description
1	Fan	750 gp	Emblazoned with heraldry and made of rare materials.
2	Orb	3,750 gp	A sphere of precious metals, engraved and bejeweled.
3	Signet Ring	1,500 gp	A heavy ring bearing the royal heraldry or seal.
4	Scepter	4,250 gp	A short rod of precious metals mounted with a decorative headpiece.
5	Seal	2,000 gp	A hand-held, square pillar of jade or ivory with a distinctive mark on one end.
6	Sword	5,000 gp	A ceremonial sword heavy with jewels and decoration.

CLOTHING REGALIA

d6	Regalia	Average Cost	Description
1	Belt	1,750 gp	A jeweled band worn around the waist.
2	Collar	3,750 gp	An ornate necklace of precious metals, often with a large pendant hanging from it.
3	Gloves	1,500 gp	A hand covering made of fine fabrics that are richly embroidered and decorated.
4	Mantle	2,500 gp	A cloak-like garment with a long train and decorated with jewels.
5	Robe	4,250 gp	A heavy robe lined with fur and decorated with golden thread and jewels.
6	Vestments	5,500 gp	Liturgical garment of embroidered velvet or other expensive fabric.

OTHER REGALIA ITEMS

d8	Regalia	Average Cost	Description
1	Ampulla and Spoon	250 gp	A container of rare oils and a jeweled spoon used to anoint a ruler.
2	Banner	250 gp	A heraldic flag made of embroidered fabric set with jewels.
3	Canopy	1,000 gp	A heavy shade to protect from the sun, made of rich fabrics and supported by poles at the corners.
4	Ceremonial Armor	1,450 gp	An ornately decorated suit of armor made of precious metals and not used for combat.
5	Insignia Brooch	1,250 gp	A large jewel set in a decorative badge.
6	Slippers or shoes	500 gp	Ostentatious footwear typically embroidered and set with jewels.
7	Throne	10,000 gp or more	Heavily decorated chair used by a sovereign.
8	Veil	750 gp	A piece of thin, expensive fabric worn to conceal the face.

RELIGIOUS ITEMS (RELIQUARIES, RELICS, AND ICONS)

d6	Regalia	Description
1	Altarpiece or Triptych	A decorative work of art placed on an altar or in a place of prominence.
2	Chalice	A jeweled bowl or cup used in ceremonies.
3	Coffer or Casket	A small, highly decorated box containing the remains of important religious figures or other precious objects.
4	Icon	A representation of a deity or divine being, often carved or painted.
5	Phylactery	A reliquary with a glass or transparent panel to display the remains of important individuals within.
6	Relic or Reliquary	An object reputed to have a connection to a hero, religious figure, or deity. Often housed in decorated containers.

Religious items are typically made of valuable materials such as gold and gemstones, but due to their sacred nature, they are not assigned a price and are typically worth more than the materials that compose them.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS & ADVENTURE HOOKS

Need a hook to pull characters into the story?
Roll and consult the tables in this section for some quick ideas.

TIER I: RANDOM SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

d20	Encounter
1	A castle staff worker feels slighted or humiliated after interacting with one of the PCs. The incident might be real or falsely perceived. Regardless, they get their revenge on the PC by ensuring their food is over-seasoned, their beverages are watered down, or their bed pans mysteriously vanish at night.
2	A horse throws a rider outside the stables. An argument ensues over whether the stable hand shoed the horse correctly.
3	A poorly trained dog escapes from a kennel and aggressively corners an apprentice cartwright in one of the stable pens.
4	A scrawny chicken approaches the PCs and scratches around them, looking for food. A scruffy-faced individual wearing a threadbare tunic accuses one of the PCs of stealing the fowl.
5	A slightly tipsy courier mistakenly delivers a note to one of the PCs. No name is on the envelope, but it is sealed with a wax stamp identifiable with a noble household. Currently, three members of the noble household reside on the lord's grounds: a father, a mother, and their teenage child. The message contains an invitation from an unknown lover for one of the family members to meet in a lover's tryst. Varying levels of drama and accountability result, depending on who receives the note.
6	A small rock crashes through a stained-glass window in the main hall. PCs must quickly figure out who threw the rock and determine whether it was just an accident.
7	A strange voice calls to the PCs, leading them to a large rain barrel covered by an oilskin tarpaulin. Inside hides a guard from the night watch. The man is naked and claims his comrades stole his clothing as a prank after he accidentally fell asleep during his watch. He begs the PCs to find his clothes, which are strung up somewhere in the courtyard.
8	A sweltering summer heatwave forces residents to sleep outdoors in the inner courtyard. The lord requests PCs help keep the peace and regulate noise levels of various groups during quiet hours. The task becomes increasingly difficult when they must help a woman calm and quiet her cholic infant when it begins wailing uncontrollably in the middle of the night.
9	After a PC shows one of the castle staff kindness, the individual develops a slight crush on them and anonymously leaves them small tokens of affection, hoping to pique their interest as a mysterious admirer.
10	After several days of rain, the dirt roads that lead to the castle have become soft and muddy. A carriage transporting a visiting dignitary becomes stuck, delaying their arrival. The dignitary is well-known for horrid displays of entitlement. Therefore, the lord requests the PCs meet the dignitary to help resolve the issue and placate any tantrums before bringing them to the castle.
11	PCs witness one of the scullery servants slip a piece of silverware into the folds of their apron, presumably pilfering it to pawn off later.
12	Drought has brought a poor crop yield. Vassals dependent on subsistence farming sent several representatives to the castle to negotiate a solution. The lord asks the PCs to mediate the negotiations. The vassals request either the right to attempt to barter with an unfriendly neighboring kingdom or else writs that allow them to act as privateers and seize supplies from unofficered travelers on the lord's landholds.
13	For seemingly unknown reasons, the castle's jester begins to target one of the PCs as the scapegoat for his insult jokes. The jester believes the PC is a childhood friend and that they will eventually recognize the connection. When they confront the jester, he is shocked that the PC doesn't recognize him and formally introduces himself. If the PC accepts the connection, or pretends to, they gain a new ally. Otherwise, the jester apologizes, expressing great embarrassment for his misunderstanding.
14	One of the castle lord's children is a practical joker and takes to placing frogs and other creatures in inappropriate places throughout the castle. To the child's delight, the sudden appearance of these creatures produces surprise or terror in both servants and guests.

