
LEVEL UP
ADVANCED 5TH EDITION
ADVENTURES IN ZEITGEIST
RYAN NOCK

ADVENTURES IN ZEITGEIST

A SETTING OF STEAM AND SORCERY



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE Wherein the World Still Spins 1
- ▸ *First, a Note about Spoilers 1*

Overview 1
- 1. Invention, Ideologies, and Inflection Points 2
- 2. Humans, the Great Nations, and the Great Eclipse 2
- 3. Elves, the Dreaming, and the Great Malice 2
- 4. Devas, Tieflings, and Technology 3
- 5. Dwarves, Doomsday, and Dogma 3
- 6. Savagery, Liberty, and Dragons 4
- 7. The Planets, Planes, and Piety 4
- 8. Heroic Themes and a Crafted Cosmology 5
- ▸ *Pronunciation Guide 5*

Contents 5
- ▸ *The Great Eclipse and the Spirit of the Age 5*
- ▸ *An Exceedingly Brief Timeline 6*

CHAPTER ONE A World on Its Axis 7
- ▸ *Level Up! 7*

Homelands 8
- ▸ *Powers of the Great Nations 8*
- Ber 8
- Crisillyir 9
- Danor 11
- Drakr 12
- Elfaivar 13
- Risur 14
- The Yerasol Islands 15
- ▸ *A Common Language 15*
- Colonies 16
- The Malice Lands 16
- City States, Border States, and Other Continents 17
- Stateless 18

Heritage, Culture, Nation 18
- Major Heritages 19
- Minor Heritages 20
- New Cultures 25
- ▸ *Gold as Fashion and Fortune 27*

Backgrounds 28
- Archaeologist 28
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Archaeologist 29*
- Faction Agent 29
- Investigator 30
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Investigator 30*
- Riven Mind 30
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Riven Mind 31*
- ▸ *Egregores 31*

Character Themes & Feats 32
- Courseur 32
- Docker 33
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Docker 33*
- Gunsmith 34
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Gunsmith 34*
- Martial Scientist 35
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Martial Scientist 35*
- ▸ *A Note about Martial Scientists 36*
- Ottoplismist 36
- Skyseer 37
- ▸ *Skyseer: The Cosmology in Brief 37*
- Sophist 38
- Spirit Medium 39
- ▸ *Adventure Seed: Spirit Medium 39*
- Technologist 40
- Telemachian 41
- ▸ *A Note about Yerasol Veterans 41*
- Tropezaro 42
- Vekeshi Mystic 43

CHAPTER TWO The Science of Adventure 45

New Class—Savant 45
- Class Features 46
- ▸ *Adventure Seeds: Savant 49*
- Steward 50
- Vanguard 50
- Vox 51
- Savant Schemes 52

New Subclasses 53
- Adept—Durala Carao 53
- ▸ *Adventure Seeds: Durala Carao 53*
- Berserker—Queen Bee 54
- ▸ *Adventure Seeds: Queen Bee 55*
- Bard—Vagabond 56
- Cleric—Aspirant 56
- ▸ *Godhands of the Clergy 57*
- Druid—Axis Slayer 57
- Fighter—Gadgeteer 59
- Herald—Executore 61
- ▸ *Freedom in the Industrial Workforce 61*
- Ranger—Titanist 62
- ▸ *Adventure Seeds: Titanist 63*
- Rogue—Occult Blade 65
- Sorcerer—Annihilator 66
- Warlock—Urbanist 68
- ▸ *Adventure Seeds: Urbanist 68*
- Wizard—Last Raven 69
- Wizard—Enclavist 70

On Religions and Deities 72
- Clergy 72
- Guerro 72
- Seedism 73
- The Old Faith 73

CHAPTER THREE An Exposition of Inventions..75
Progress and Innovation..... 75
▸ *Notable Innovations*.....75
Modern Technology.....76
Equipment..... 77
Civilized Gear.....77
▸ *Character Starting Wealth*.....77
▸ *Adventure Seeds for Technology*.....77
▸ *Optional Rule: Sartorial Defense*.....78
Explosive Alchemicals.....78
Firearms.....78
▸ *Compatibility with the Core Rules*.....80
▸ *Muzzle Loading a Firearm*.....80
▸ *Etiquette for an Armed Populace*.....81
Apotropaics.....82
▸ *Counterfeit Apotropaics*.....82
Travel.....83
▸ *Ship-Spirits*.....84
▸ *The Avery Coast Railroad*.....85
▸ *Naval Weapons*.....88
Magic for Sale.....88
▸ *Kinetography*.....88
Life and Death.....88

CHAPTER FOUR Collectanea of the Avery Sea..91
How We Got Here..... 91
Old History.....91
The Great Eclipse.....91
New History.....92
Ber..... 93
Introduction.....93
Grand History.....93
▸ *Ber at a Glance*.....94
▸ *The Heroes of the Revolution*.....95
▸ *Ber: Landscape and Cuisine*.....96
The Government and Its Leaders.....97
▸ *Goals of the Bruse*.....98
▸ *The Noble Savage Beating*.....98
Beran Peoples.....98
▸ *Hazard at Sea*.....99
▸ *Cultural Stereotypes*.....100
Seobriga.....101
▸ *Dwarves in Ber*.....102
Ursaliña.....102
Karch.....104
Other Places of Interest.....106
Crisillyir..... 107
Introduction.....107
Grand History.....107
▸ *Crisillyir at a Glance*.....107
▸ *Crisillyr: Landscape and Cuisine*.....108
▸ *Elfaivaran Slave Trade*.....109
▸ *The Lovely Legion*.....109
The Government and Its Leaders.....113
Welcome to the Family.....114
Alais Primos.....115
▸ *Solar Cathedral*.....115
Sid Minos.....117
Vendricce.....118
▸ *The Heretical Writings of William Miller*.....119
Other Places of Interest.....120
Danor..... 120
Introduction.....120
Grand History.....121
▸ *Danor at a Glance*.....121
▸ *Articles of the Treaty*.....123
▸ *Danor: Landscape and Cuisine*.....124
▸ *The Last Stain of the Great Malice*.....125
The Government and Its Leaders.....126
Cherage.....127
Beaumont.....128
▸ *The Department of Dreams*.....130
Methia.....130
▸ *Porteurs du Mort*.....131
Other Places of Interest.....133
▸ *The City State of Orithea*.....133
▸ *The Other Malice States*.....134
Drakr..... 134
Introduction.....134
▸ *Drakr at a Glance*.....134
Grand History.....135
▸ *Drakr: Landscape and Cuisine*.....136
▸ *Stones of Remembrance*.....137
The Clans.....138
The Government and Its Leaders.....138
Kuchnost.....139
Frost Giants.....139
▸ *The Chthonic Canal*.....139
▸ *Tradition's Jape*.....140
Trekhom.....140
▸ *Let Us Welcome Controversy*.....142
Mirsk.....142
▸ *The Lost Riders*.....143
▸ *Mirskwood Folk*.....144
Knütpara.....145
▸ *The Clash of Ideas in Drakr*.....146
Other Places of Interest.....148