15	One of the castle lord's older family members swears one of the PCs resembles a deceased relative or close friend. Every time the elder encounters the PC, they bring up the uncanny resemblance and ask them if they are sure they aren't of any relation to the deceased. Unless they prove otherwise, the elder remains convinced that the PC is indeed related—and secretly suspects they were born due to infidelity.
16	One of the cleaning staff accidentally spills dirty mop water on the PCs or their possessions. While attempting to apologize, the event draws the attention of the clumsy staff person's superior, who angrily berates them and threatens them with a beating as punishment for the incident.
17	One of the lord's children fancies themselves a poet. The lord has arranged for the child to perform their latest piece, "Ode to the Pain of the Longing Heart," for a local audience in the square. The work is tediously long, poorly constructed, and so melodramatic that it is laughable. The lord assigns the PCs the near-impossible task of ensuring no one in the audience jeers, laughs, or falls asleep during the recitation.
18	PCs return to their castle lodging to find a perfectly cleaned room. Unfortunately, an item they left in the room is missing. They find no evidence of a break-in and conclude that someone on the staff either stole or accidentally disposed of the item while attending to the room. The PCs must conduct staff interviews to determine what happened.
19	Sometime after a transaction on the castle grounds, only once able to count his funds at the end of the day, the proprietor discovers that he was short-changed by someone. After reviewing the day's transactions, he falsely concludes that the PCs have taken advantage of him, so he sets out to confront them, to confess their trickery, and pay the difference of what they owe him. The sum is only a few coppers, but he feels it's the principle of the matter. He is exceptionally persistent and bothersome, though if the PCs give in to his accusations, they risk losing the trust of others within the community.
20	Two guards during the night watch get into an altercation over a card game. Tensions escalate quickly, and they draw knives and threaten to kill each other.

TIER II: RANDOM SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

d12	Encounter
1	A strange woman wanders through town, carrying a sack with a half-dozen adorable kittens. She offers to sell the cats, claiming they are good luck. The woman is a hag, and each kitten wears a small charm that brings whoever owns the kitten terrible luck.
2	A sudden and unexpected rainstorm forces everyone in the street to run for cover. The nearest cover is a porch or stable, crowded with others trying to escape the violent downpour. While everyone huddles, someone notices their coin purse has gone missing and angrily accosts everyone in the group to determine who's responsible for the theft.
3	A well-dressed merchant invites the PCs to entertain a proposition for a covert job over an expensive dinner at the local inn. The merchant refuses to discuss the job details until all have finished their meals. Halfway through the dinner, the merchant excuses themselves to go to the restroom. The merchant never returns, sticking the PCs with the bill. The reason for the disappearance is unknown.
4	A young noble requests tutelage in the art of swordplay. They offer one of the PCs a substantial payment for lessons. Unfortunately, the young noble's overbearing parents have forbidden the learning of martial arts for fear of their safety. When the parents learn of the lessons, they accuse the PC of irresponsible recklessness and of placing their precious child in danger. The nobles demand the PC's arrest while their cowardly child claims the PC coerced them into the lessons.
5	A young trinket peddler fearfully approaches the PCs. His eyes dart in paranoia as he cautiously reports that he overheard two individuals bartering over an ancient map, supposedly showing a secret entrance into the castle.
6	After an argument with the butler, a disgruntled kitchen servant puts a soap block into the evening stew pot. That evening, the lord invites guests to eat at his table. Those consuming the stew note the odd flavor, but social graces dissuade them from commenting, and they awkwardly struggle not to express their disgust.

7	An individual from a prominent house approaches the PCs and requests their aid in sneaking out of the castle. The individual claims the head of their house is abusive and offers the PCs a valuable gem as payment for their efforts. Unfortunately, the gem has a specific cut recognizable to the head of the house and its agents. Attempting to display or pawn the stone anywhere within the castle grounds attracts attention.
8	An unkempt beggar approaches the PCs. Instead of asking for aid, the beggar briefly stares at one of the PCs before uttering a strange passage in an unknown language—and in a curiously deep and inhuman tone. After, they wander off. If the PCs pursue and question the beggar about the incident, he claims no recollection of ever seeing them, and if they persist, he screams for authorities, claiming they are harassing him.
9	An unknown prankster tossed a large stone into the offal pit, blocking the drain and causing the sewage to back-up into the streets. As a result, several local vassals argue over who is responsible for the mess and who will rectify the putrid situation.
10	As the PCs pass the guard-training yards, one of the guards believes he recognizes a PC as someone with whom they had a major falling out about a decade earlier. They yell insults and accusations, attempting to provoke the PC.
11	PCs spot a bounty upon a nearby post for someone wanted as a peeping Tom. The likeness and description of the person loosely resembles one of the PCs. Until someone apprehends the criminal, people continually mistake the PC for them. While the mistaken identity might seem comical or amusing, the longer it takes to apprehend the criminal, the more the situation poses a sincere threat to the PC's reputation.
12	The blacksmith's apprentice uses his end-of-the-week stipend to binge on a two-day drinking spree. PCs first run into him early in the evening, at which point he attempts to arm wrestle one of them for money. Regardless of the outcome, the apprentice gets angry and berates the PCs for perceived wrongdoing before stumbling off.

TIER III: RANDOM SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

d10	Encounter
1	A prominent aristocrat and socialite fancies themself as a fashion designer. The aristocrat desires real-life adventurers to model their latest designs at an upcoming gala at the high court. As inspiration, the designer based the fashions on the ancient military uniforms of a kingdom that once conquered and subjugated several neighboring kingdoms. The ignorant and irresponsible use of the designs offends several guests whose ancestors suffered under the subjugation. The PCs must make amends for the offensive garments before the event is ruined.
2	A roguish individual with a seemingly bottomless coin purse treats themselves to a night of debauchery. Early the following day, a palace chambermaid arrives at the inn looking for the lord's recently arrived nephew, who is supposed to be fostering in the castle. The nephew matches the description of the prior evening's rogue, though the troublesome young ward has seemingly vanished. The innkeeper is furious and demands the chambermaid produce payment for both drinks and damages.
3	A stranger leaves an infant on the PCs' doorstep, wagon, or similar location, where they are likely to recover it readily. A cryptic note pinned to the swaddling blanket claims the infant is the child of the current lord's elder sibling and therefore the rightful heir to the castle.
4	As wars rage throughout the realms, the high king requests the lord host two allied armies upon her landholds. The allies set up temporary barracks outside the keep. Unfortunately, supplies for both camps are running low, creating mounting tensions between the groups. The PCs are called upon to help mitigate the conflict until the next caravan of supplies arrives.
5	PCs encounter a wandering merchant who offers to sell them some potions at a discount. If they appear uninterested, he gives one of the PCs a free sample. The potions are of excellent quality, and all bear a similar wax seal. The potions were actually stolen from an efreeti's private vault in the City of Brass, who will be seeking to reclaim their possessions.