Elfaivar 149
Introduction 149
▸ *Elfaivar at a Glance 149*
Grand History 150
▸ *Elfaivar: Landscape and Cuisine 152*
▸ *Languages and Time 153*
▸ *Current Status of the Colonies 154*
The Government 155
▸ *Slavery in Elfaivar 155*
Rumah Terakir 156
▸ *Peril of Ravana 157*
▸ *The Lonely Companion 158*
Kanta Mahala 159
Kirimpulang 161
▸ *The Arsenal of Dhebisu 161*
Other Places of Interest 162
Risur 163
Introduction 163
Grand History 164
▸ *Risur: Landscape and Cuisine 164*
▸ *Risur at a Glance 165*
▸ *Writings of King Baldrey 166*
The Government and Its Leader 167
Bole 171
▸ *The Sword of the Black Needles 171*
Slate and Clover 172
▸ *The Winter Culling 174*
Flint 174
▸ *Radical Raven Fountain 177*
▸ *Blackfall Grotto 179*
▸ *The Pauper Archmage 180*
Other Places of Interest 182

CHAPTER FIVE Of All Possible Worlds 183
The Planetary System 183
Planar Mechanics 183
Blood of Ostea 184
Bonds of Urim 184
Light of Ascetia 184
Mysteries of Mavisha 184
Timeliness of Teykfa 185
Wards of Amrou 185
Winds of Caeloon 185
Calendar 185
Planetary Gazetteer 185
The Bleak Gate 185
▸ *Skyseers Against Industry 185*
Differing Dreams 186
▸ *Halos 186*
Vona, Light of Inspiration 189
Jiese, the Fires of Industry 189
Caeloon, the Paper Wind 190
Ostea, the Beating Heart 191
Urim, the Shattered Golden Chain 191
Av, Plane of Reflections 191
▸ *The Space Race 191*
Teykfa, the Ticking Pendulum 192
Mavisha, the Mysterious Deep 192
Ascetia, the Hidden Jungle 192
Amrou, the Salt Waste 192
Travel Between Worlds 193
Plane Shift 193
Planar Portals 193
Zones of Confluence 194

CHAPTER SIX A Parade of Curiosities 195
Magic Items 195
Crafting Components 195
▸ *Planarite 195*
▸ *Example Planarite—Air 196*
▸ *Example Planarite—Death 198*
▸ *Example Planarite—Earth 199*
▸ *Example Planarite—Fire 200*
▸ *Example Planarite—Life 201*
▸ *The Navras Opera House 202*
▸ *Example Planarite—Space 203*
▸ *Example Planarite—Water 204*
Training and Mastery 209
Godhands 209
Martial Scientist Theses 210
The Rites of Rulership 211
▸ *The Rites in Other Nations 212*
Risur's Rites 212
Prestige Classes 213
Applied Astronomist 213
Logos 214
▸ *Magical Epistemology 215*
Mad Shootist 216
Monument of War 217
Notorious Celebrity 218
Polyhistor 219
Steamsuit Pilot 220
Urban Empath 221
Vekeshi Excoriant 222
Wayfarer Cirqueliste 224

CHAPTER SEVEN A Modern Menagerie 225
Arctech 225
▸ *Technological Weaknesses 225*
BEAR—Battle Enhanced Animalistic Replicant 225
Brass Men 226
Military Steamsuit 227
Ran's Cachean Elephant 228
Crooks 229
Government Forces 231
Fey 232
Rangales 232
The Borenbog 232
Bleak Court Beasts 233
Ten-Headed Lion 235
Painted Fey 237
▸ *Elfaivaran Samsāra-Fey 237*
Witchoil Experiment 237
A History of Oily Creations 237
▸ *Graced by the Glistening Oil 237*
Witchoil Automaton 238
Witchoil Monstrosity 239
Shadow Hound 239
Noetic Entities 240
Varieties of Noetic Entities 240
Malice Beasts 241
▸ *Thoughtflesh and Thoughtforms 241*
▸ *Making a Meal of Yourself 241*
▸ *Other Potential Emotivores 242*
▸ *Malice Beast Traits 243*
Ship-Spirits 245
▸ *Kotele's Motivation 246*
Egregores 246
▸ *Narrator Advice: Egregores 247*

CHAPTER EIGHT The Grand Design 249
Campaign Styles 249
▸ *"Importing a Save" from Zeitgeist: The Gears of Revolution 249*
Constabulary 250
▸ *Interconnected Gears 252*
▸ *Black Shores: Noir in the Yerasol Archipelago 253*
Conspiracy 253
▸ *To Court the Unseen: Thievery for a Higher Purpose 255*
Revolutionary 256
▸ *Fighting Illusions with Journalism and Guns 258*
Voyager 259
▸ *Looking to the Classics 260*
New Mechanical Options 261
When to Use These Rules 262
Influence 263
▸ *Note: Bonuses and Advantage 263*
▸ *Impossible Missions 263*
▸ *Example Campaign Groups 264*
Inquiries 266
▸ *Torture and the Rule of Law 267*
Pursuits 267
Secret Missions 269
▸ *When to Use Secret Missions 269*
▸ *Ten Steps Ahead 270*
Secrets of the Setting 271
Cult of the Steel Lord 271
▸ *The Fall of Srasama 272*
Vekeshi Secrets 272
Remnants of the Demonocracy 273
Sample Conspiracies 273
The Secrets of Egregores 275
Plots and Possible Futures 275
A Different Cosmology 276
The Truth About Axis Island 278



The Avery Coast Railroad: still always on time.