6	During the night, a raging storm causes the collapse of the royal stable's carriage house roof. Fortunately, there were no injuries, but a traveling wizard had stabled her coach within the carriage house, which the collapse destroyed, allowing wind and rain to severely damage several of her tomes. She demands compensation and aid in salvaging what she can from the disaster. If anyone dares help the foul-tempered wizard, she declares several items missing about halfway through the salvage and accuses anyone nearby of committing the theft.
7	Rumors begin to surface that the castle bishop, who serves as the lord's spiritual advisor and confidant, sired at least three illegitimate children during his tenure. The accusations are led by the bishop's rival, a younger priest who seeks to oust them from the position. The lord suspects foul play by even higher authorities within the church, who have for years sought to replace the bishop with someone whose courtly advice will further push their political agenda.
8	Someone within the lord's high council has been revealing specific details of private meetings to select nobles in order to help them keep ahead of public policies, allow them to buy real estate, or purchase goods and services in select areas.
9	Spurred on by a local demagogue, a small crowd of vassals gather at the castle's steps to protest recent tax increases. The crowd grows restless and increasingly angry as the speaker recites a litany of offenses perpetrated by the castle's lord. The growing throng seems poised to erupt into looting or other violence unless someone publicly challenges the speaker's position.
10	The church guard drags a massive, heavily scarred man through the streets, bound in shackles and heavy iron chains. He appears to be a foreign warrior, attempting to fight back, protesting and yelling in a foreign language. Clearly, the warrior doesn't understand the reason for his treatment. Conversely, the church guard remains dismissive of any interference and refuses to explain their treatment of the prisoner, only stating that he is a heretic that they must bring before the tribunal for his crimes.

TIER IV: RANDOM SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

d10	Encounter
1	A magical anomaly causes the personalities and memories of several individuals to become scrambled. Those affected include the castle lord and their chief advisors, whose memories and personality traits have become interwoven and dispersed with unknown vassals and other community members. PCs must seek out individuals carrying these traits to help bring things back to normal.
2	A mysterious black stone appears in the middle of the square. It is cold to the touch and makes a low hum—the stone seeming to physically pulse along with the sound. Sages believe it is trying to communicate, and it is stirring up conspiracy theories and fears in the common folk and some within the castle.
3	A small child approaches the PCs, scared and uncontrollably weeping because she has lost her poppet.
4	The young child of the region's lord learns their father has arranged for their marriage to the heir of a rival lord in order to broker peace and end a longstanding grudge between nations. In protest, the child refuses the arrangement and locks themselves somewhere in the keep. The lord requests the PCs find them in time for the wedding, but when they do, the child is very clear and insistent in their refusal.
5	At the time of coronation, the soul of the god-emperor is placed into a mystical gemstone, protecting them from manipulation and damnation until the end of their hundred-year reign. To prevent his reign from ending, the current god-emperor purposely allowed a powerful rival to win the gemstone in a game of chance, so it now lies protected in this individual's vault, far from the reach of the empire's officiates. PCs must convince the enemy to return the gem, but it desires compensation of equal value.
6	A dragon seeking allies in a divine war disguises themselves as a human and ventures to the castle as a vagrant seeking shelter and hospitality. They intend to base their plans for the region in the encroaching upheaval of how the PCs and others interact with their alter ego.

7	Prominent dignitaries summon the PCs to lend their votes at a summit council in order to determine the terms of a peace settlement between two warring nations. Among the guests sits an arch-devil's stunningly dressed and well-groomed avatar. The devil is there to manipulate one of the participants into agreeing to specific terms in the treaty that would break a contract made by their ancestors over a century ago, allowing the arch-devil direct influence over the kingdom's political agendas.
8	Revolutionaries from an eastern province have accused several of the region's lords of crimes. The PCs must collect accounts and evidence to either aid the revolutionaries or defend their lord and prevent revolt.
9	Rumors surface concerning an outbreak of endemic parasitic worms that kill their victims and transform them into putrescent, worm-riddled slime. Some fear the slime is sentient while others are convinced the worms are supernatural agents of an elder god. Those within the castle beg the lord to shut the gates to all travelers until the lands are safe. Because the lord requires precise and accurate information, she is uncertain how to proceed. At the very least, she is unprepared and lacks the supplies to survive an extended quarantine. Her uncertainty stirs fear and dissension among her vassals, and her kingdom's dissolution seems imminent.
10	Within the halls of the dead lie the vaults of three deceased kings whose restless spirits are bound by a long-forgotten secret. Each spirit seeks to answer a question known only to one of the other spirits. The PCs must negotiate with all three spirits to get each to reveal their answers, and only by combining the knowledge of all three kings is the mystery unraveled.