In the halls of power and elsewhere, grand visions of the future motivate the nations and peoples of Lanjyr...



... while skyseers document portents in the night sky, seeking the shape of things to come: the zeitgeist of a new age.

PREFACE
WHEREIN THE WORLD STILL SPINS

Down an alley from Alchemy Row, the air is thick with the burnt-oil stench of factory effluent dumped into Parity Lake, waters that even the governor's druids can't keep clean. But the view here is free of the looming walls of industrial warehouses, free of the crowds with their pageant of protesting dockers, proselytizing deists, and prosperous dandies who've come to experience some *real* culture among the poor common folk.

Here on the shore of this leather-brown lake, it's possible to forget that the beachfront foreign intrigues are afoot in the extravagant embassies a mile to the north, that the fresh air of the Cloudwood and all its teeming fey are an afternoon's walk east, and that the foremen repairing the royal airship dock west alongside Flint Bay pay well for a strong worker who isn't afraid of heights.

But no one ever forgets Cauldron Hill.

Look south, and there the haunted mountain peak rises above the smoke of Flint's industry, the one place in the city where the skyseers can clearly watch the heavens for warning. In living memory, the hill produced three disasters—called the three ravens by the prophet who foresaw them.

After the third warning, the stars themselves vanished for a year, and everything atop the hill—the stones, the trees, and the foolishly curious—was devoured into darkness.

The heavens eventually returned, but they appeared a bit jostled from the journey. The world had been saved, said the sages and politicians. People became more aware of what limited time they had, and yet how long the world would live and outlast them. For a while, the shared salvation even inspired a few industrialists to sincere magnanimity.

But that didn't last, which explains the thickness of the throngs here at Alchemy Row: another protest, no doubt filled with provocateurs and spies, perhaps demanding justice against the Unseen Court, or calling for another war in the Yerasol Archipelago, or doomsaying about a fourth raven alighting atop Cauldron Hill.

Alchemy Row always presents a novel scene: the food is lush and the music is commanding. But what really draws people out is the chance at revolution, to set the spirit of the age: the *zeitgeist*.

Overview

The Zeitgeist setting is a step away from traditional fantasy. In many parts of the world, day to day existence is much unchanged from how folks lived centuries ago. Fey trickery, prowling monsters, and roaming brigands pose as great a threat as ever. Priests and druids offer guidance, and it's possible to live all one's entire years without seeing a steam engine.

Yet though this is still a land of magic, eight key elements set it apart.

First, a Note about Spoilers

In 2011, E.N. Publishing released Zeitgeist: *The Gears of Revolution*, an adventure path where a group of constables investigated a sprawling conspiracy. The Zeitgeist setting takes place twenty years afterward. If you intend to play or run that campaign, this book contains plenty of spoilers, but it's mostly broad knowledge that the public would find in a history text. Reading on might lessen the impact of some twists, but it shouldn't ruin the journey.

If you have already played that campaign, you'll be interested in Chapter Eight, which offers advice for adjusting how the world would look if your group's adventures had different outcomes.

And if you're intrigued, the adventure path is available through the EN5IDER subscription and at various online RPG stores. It's an epic mystery, one we're exceptionally proud of, but we invite you to explore onward and come up with your own tales to tell.



1. Invention, Ideologies, and Inflection Points

Ironclad industry is reshaping nations, and railroads slice through the wilderness where monsters still roam. Steam and soot darken the skies over cities, whose urban labyrinths seem to have spirits of their own. Fiends that the old religions thought they'd banished find novel forms in the new age, and fresh frights crawl out of imagination and into the shadows between gaslights

Heroes and scoundrels stroll smoggy streets in top hats and tails, wield pistols or enchanted arcane fusils, and battle over matters of philosophy and geopolitics as often as over treasure and thrones. Groups once lumped together as "savage races" have founded a nation of their own, eager for prosperity and respectability. And while many resist efforts to scientifically categorize magic, academic institutes of sorcerous studies are attracting extravagant investments from nations who fear what arcanotechnological inventions their rivals might bring to bear.

No land on the continent of Lanjyr is static. Every nation and ideology is vying for influence, and your adventures will determine the shape of things to come.

2. Humans, the Great Nations, and the Great Eclipse

Humans dominate three of the six great nations of the modern world. Their ascendance in the past two thousand years toppled a mighty elf empire and provoked belief in doomsday millennialism among many dwarves, a belief that proved prescient.

Twenty years ago, the sun and stars vanished for nearly a year, an event called the **Great Eclipse**. The world was pulled back from the brink of destruction thanks to a group led by the monarch of the nation of **Risur**. Though one of the great innovators of magical technology, Risur is a nation of old druidic traditions, with close ties to the fey, passed down from the original elf inhabitants to the current human majority. It weathered the Eclipse better than any other country, and its influence helped forestall war in the aftermath.

3. Elves, the Dreaming, and the Great Malice

Of the many elf cultures around the world, the nation **Elfaivar** created unparalleled magical wonders, with cities that straddled between this world and the **Dreaming**, a fey plane that is a shifting mirror of reality. But five centuries ago Elfaivar collapsed when its goddess of womanhood, Srasama, was slain, which caused nearly every woman of that nation to perish. Until recently, this disaster—the **Great Malice**—had been the most pivotal event in history. Elfaivaran survivors were often abused and demonized as they struggled to keep their people and culture alive, and many withdrew fully into the Dreaming.

At the end of the Great Eclipse, however, a last vestige of Srasama's power granted a miracle: millions of those same women who had perished in the Malice were restored to life. Though displaced by centuries, their return has heralded an unsteady restoration of Elfaivar to the world stage.



4. Devas, Tieflings, and Technology

Srasama died at the climax of a holy war against a faith called the **Clergy**. The backlash of her fall afflicted two groups and created two humanoid species. Mortals present at the site of her death were infused by a sliver of her divinity. Marked by strange geometric lines, they continually reincarnated in the following centuries, and came to be known as **devas**.

Across the world, worshipers in the capital city of the Clergy were marked by a curse. Given horns and tails, they came to be known as **tieflings**.

The land around that capital was left without magic, and today forms the nation of **Danor**. Two centuries ago Danor—populated mostly by humans but led by the descendants of those tieflings—sparked a revolution of industry and mighty science. They built steam ships, railroads, and firearms, upending the balance of power in Lanjyr.

Magic has recently returned to Danor, and today's innovators weave together technology and magic into arcanoscience, a development watched warily by those who fear the invention of some grand new weapon that will precipitate a global war.

5. Dwarves, Doomsday, and Dogma

The major dwarven nation, **Drakr**, was grimly prepared for the doomsday that arrived two decades ago. As they expected, ancient horrors clawed free from glaciers and fell from the black sky. The world was engulfed in deadly cold. But then the world failed to end. A culture dominated by a dour mix of duty and pessimism found a weight suddenly lifted from it. In that void, an explosion of new dogmas spread and competed for adherents.

Drakran society organizes around philosophical factions, and a broad base supports the current chancellor's **eschatology** movement, which instructs people to plan their endings—for life, for governments, for literature, even for relationships. Drakrans credit eschatology for helping survive the end of the world.

Traditionalist clans in the **armiger** faction see the chancellor's reformist policies as a threat to their power, and so they back other philosophers to splinter his base. One growing movement attracts those who, in the aftermath of the Great Eclipse, aren't quite convinced the world *didn't* end, and solipsistically doubt reality. A major international crime syndicate called the **Kuchnost** encourages such pathological skepticism, the better for them to operate on the edges of truth and trust, because if nothing is real, why follow the law?

6. Savagery, Liberty, and Dragons

The youngest of the great nations, **Ber**, shook free in the past two centuries from the yoke of toppled dragon tyrants. Once a chaotic quilt of quarreling "monstrous" peoples, Ber arose from an unlikely alliance of dragonborn, gnolls, goblins, goliaths, kobolds, lizardfolk, minotaurs, orcs, and others. United by a common devotion to personal liberty, they live in an uneasy peace as their rulers unite the disparate peoples with a shared pride in proving their civility to a doubting world.

A handful of the old dragon tyrants managed to avoid being slain by finding refuge in other countries. And in recent years hitherto unseen fey dragons have wandered in from the Dreaming and laid claim to Ber's more wild frontiers. Their arrival is blamed on the **tropezaros**, a movement of survivalists, artists, and guerrilla warriors who seek to reconnect their modernizing society with the wilds of nature.

7. The Planets, Planes, and Piety

People have always pondered the heavens, but today the hold the night sky has on the world is undeniable.

In Risur, folk prophets called **skyseers** watch the movements of the stars to foretell the future. More enlightened scholars study the roaming planets to understand how the flow of their energies affects the fundamental nature of reality, while industrialists wonder at the potential riches of those worlds. Elfaivaran cities weave between the real world and the Dreaming. Sailors in the **Yerasol Archipelago** tell tales of mirages revealing coastlines of other worlds, and though many think them mad, a cadre of Drakran engineers claim they will soon have a vehicle that can fly to other worlds on columns of flame.

The presence of other planes is most strongly felt in **Crisillyir**, a human nation whose powerful Clergy once kept demons locked away and whose bishops would frighten sinners by invoking condemned spirits from the **Bleak Gate**. That realm, a dark mirror of the real world, holds the dead until they pass on to their eternal reward. During the Great Eclipse, however, ancient evils escaped from Clergy prisons, sowing doubt and discord. The once monolithic faith is fracturing into two opposing denominations, each suspicious the other is being inexorably corrupted by entities from sinister other worlds.



Pronunciation Guide

- **Risur.** REES-ser (rhymes with "fleecer"). A native is a Risuri (rhymes with "Missouri").
- **Crisillyir.** kris-SILL-lee-ur (rhymes with "the sillier"). A native is a Crisillyiri (rhymes with "this ill eerie").
- **Danor.** DAN-nor (rhymes with "fan oar"). A native is a Danoran (rhymes with "can foreign").
- **Drakr.** DRAHK-kur (rhymes with "locker"). A native is a Drakran (rhymes with "Cochrane").
- **Elfaivar.** el-FIE-vahr (rhymes with "bell five bar"). A native is an Elfaivaran.
- **Lanjyr.** LAN-jeer (rhymes with "fan jeer").
- **Yerasol.** YAIR-uh-sahl (rhymes with "aerosol").
- **Srasama.** srah-SAH-muh (rhymes with "the llama").

8. Heroic Themes and a Crafted Cosmology

The Zeitgeist campaign setting presents twelve character themes that reinforce the heroic archetypes of the world, such as gunsmiths, spirit mediums, and technologists. In addition to origin, class, and background, characters can choose to be associated with one of these themes, which suggest ways to hook the character into the setting. Some may take a feat that marks them as a pinnacle of the theme's movement.

Also, players should know the minor rules changes caused by the planets that circle in the night sky. For instance, the distant shores of Mavisha, the Mysterious Deep make divination magic less effective on islands. See Chapter Five for these rules.

Contents

This worldbook contains materials for both players and the Narrator.

Chapter One: A World on Its Axis offers new heritages and backgrounds. You'll also find character themes, which are optional hooks to show how your character is engaged in the changing times.

Chapter Two: The Science of Adventure lists variant class archetypes unique to Zeitgeist that can tie your characters more closely to the setting.