NOBLE ADVENTURE HOOKS

d20	Noble Adventure Hooks
1	A secret fellowship, representing all the peoples of the realm, is called together when the Blight King reveals his tyrannical plan for power by collecting three of the seven shards of the Broken Crown of Greymoor. With the fourth shard in hand, the fellowship must gather the final shards and stop the Blight King's plan before time runs out.
2	Baroness Avion's Chateau de Corlais is plagued by hordes of flocking geese that refuse to go away, despite the season for migrating. Desperate to be rid of the aggressive and messy beasts, the baroness is offering her late husband's fabled weapon as reward.
3	Duke Gramth has stewarded the Seat of Polonia for three generations and is much beloved for his generosity and longevity. But now a usurper, Wencel of Camber, amasses support for his claims as last scion of Polonia and the realm's rightful king. With civil war on the horizon, it will take a miracle, a mercy, or a well-executed mission to decide the country's political fate.
4	Emperor Liu's last crane recently perished in a storm like no other. With this symbol of the realm gone, the morale of the region is at an all-time low. Can anyone brighten the emperor's spirits and lift the pall that weighs heavily on the country?
5	Every fortnight, the good queen Pelenike goes missing until the following dawn, at which time she returns exhausted to within an inch of her life and rebukes inquiries about her whereabouts. Her loyal servants—fed up with the secrecy and the disconcerting state their queen so frequently abides in—now seek noble investigators to follow and watch Pelenike on her next outing.
6	Hortensio Lepidus is a noble without a house, but he doesn't let that fact diminish his standing at court. In fact, the brash Hortensio threatens anyone who so much as sneers at him to a challenge for life and land claim. This might be a death wish or a ploy to once again be a landed noble, but his rivals are unwilling to find out firsthand. Instead, the court seeks someone brave and capable to accept Hortensio's challenge and silence the braggart for good.
7	It's been six months since Castle Voss was launched into the sky atop magic, bean-sprouted vines and branches and into the realm of Cumulos the sky giant, who now demands vassalage. Vossland is not happy with the state of affairs, and they want to storm the suspended castle and reclaim their freedom by force, but they need real warriors to help make their dreams a reality.

8	King Harvi and his retinue went elk hunting a fortnight ago and have yet to return, and his new wife, Queen Veruna, worries for his well-being. She promises the royals' best steeds to whomever brings her husband back to court.
9	King Sylvain Thornhart keeps his greatest shame, the monster his son Prince Leif turned into, locked away in the castle dungeon. The witch Grim Elsa has hired the PCs to break the prince out of his prison, but are the witch's motives for doing so pure or self-serving?
10	Kobold prince Yip-Yap of Clan Beetlefinger has been cast out of his clan and seeks a new army to back him and his rightful claim to the Beetlefinger Throne. The ambitious kobold promises all the riches of the clan's vaults to whoever supports his claim, including the fabled boots of Flapjack Beetlefinger.
11	Someone toppled Lady Ducaeu's memorial shrine in the town square last night. She is offering a generous reward to whomever apprehends the culprit. The only clues to go on so far are the vague story of a panhandling (and untrustworthy) eyewitness and a trail of ashy ooze that leads toward the museum of local history.
12	The Dragoons of the Crimson Gyrfalcon patrol the realm's borders, accosting everyone they find. With little patience for pleasantries, the dragoons search for a young adult who bears a red feathery birthmark, but they do not admit why.
13	The Fourth Necropolis of Ozantheses II has been overrun by wrathful spirits and walking dead, which threaten to push past the grave city's walls and into the neighboring lands of the living. It will take a cadre of holy crusaders and brave masons to quell the tide of undead and reinforce the necropolis's walls.
14	The Hammerlords of Sunderhall, King Jorin and Prince Mexir, have ruled the dwarven kingdom with pride and compassion for ages. But when a virulent plague ravages Sunderhall's subjects and besets the king, the prince consort is made desperate to find a cure for the people and the man he loves—even going so far as to offer a hero's pick of the Hammervault if a cure can be found.
15	The Kingdom of Annelon calls for aid, shining their crystalline mirrors in the night. But upon arrival at the kingdom's gates, PCs find every subject of the realm has been turned to glass.
16	The rumors surrounding the Crown of Onux Blackblade begin to ring true when a shard of the fabled headpiece surfaces in a pawnshop overnight. Now, every mercenary company and power-thirsting noble is on the hunt for the lost artifact. Whoever finds it first is sure to attain glory in Onux's legends.
17	The saga of Clotilde the Green has been recited for the last five years, hailing the lass's bravery and sacrifice against the dread serpent Ansilax. But now Ansilax flies again, and the realm's only hope rides on sifting through the saga's embellishments to reveal the drake's true weakness.
18	The sham trial of princess Nelanore has reached a verdict of guilty on all counts of treason and sedition. With her execution by guillotine planned for the following dawn, her brother, the beloved Prince Niro, must resort to drastic measures to save the princess from a headless fate, including hiring someone foolhardy enough to distract the royal guard during a rescue attempt.
19	The Tawny Owl of St. Lune has gone missing, and the extended membership of the royal family are all suspects in the theft. The PCs must help Princess Xanthe of Lune ferret out the culprit—and the reward is sure to be a king's ransom.
20	The Wyrbeast of Curcannen terrorizes the great house of the same name, rattling castle bastions and ravaging sentinels every full moon. The remaining scions of House Curcannen are at wit's end and eager to be rid of the beast at any cost.

RANDOM TABLES

Need a few details to help flesh out a locale or NPC? Roll and consult the tables in this section for some quick ideas.

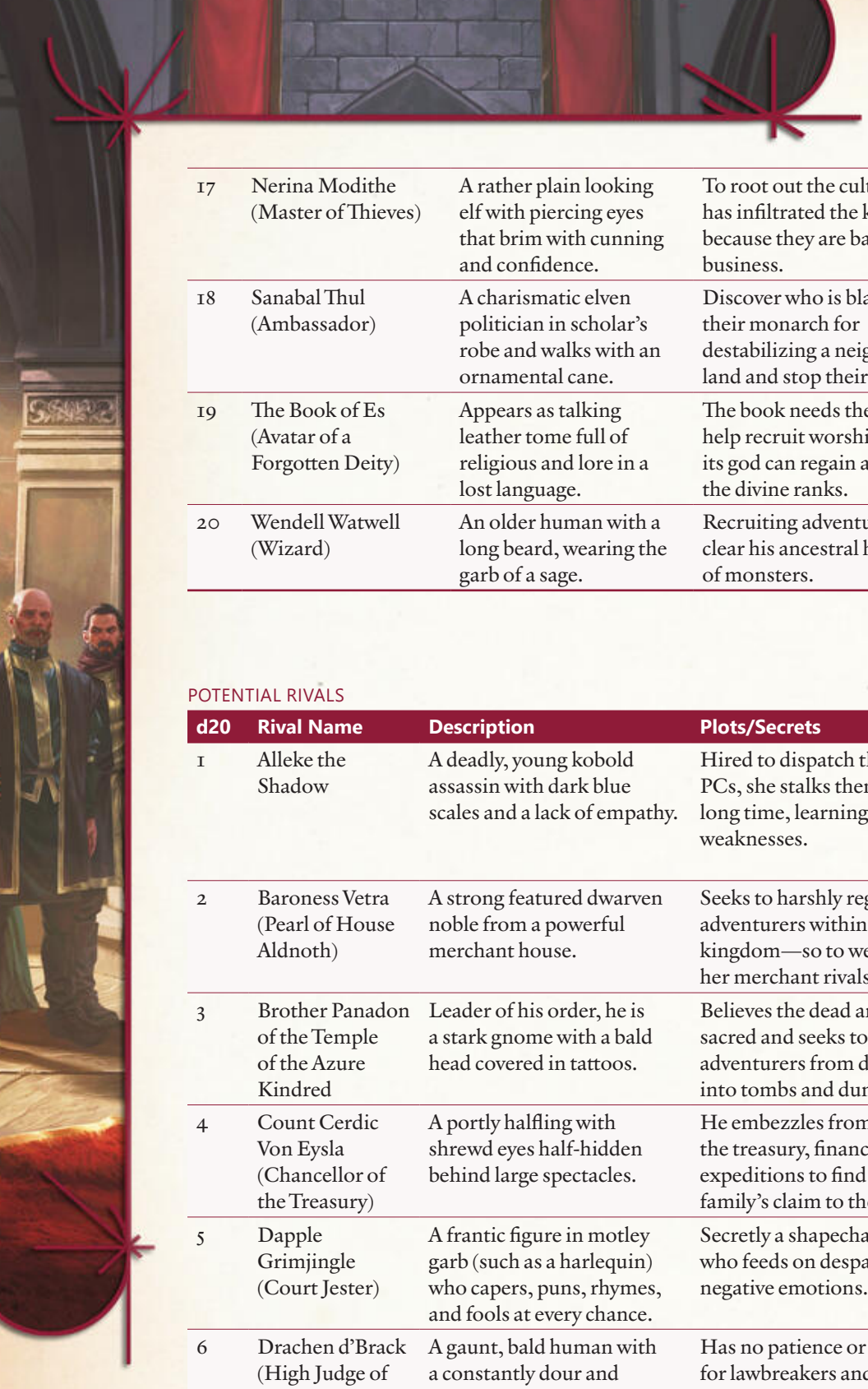
HAUNTS OF THE CASTLE

d20	Haunts
1	A blood-covered doll stands in a dark hallway, beckoning to the PCs to follow it into the shadows.
2	A spectral jester capers in the halls, cursing those who do not laugh at his painfully terrible jokes.
3	A trail of blood paints itself on the floor in front of the PCs, leading to the door of an ally/innocent/patron.
4	A voice crying for help echoes faintly from behind the brick walls of certain hallways.
5	During a banquet or feast, the food turns rotten when eaten.
6	Every night, a ghostly but loyal hound follows one PC around.
7	For a moment, a tapestry depicts the PCs murdering each other.
8	For fleeting moments, random mirrors show ghastly reflections of those who pass by them.
9	Ghostly future versions of themselves silently attempt to warn the PCs of an approaching calamity.
10	If the PCs sleep in the castle, there is a 10 percent chance a ghost will attempt to possess one of them (DC 15) for a few hours during the night.
11	In a run-down area of the castle, the ghostly vision of a chamber makes the collapsed floor seem safe.
12	Mounted trophy heads of monsters and animals whisper dark secrets.
13	On certain nights, the statue of the first monarch weeps blood.
14	On the anniversary of the event, ghosts roam the castle, recreating their successful assault and pillaging.
15	A chamber rapidly fills with blood and with the screaming heads of those wronged by the monarchs.
16	The door to a PC's chamber opens onto a void of swirling shadows. Perhaps it is an illusion. Perhaps not.
17	A childs marionette slumps in a corner of the nursery, but when the PCs look away, the puppet goes missing.
18	The spirit of the former monarch yells riddles in the great hall before being cut down by unseen attackers.
19	There are two royal children . . . but weren't there three yesterday?
20	Those who walk down a certain hallway at night rapidly age, collapsing into bones if they fail to reach the doorway at the far end.

POTENTIAL PATRONS

d20	Patron Name	Description	Goals	Personality Quirks
1	Alistair Goldmantle (Prince of the Realm)	The youngest child of the monarch has short blond hair and wears the finest garments.	To uncover and stop the threats against his family that no one else seems to believe are real.	Insecure and prone to fear, he hides his inexperience behind bravado.
2	Aspect 443g27b, or "Mr. Asp" (Tribune of the Planeskeepers)	An octagonal, multilimbed construct with an animated wooden face attached to its front.	To stop the influx of rogue portals that threaten to destroy the planes themselves.	Uses common human phrases to seem more humanoid—but always gets them wrong.
3	Aurore Embolo (Spymaster)	A cunning, dark-skinned human with an odd, purple-furred cat draped over her shoulders.	To uncover the enemy agents who have infiltrated the kingdom's merchants, military, and churches.	Her "cat" is the manifested spirit of one of her ancient ancestors.
4	Cal Fickletwist (Hierophant of the Secret Grove)	A tiny sprite with iridescent dragonfly wings and twin hair buns.	To stop powerful merchant guilds from despoiling the wild places of the region.	Passionate but easily distracted, she loves bright colors—and presents.