Chapter Three: An Exposition of Inventions is a shopping list of new equipment for PCs, and explains the campaign's industrial age technology and more elaborate arcanoscientific innovations.

Chapter Four: Collectanea of the Avery Sea showcases the setting writ large, focused on the major nations on the continent Lanjyr, and the conflicts of ideology that bring the world alive.

Chapter Five: Of All Possible Worlds details the planets of the night sky, the parallel planes of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate, and how they influence the world.

Chapter Six: Parade of Curiosities presents prestige classes, rare boons, and diverse inventions and magical treasures.

Chapter Seven: A Modern Menagerie details monsters that roam this world or come from beyond it, as well as deadly minions and cunning antagonists from groups that hold power or plot in the shadows.

Chapter Eight: The Grand Design offers guidance on what sorts of games can best fit the Zeitgeist setting, from industrial espionage, to politicking with the fey, to struggling to unite a nation falling to civil war.

The Great Eclipse and the Spirit of the Age

Less than a generation ago, shared terror gripped all of civilization as stars fell from the sky and the sun vanished into darkness. In their place spun a hazy constellation, like grinding gears in the heavens, growing ever larger as the world drifted toward that consuming gyre. For nearly a year, entire nations beat back despair or embraced an expected apocalypse. Strange magic sapped millions of their free will.

And then, for one climactic hour, nearly everyone felt themselves drawn into a colossal clash of ideals. In the two decades since, scholars and artists have struggled to describe the sensation, like having one's beliefs wielded like a blade, or feeling one's soul mingle with the passionate, uncertain essence of uncountable foreigners. Some glimpsed a battle in the skies between flying ships, others heard the plaintive plea of a mother for her son to pull back from the brink of disaster, and everyone recalls the smoky scent of burning leaf of Nicodemus.

When that hour ended, the stars returned, and a new day dawned.

People who had resigned themselves to the end of the world had another chance, and resolved to try and recapture the lives they'd had before. In many ways, the world felt renewed, indeed *better* than it had been before.

But soon, rumors spread that this feeling was no mere sentiment. In truth, in that pivotal hour the spirit of the new age had been decided. People could survive wounds that would have been fatal before. Newly reliable magical flight made possible the development of airships. Superstitious protective measures like rings of salt now could actually keep magical monsters at bay. Those facing difficult choices found themselves feeling pulled to consider lessons from history. And many who thought themselves certain to die consistently reported a sense of calm resolve buoying them past their despair.

A new age has begun, but its spirit was chosen by others. And many cannot help but wonder what the world would be like if the hand that moved the stars had chosen otherwise.



An Exceedingly Brief Timeline

- **1200 BOV (Before Our Victory):** King Kelland defeats the fey titans and founds Risur, the first mortal nation on the continent of Lanjyr. In the following centuries, other nations rise up throughout Lanjyr.
- **1117 BOV:** The Demonocracy arises, its monstrous rulers enslaving the primitive nations of the north. Risur keeps it from expanding south, and Elfaivar blocks its eastward growth.
- **500 BOV:** Triegenes the fisherman founds the Clergy in what is modern-day Danor, overthrows the demonocracy, then dies and ascends to godhood.
- **50 BOV:** The First Victory, a holy war between the Clergy and the elf nation Elfaivar, ends with Elfaivar losing much territory.
- **1 AOV: (After Our Victory):** The Second Victory begins as an Elfaivaran effort to reclaim lost lands ends in their decisive defeat when the Elfaivaran goddess Srasama manifests physically and is then slain in an event called the Great Malice. Danor collapses into chaos as the nation becomes a dead magic zone. The seat of the Clergy moves to Crisillyir. Elfaivar splinters into scattered enclaves of survivors. Dwarves seize control of their own nation in Drakr.
- **300 AOV:** King Boyle of Risur claims to slay the last dragon tyrant of Ber, but offers a secret pact to hide and protect a handful of them. The nation of Danor, resurgent with industry and technology, begins to contest Risur for control of the lush Yerasol Archipelago.
- **460 AOV:** King Aodhan of Risur encourages his people to pursue industry so they can fight back against Danor. Meanwhile in Ber, Bruse Le Roye unites tribes of diverse people into a new nation.
- **501 AOV:** A towering arcanotechnological colossus is unleashed upon the Risuri city of Flint. No one seems able to control it, and it wanders across multiple countries, mindlessly trampling whatever is underfoot wherever it roams. It ultimately arrives on Axis Island in the Yerasol Archipelago and somehow triggers the Great Eclipse.
- **502 AOV:** The sun and stars vanish, and the rules of magic change. After a year of upheaval, the Great Eclipse ends, and the sun and stars return, though several planets have been replaced. Millions of women who died five centuries earlier in the Great Malice are resurrected in Elfaivar.
- **503 AOV:** Drakran explorer Kiegar Arukova captures public imagination with a series of expeditions whose aim is to map the Dreaming. This proves impossible, but it leads to more fey forays into the real world.
- **519 AOV:** After a period of cautious peace, the Elfaivaran Reclamation Crisis becomes the first major international conflict since the Great Eclipse. Elfaivaran warlord Adin Radhasi claims the Crisillyiri city of Vendricce for over a year. While trying to broker an armistice, Risur's monarch is nearly slain by a Clergy cadre of gunslinging godhands. A rampaging Crisillyiri army retakes the city and pursues the Elfaivarans into a Risur-controlled colony before being defeated by the Risuri king. The king negotiates an armistice, then abdicates in the aftermath.
- **522 AOV:** Present day. Risur is about to launch its first aerial battleship, the *Burning Sky*, and its new queen hopes to found a loose international governing body devoted to peacekeeping, named the Concert of Nations.

CHAPTER ONE
A WORLD ON ITS AXIS

The Zeitgeist setting is one where characters' choices can shape the world. But the first choices you must make are to determine who your character is. You can follow these steps in whatever order makes sense to you.