5	Dunrak el-Parala (Farspice Merchant League)	An olive-skinned dwarf with a bristling black beard and a metallic left arm.	Recruiting adventurers to aid against threats to his spice caravans.	Insists on sharing drinks and food before every conversation.
6	Dutchess Isla Rowan (Queen Mother)	A thin, almost gaunt, human with silver hair and a noble bearing.	To determine which of her children is secretly guilty of murdering their father.	She has several pet marmots, each with three names. She always uses a pet's full name when addressing it.
7	General Marcus (Preceptor of the Bladed Order)	A gnomish paladin wearing full plate mail who exudes a palpable presence.	Needs elite warriors to battle a threat to the kingdom that no one else acknowledges.	Barks out orders and commands without entertaining the notion they won't be obeyed.
8	Grandmother (Witch)	An old crone with scraggly grey hair and a hooked nose.	Difficult to determine as her tasks seem random although have long-lasting effects.	Alternates between acting like a kindly granny and an incredibly frightening figure of ancient power.
9	Lord Tarald Markos (Noble of the Court)	An absurdly well-dressed halfling with a monocle and perfect hair.	Hiring adventurers to aid him in rising above his rival lords, who are part of a sinister cabal.	Despite his posh demeanor, he enjoys carousing, gambling, and proper taverns.
10	Madam Tasarla (Prophet)	A dusky human with long dark hair and a mysterious and supernatural manner.	Save the kingdom by accomplishing a series of deeds, in accordance with prophetic dreams.	She tries to appear older than her actual age and pretends to have more control over her "sight" than she actually does.
11	Maester Varus Oghed (Sage and Professor)	White-haired elderly human with a frenetic manner.	Needs helpers to gather artifacts and relics for his studies.	Somewhat forgetful and old fashioned, he delights in knowledge.
12	Margreta Von Lobell (Former Countess)	An older human with long, graying red hair, wearing last-season's fashions.	Seeks to restore her family name by accomplishing deeds for the kingdom.	Has six adult children and eight grandchildren who always seem underfoot.
13	Master Ellias (Head of the Fool's Guild)	Short and balding human with huge muttonchops and a wide grin.	Uses his performers to gather information in defense of the kingdom.	Tells puns and bad jokes to attract attention.
14	Mother Yesral Jofa (Abbess of the Convent of Ash)	A perpetually calm elf, wearing the somber garb of a priestess.	Recruiting agents to stop a rise of undead from flooding the kingdom.	Secretly, Mother Jofa has a passion for music, the bawdier the better.
15	Mr. Addington (Majordomo)	A stiff and proper dwarven manservant wearing a black uniform with a high white collar.	Work in secret to safeguard the monarch from the ambitions and schemes of his ruthless family.	In public, he speaks little and devotes himself to the needs of others. In private, he is an accomplished martial artist.
16	Mulbin Baxter-Woodrow (Captain-General of the Explorer's Society)	A weather-worn elf, wearing richly made leather garb and a colorful hat.	Sending agents to ruins on the border to find important relics before rival nations do.	Boisterous and dramatic, he never uses two words if he can use five.

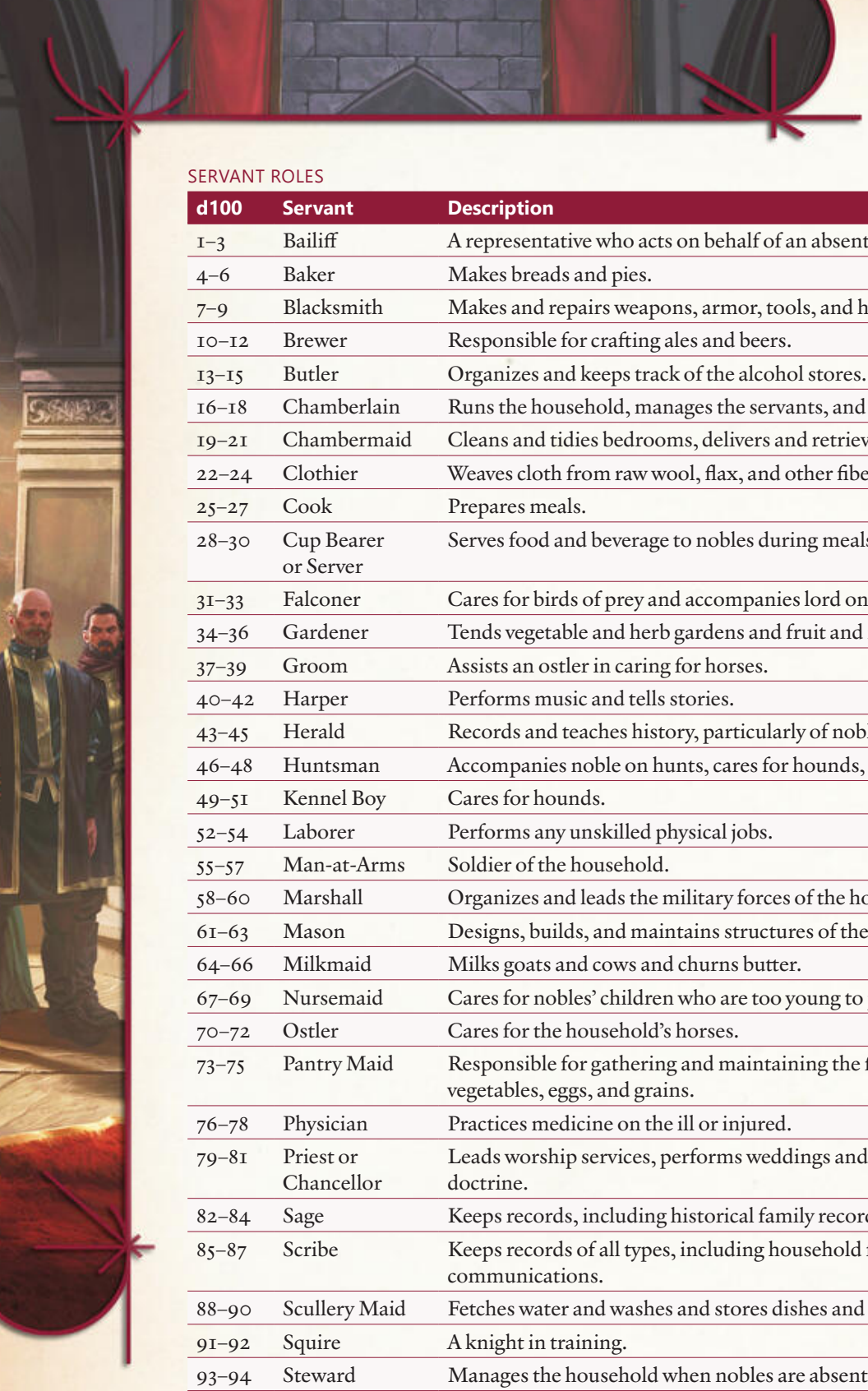


17	Nerina Modithe (Master of Thieves)	A rather plain looking elf with piercing eyes that brim with cunning and confidence.	To root out the cult that has infiltrated the kingdom because they are bad for business.	Though amoral and no fan of law, she is loyal to her followers and is a true patriot.
18	Sanabal Thul (Ambassador)	A charismatic elven politician in scholar's robe and walks with an ornamental cane.	Discover who is blaming their monarch for destabilizing a neighboring land and stop their plots.	They walk with a limp, claiming it is a war injury, but their cane is actually a powerful magic wand.
19	The Book of Es (Avatar of a Forgotten Deity)	Appears as talking leather tome full of religious and lore in a lost language.	The book needs the PCs to help recruit worshippers, so its god can regain a place in the divine ranks.	Doesn't understand mortal behavior very well.
20	Wendell Watwell (Wizard)	An older human with a long beard, wearing the garb of a sage.	Recruiting adventurers to clear his ancestral holdings of monsters.	Treats everyone as if they were his grandchildren.

POTENTIAL RIVALS

d20	Rival Name	Description	Plots/Secrets	Personality Quirk
1	Alleke the Shadow	A deadly, young kobold assassin with dark blue scales and a lack of empathy.	Hired to dispatch the PCs, she stalks them for a long time, learning their weaknesses.	Prefers to hide in plain sight, adopting the role of someone trusted by her prey, such as a merchant, religious figure, or hireling.
2	Baroness Vetra (Pearl of House Aldnoth)	A strong featured dwarven noble from a powerful merchant house.	Seeks to harshly regulate adventurers within the kingdom—so to weaken her merchant rivals.	A chain of carved, jeweled stones hangs from her belt, and she plays with it as she talks.
3	Brother Panadon of the Temple of the Azure Kindred	Leader of his order, he is a stark gnome with a bald head covered in tattoos.	Believes the dead are sacred and seeks to stop adventurers from delving into tombs and dungeons.	Enjoys quoting religious scripture to prove every argument.
4	Count Cerdic Von Eysla (Chancellor of the Treasury)	A portly halfling with shrewd eyes half-hidden behind large spectacles.	He embezzles from the treasury, financing expeditions to find his family's claim to the throne.	Adjusts or cleans his glasses in moments of stress.
5	Dapple Grimjingle (Court Jester)	A frantic figure in motley garb (such as a harlequin) who capers, puns, rhymes, and fools at every chance.	Secretly a shapechanger who feeds on despair and negative emotions.	Makes fools of others and cleverly uses words to insult without crossing too far over the line of offense.
6	Drachen d'Brack (High Judge of the Realm)	A gaunt, bald human with a constantly dour and severe demeanor.	Has no patience or mercy for lawbreakers and believes "adventurers" are nothing but vigilantes.	Loves his small dog Bumbles, who follows him around.
7	Duke Henrik Diego Elgar (Retired General)	A proud, older human with a military bearing. Has short gray hair and old battle scars on his arms and neck.	Leads a cabal of dissatisfied nobles that plan to overthrow the monarch.	Claims to have a refined palette and can't stomach common food or drink.

8	Eloise Barton (Sword-for-Hire)	A strong-featured human with short auburn hair and a confrontational demeanor.	Claims to be the scion of famous heroes and seeks to be better than they were.	When not working, she indulges in intoxicants or drugs to avoid boredom.
9	Emmeral (Wizard of the High Tower of Arcana and Fate)	A fiercely intelligent elf with plaited silver hair and priggish manners.	Dabbles in forbidden and esoteric studies but is secretly a coward and will act out of fear.	When he talks, he over-emphasizes syllables to show off his education.
10	Henge (Master Weaponsmith, Armorer, and Inventor)	A small, four-armed humanoid construct fashioned from metal, wood, and glowing crystal.	A genius-level intellect and utterly amoral, it will make anything for anyone, regardless of consequences.	It is hiding from a cabal of wizards and distrusts spellcasters.
11	Kaen Irinon (Merchant Lord of the Western Bank)	A thin elf with a topknot of silver hair, wearing exceptionally decorated garments.	Will not allow anyone to take away their current spot as the monarch's favored companion.	Softly hums songs when not speaking. The type of song changes to fit the situation.
12	Kismet Skonos (Wildfist of the Southern Monastery)	An abrasive dwarf with extremely defined muscles and an overly energetic personality.	Wants to prove she is the best martial artist ever. She meets every challenge with her fists.	Never sits or stands still. If she isn't fighting, she's carousing. If she isn't carousing, she's fighting.
13	Lady Islo of House Symma	A poised and strictly dignified gnome who always wears gray clothing and is a voice of restraint in court.	She is the last survivor of a family murdered by the current monarch. She plots a long, savory revenge.	She has a soft spot for children, exiles, and the displaced.
14	Lord Harvor Montlathe	An older human noble with distinguished features and a thinly veiled cruel streak.	Secure his three sons prominent positions in court.	Prides himself on his social position and fastidious appearance.
15	Lura Nuroth (Lady-in-Waiting)	A graceful elf with a kind face and very long golden hair, braided in complicated patterns.	A hidden information broker and spy-for-hire, she works for whomever has the most coin.	She weaves chimes and bells into her braid, so her every step is a soft musical chime.
16	Prince Jaccob von Kulhane	A dark-haired human noble with a perpetual sly smirk.	Third in line for the throne, he has secretly sworn allegiance to an enemy kingdom.	He is deeply religious and does not tolerate violations to the doctrine of the faith.
17	Regnald Tamerwin (Court Healer)	Gorgeous human with a dazzling smile.	A serial murderer who dedicates every kill to a cabal of demons.	A philanthropist, he is overly generous with coin and gifts.
18	Shalix Garrick (Captain of the Guard)	A tall, curt orc in the uniform of a royal guard. She is fanatically loyal to the throne.	Unbeknownst to Shalix, her dreams are being influenced by an orc warlock who plans an invasion of the realm.	Believes in omens and the prophetic power of dreams.
19	Sir Belseth Kolu (Queen's Favorite)	A massive human knight with crimson demon scars across his face.	Leads a company of adventurers who are competitors of the PCs. Secretly works for a devil.	The scars on his face occasionally weep black blood-like fluid when he is agitated.
20	Ysolt Sekhmet (Esteemed Composer and Bard)	A lovely human woman with a wicked grin, brightly colored garments, and a lute in her hand.	Spreads negative rumors about the PCs because she favors a rival party of adventurers.	Enjoys the attention of others and always preens, performs, or flirts.