- Choose a **homeland**, which could be one of the great nations on the continent Lanjyr, a smaller state, or even the lack of a homeland. Each homeland has a list of common backgrounds, character themes, and class options.
- Choose a **heritage**. The most common humanoid heritages of Lanyr are humans, dwarves, elves, orcs, and tieflings, but far more populate the world.
- Choose a **culture**, whether from the *Level Up* core rules or from the new options presented in this chapter.
- Choose a **background**.
- Choose a **character theme**, which suggests what contentious element of the world's society engages your character. Each character theme has an associated feat available to those committed to the movement.
- Choose a **character class**; new archetype options and the new **savant** character class appear in Chapter Two.
- You'll also want to choose **equipment**; equipment specific to the Zeitgeist setting appears in Chapter Three. Modern culture offers fine apparel and fashionable armor, and anyone who expects to get into a scrum can make good use of a pistol or shotgun. Each player character starts with an extra 30 gp.

Level Up!

Zeitgeist is the first setting to use EN Publishing's new *Level Up: Advanced 5th Edition* system. It's fully compatible with 5th Edition, adding a few more character options and a bit more mechanical depth. The following information will help you use this book with the core 5th Edition rules.

Level Up uses the term *Narrator* in place of *Game Master*, and we have changed the names of three classes to make them more universal: *barbarian* becomes *berserker*, *monks* are *adepts*, and the *paladin* is the *herald*. Also, we use *exertion* instead of *ki*.

There are changes that affect character creation: "race" has been split into *heritage* (traits inherited by birth) and *culture* (traits gained by upbringing). Each nation's overview in this chapter includes a list of suggested heritages and cultures, and a few new options for each appear starting on page 18.

In *Level Up*, characters don't get ability score bonuses from their heritage or culture; instead, ability score bonuses are derived from their background. If you're using the core 5th Edition rules, you can generally replace a heritage with a "race," replace a culture with a "subrace," and either take the Fifth Edition ability score bonuses or assign two +1 bonuses to your ability scores however you want. It shouldn't break anything.

Finally, *Level Up* contains two new skills: Culture and Engineering. If you are using original 5E rules, we suggest the Narrator grant each PC one additional skill proficiency and recommend at least one character is proficient in each of those skills.

For example, you might play Kevin de Palma from the nation of Risur, a half-elf Gadgeteer fighter who has the investigator background and the Spirit Medium character theme.

Or you might play Camila Brajallos from the nation of Ber, an orc herald who has chosen the Executore oath, the riven mind background, and the Docker character theme.

Or you could be Nidha Krimpal from Elfaivar, an elf wizard who is studying the Enclavist school and who is pursuing archaeology to help rebuild the country and learning diverse fighting techniques as a Martial Scientist to help defend it.

Homelands

Once you decide where your character is from based on these introductions, you can read more detail about your character's homeland in Chapter Four. See the overview map of the continent of Lanjyr on page 3.

- **Ber.** Populated by gnolls, goblins, minotaurs, orcs, and other "savage races," this young nation aspires to prove itself civilized, and will violently defend people's liberties.
- **Crisillyir.** This pious nation is fracturing in the wake of a religious schism, in which citizens placed their own gods on trial and inadvertently released countless sealed demons and other evil beings.
- **Danor.** Founded on ideals of reason and science, this innovative nation prides itself as the enlightened spark of the world's industrial revolution, but its leaders have suppressed its military strength and technological innovation to appease other nations who want it docile.
- **Drakr.** Dominated by clans of dwarves and led by philosophers, this resilient nation is a powerhouse of industry rapidly being plundered by criminal syndicates that work to undermine facts and sow doubt in institutions.
- **Elfaivar.** Five hundred years ago nearly every woman of this magical elven empire perished. Twenty years ago, millions of them were miraculously resurrected, driving an oppressed, cautious people to reclaim territories lost to foreign colonization.
- **Risur.** This thriving nation stands as the world's sole superpower, struggling to balance obligations to protect and foster other nations with defending the interests of its homeland, where a longstanding alliance with the fey grows ever tenser due to the spread of modern technology.
- **The Yerasol Islands.** Centuries of wars between Risur and Danor have fostered discontent in this archipelago, where the rules of reality can shift from island to island.
- **Colonies.** Crisillyir, Danor, Drakr, and Risur each maintain control of one Elfaivaran colony, while the Greater Elfaivaran Ran is working to counter-colonize these lands and restore their empire's old borders.
- **The Malice Lands.** Until recently, few lived in this region because magic here went wild, shifting terrain and mutating monsters. Newfound stability provoked a land grab by outsiders, but the rugged locals (and the often surreal monsters) are quite adept at fending off interlopers.
- **Border States.** There are dozens of smaller nations with less influence on international politics or culture. If you want to play a character whose homeland is not one of the nations in this setting book, they may hail from a border state.
- **Other.** Some people have lived their entire lives traveling and belong to no country. Others hail from continents beyond Lanjyr, or even the other planets in the star system, transported to this world through magical accidents or coterminous seas.

Powers of the Great Nations

Before civilization, nearly every land was dominated by grand monsters beyond the power of mortals. Risur's founder made a pact with the fey of the Dreaming, subdued his land's fey titans, and acquired command over nature. In so doing, Risur became the first of what today are called the great nations.

Each of these six nations has military and economic might, but the true source of their power is something deeper that defines the soul of that nation.

Ber survived its draconic tyrants, and today citizens feel a loyalty to their nation because it protects their liberty. Crisillyir's founder defeated the Demonocracy by harnessing the power of religious faith on a national scale. Danor sees itself as having defeated ignorance and the handicap of lacking magic through its science and technological innovation. Drakr is broadly fatalist; long ago warlords sent thousands to their deaths to defeat undead titans, and today the clans descended from those warlords similarly command millions to work and toil, having convinced them that such suffering is their lot in life. And Elfaivar is adept at using the Dreaming like a fertile garden to create magical wonders.

Ber

Rejuvenated by the shared suffering of the Great Eclipse, a nation of people once seen as monsters is now looked up to as a role model by many, a safe haven by some, and a tempting jewel for others.

Competing dragon tyrants ruled this arid land for centuries, each commanding tribes of various "races" that most civilizations had deemed savage: dragonborn, gnolls, goblins, goliaths, kobolds, lizardfolk, minotaurs, orcs, and others. Though forced to war against each other for their tyrants' territories, the disparate peoples were united in their hatred of their oppressing overlords. When the last dragon tyrant fell two centuries ago, what had been a crazed mass of competing fiefdoms slowly started to see itself as a common nation. Finally, sixty years ago the heroic orc **Bruse Le Roye** united the tribes and declared Ber a sovereign nation.

Beran culture actively rejects tribalism. In lieu of older traditions of armed raids as a trial of adulthood, every Beran town and city has regular festivals of sports and eclectic art competitions to let citizens of disparate heritages share a common rite of passage. The first great investment Bruse Le Roye made was in schools, and his second was the **Executores dola Liberta**, wandering lawbringers who violently ended slavery.

"Who can be the most civilized" became a competition, with foreign finery worn with as much pride as the war paint of old. A movement known as the **Panoply** ensured that traditional Beran identity remained respected, as part of a philosophy that embraced cultural variety as valuable for its own sake. Imported industrial experts oversaw construction of factories and a national rail system, but when the locals learned enough to take over, Ber's historical distrust of draconic wealth hoarding meant profits were widely shared among the citizens.

Ber today is a flourishing garden of multiculturally conscious journalism, music, and philosophy. Berans are fiercely defensive of personal freedom, so much so that they let a faction of gnolls along the southern coast effectively secede. The logic was that the



inhospitable region would take in those who rejected the new ways, acting as a pressure relief valve, but instead the gnolls launched a coup. Even after being beaten into submission, they remain a thorn in the nation's side, believing their long-dead dragon tyrant **Gradiax the Steel Lord** will return to lead them to glory.

The **tropezaro** movement is devoted to protecting their country's land much as the Panoply protected traditional culture. They value individualist survivalism and sought techniques of guerrilla warfare from around the world, training to use the land itself as a weapon, which in turn has made them the driving voices for protecting nature from over-exploitation and the risk of arcano-scientific disaster. Originally quite popular, they lost much of their support after tropezaros exploring the Dreaming awoke fey dragons, which pose an as-yet unclear threat.

Three years ago, the current Bruse **Corta Nariz de Guerra** tried to raise her nation's standing by volunteering her military to defend Crisillyir against invasion by Elfaivar, which embarrassed Ber when its inexperienced and overconfident navy lost nearly every engagement.

- **Major Heritages:** Dragonborn, Gnoll, Goblin, Goliath, Kobold, Lizardfolk, Minotaur, Orc.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Bloodmarked, De Guerra, Pedresco, Steelmarked.
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Entertainer, Folk Hero, Outlander, Sailor, Urchin.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Docker, Telemachian, Tropezaro.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Herald (executore), Warlock (urbanist).

Crisillyir

Decimated during the Great Eclipse and overrun by escaping evil forces, this most pious nation has been threatened by invasion from Elfaivar and destabilized by schemes from Drakr, exacerbating a theological schism into a violent shadow war between opposing denominations.

For most, Crisillyir is synonymous with the Clergy, the world's foremost pantheist religion. The founder **Triegenes**, was said to be a mortal fisherman who defeated the old Demonocracy a thousand years ago, then ascended to divinity, serving as an example that every person should seek to improve themselves. Inspired by their many gods, the people of Crisillyir sealed away demons and created immense architecture and majestic artwork.

But then came the Great Eclipse, a cataclysm that the pious felt must be a divine judgment. Many of the Clergy's hierarchs committed suicide, and a renowned devotee to Triegenes, **Vitus Sigismund**, led the people of the capital city in a series of "god trials." They declared mortal proxies for deities they felt had failed their worshipers, held a rancorous trial, and then hurled the proxies—always guilty—into a volcano overlooking the capital city. Eight



gods were slain this way, and each one's death triggered the deaths of their most earnest adherents around the world, in a mocking mirror of how Elfaivaran women perished during the Great Malice.

Ultimately the people turned on Sigismund, who denounced his own god Triegenes and threw himself into the volcano. The resulting eruption burned the city like a hellish dragon, and even later, when the sun and stars returned, Crisillyir hung together by a thread.

Demons and monsters long locked away by divine magic re-emerged, and vast swaths of ground were desecrated, where the dead rose to hunt the living. But the gravest threat to the nation's soul was a critical disagreement of doctrine: were the eight dead gods unjustly martyred, or rightfully executed for failing their worshipers?

The three great cities along the Avery Sea mostly seemed content to return to the old status quo, but in areas less equipped to survive these new supernatural threats, two factions emerged.

In the agrarian east, far from the ruined capital, the **Meliskan** faction arose devoted to the merciful goddess Meliska, who if not for the death of Sigismund would have been the next deity put on trial. They believe she was innocent, while the other gods *were* guilty. They deemphasize Triegenes's call for self-improvement, and instead promote serving the weak and vulnerable.

In the ore-wealthy west, the **Ottoplismo** movement united around the martyrdom of the eight gods, believing their execution was unjust, but that their memories should be venerated. Ottoplismists encourage people to become hunters, soldiers, investigators, and inquisitors, the better to protect the nation from what feels like an impossible number of threats.

What began as fierce religious arguments is gradually bubbling into violence. The two factions resist open warfare, as both profess loyalty to the weak but well-meaning **Prime Cardinal Fiore Tullius** in the capital. But people keep dying in the shadows.

Not all news is foul, though. A gnome cleric, **Tittling Grainet**, has organized scattered villages of her people, long overlooked by Crisillyir's theocrats. They have appealed to the fey of the Dreaming for help dealing with the multitudinous horrors that escaped during the Great Eclipse. With such aid, they've managed to cleanse pockets of wilderness, creating safeholds they call halos or *pittura* circles, where faerie magic keeps fiends at bay. More the pity, then, that zealous exorcists often don't understand why one type of magical creature might be a friend, and so often human villages ungratefully hunt and kill the same fey who are protecting them.