SERVANT ROLES

d100	Servant	Description
1–3	Bailiff	A representative who acts on behalf of an absent noble in legal affairs.
4–6	Baker	Makes breads and pies.
7–9	Blacksmith	Makes and repairs weapons, armor, tools, and horseshoes.
10–12	Brewer	Responsible for crafting ales and beers.
13–15	Butler	Organizes and keeps track of the alcohol stores.
16–18	Chamberlain	Runs the household, manages the servants, and keeps track of supplies.
19–21	Chambermaid	Cleans and tidies bedrooms, delivers and retrieves laundry, and aids nobles in dressing.
22–24	Clothier	Weaves cloth from raw wool, flax, and other fibers, dyes cloth and makes clothing.
25–27	Cook	Prepares meals.
28–30	Cup Bearer or Server	Serves food and beverage to nobles during meals.
31–33	Falconer	Cares for birds of prey and accompanies lord on hunts.
34–36	Gardener	Tends vegetable and herb gardens and fruit and nut orchards.
37–39	Groom	Assists an ostler in caring for horses.
40–42	Harper	Performs music and tells stories.
43–45	Herald	Records and teaches history, particularly of nobles' families.
46–48	Huntsman	Accompanies noble on hunts, cares for hounds, and patrols forests against poachers.
49–51	Kennel Boy	Cares for hounds.
52–54	Laborer	Performs any unskilled physical jobs.
55–57	Man-at-Arms	Soldier of the household.
58–60	Marshall	Organizes and leads the military forces of the household.
61–63	Mason	Designs, builds, and maintains structures of the household.
64–66	Milkmaid	Milks goats and cows and churns butter.
67–69	Nursemaid	Cares for nobles' children who are too young to perform household duties.
70–72	Ostler	Cares for the household's horses.
73–75	Pantry Maid	Responsible for gathering and maintaining the freshness of food supplies, including vegetables, eggs, and grains.
76–78	Physician	Practices medicine on the ill or injured.
79–81	Priest or Chancellor	Leads worship services, performs weddings and funerals, and maintains religious doctrine.
82–84	Sage	Keeps records, including historical family records, and performs research.
85–87	Scribe	Keeps records of all types, including household financial records, histories, and communications.
88–90	Scullery Maid	Fetches water and washes and stores dishes and cooking utensils.
91–92	Squire	A knight in training.
93–94	Steward	Manages the household when nobles are absent.
95–96	Teamster	Delivers and picks up passengers and cargo using a cart or wagon.
97–98	Tutor	Educates the household.
99–100	Washer or Launderer	Cleans all the household's laundry.

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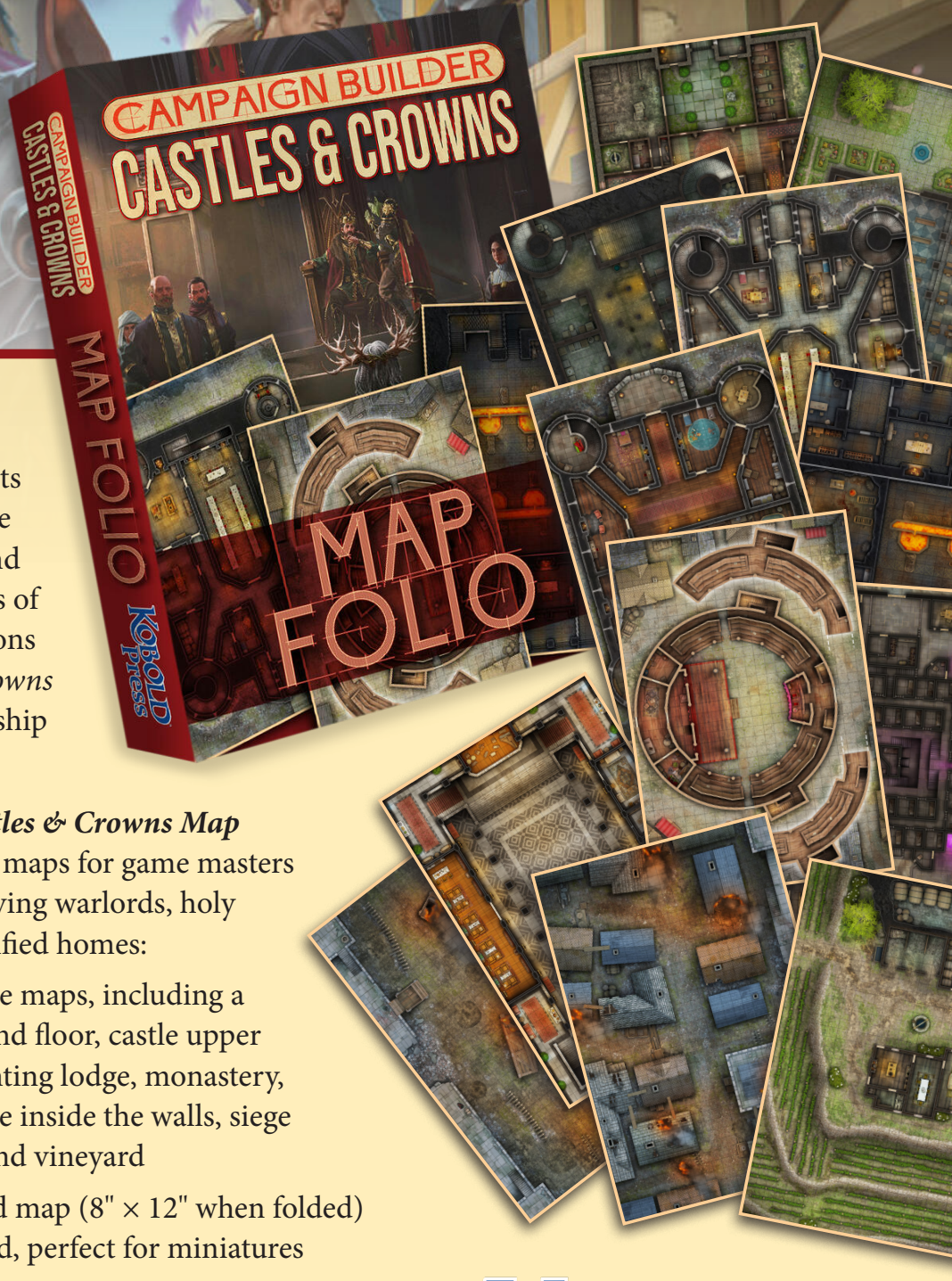

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