- **Major Heritages:** Human, Deva, Gnome.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Collegiate, Forsaken, Godbound, Villager.
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Acolyte, Criminal, Guild Artisan, Soldier.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Gunsmith, Ottoplismo, Spirit Medium.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Cleric (aspirant), Savant (vox).

Danor

Loathed for its attempts to seize power during the Great Eclipse, this country of rationalists has sought to make amends to its peer nations, though its citizens chafe at government restrictions and still feel a responsibility to take a leading role in the world.

Modern Danor developed in a land where magic had all but ceased to function. Founded by a tiefling dynasty, the nation launched the world's industrial revolution and pushed for rational enlightenment rather than superstition and faith in gods. Despite competing with Risur in four brutal wars for control of the Yerasol Archipelago, Danor always viewed itself as a scholar, not a warrior, lighting the way for the ignorant. Sometimes that light came in the form of factories, machinery, and steam engines, and in other times in cannon and musket fusillades.

During the Great Eclipse that light was rather literal. Danor's sovereign, **Han Jierre**, oversaw construction of enchanted lighthouses around the Avery Sea, the light from which sapped people of the will to rebel, letting Jierre and his allies position themselves to rule the entire region. He would have been forever scorned as a villain if not for an unexpected act of contrition in the days after the Eclipse ended.

When the sun returned, Danor's minister of war **Eloise Duffet** enacted martial law and began killing all who opposed her. Jierre returned from abroad on a faltering, damaged war dirigible, and dropped leaflets from the airship onto the capital city, confessing his many crimes and revealing his accomplices. Then he ordered Duffet to stand down and threatened to bombard her base of operations unless she returned control to a civilian, elected government. Though Duffet's forces shot Jierre out of the sky, his call for democracy united the public, who overthrew the military. Duffet retreated to an abandoned city in the north and declared herself Empress, though she had no recognized authority and limited military support.

Nevertheless, the continent feared a resurgent Danor. With combined political pressure, the other great nations forced Danor's new government to agree to the **Orithean Concordat**, a treaty of partial disarmament and onerous reparation payments. Danor tied itself into bureaucratic knots trying to fulfill its obligations while the poor went hungry and rich were denied familiar luxuries.

Lower class citizens and political radicals have tried repeatedly to win seats in government so they can renegotiate, but the coalitions they built when they did win had never grown large enough to take power … until the latest election. Now many wings of the Danoran economy are refusing to abide by the Concordat. The nation's chief executive, **President Remy Duvall**, insists on maintaining the terms of the treaty, though post-Eclipse reforms limit the power of his office.

Amidst all this bickering and gridlock, some people turn to a third way: a philosophy called **courseur**, which emphasizes the importance of moving forward despite obstacles, be they physical, societal, or legal. Inspired by this ideology, university-educated inventors attempt to combine technology with the newly restored magic, often operating in secret if they cannot get a license attesting to the safety or morality of their experiments.



Meanwhile, "Empress Duffet" is growing her support, carving out parts of Danor and strong-arming neighboring lands to join her or face invasion. She claims a desire to relight the torch of Danoran leadership, but the continent dreads the growing fires of war.

- **Major Heritages:** Human, Tiefling.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Collegiate, Cosmopolitan, Imperial, Steamforged.
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Sage (aka Thinker), Sailor, Soldier, Spy.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Courseur, Martial Scientist, Technologist.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Berserker (queen bee), Fighter (gadgeteer).

Drakr

Long ruled by a parliament of philosophers, this loose federation of human peasants and dwarven lords is unsure in this new age what guiding ideology to embrace. And in this time of uncertainty, swindlers thrive.

Dwarves would tell you that Drakr is their homeland. Like so much in their land, that is a philosophical claim whose truth varies based on your beliefs. Dozens of dwarven clans did claim the region from undead titans some fifteen centuries ago. But later the Demonocracy absorbed them, and later still the Clergy conquered the region. Dwarves only took power again after the Great Malice, and then only by allying with human groups to defend against the encroaching Malice Lands. But the dwarf clans pay well to make sure that their story is the one people tell.

Nearly every social structure in Drakr has its own line of philosophers, from mighty mercenary companies to small villages. For example, a manufacturer of mecha-typographs will argue that imprinting words with steel keys instead of a quill is evidence of the worth of the author. After all, how important could your ideas be if you think they're fit to write with a feather plucked off a goose carcass?

For centuries, the dominant philosophers have espoused some variant of the **Armiger** ideology, claiming that the survival of the nation is paramount, and that survival requires strength. And, of course, the clans are strong, so they must keep power.

However, in the years prior to the Great Eclipse, prophecies and portents of an approaching doomsday drew many to **eschatology**, an ethos that promoted planning good endings. After the Eclipse, many in Drakr believed eschatology had helped them survive. The people elevated the architect of that philosophy, **Vlendam Heid**, to chancellor.

Today, Heid's **Reformist** coalition strives to rebuild the nation to empower all its people so they can pursue their preferred ending. This means ending the nepotism of the entrenched dwarven clans, and banning the dark magic many are believed to use. The Armigers, however, accuse Heid of threatening the nation's identity by abandoning centuries of tradition.

To undercut the chancellor's authority, the Armigers have turned to the **Kuchnost** crime syndicate, which aligns itself with a new philosophy of **solipsistic nihilism**. By fostering distrust of





institutions and authority, and occasionally resorting to extreme violence against their rivals, the Kuchnost have made it hard for many Drakrans to know *what* to believe.

Military and law enforcement leaders say they're trying to dismantle this syndicate, but most Drakrans suspect they're in the Kuchnost's pocket. Whether it's true or not perhaps doesn't even matter.

- **Major Heritages:** Human, Dwarf.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Collegiate, Dialetician, Hill Dwarf, Mountain Dwarf.
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Charlatan, Criminal, Guild Artisan, Soldier.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Gunsmith, Sophist, Technologist.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Rogue (occult blade), Sorcerer (annihilator).

Elfaivar

Five centuries ago, all but a few hundred Elfaivaran women perished in an event called the Great Malice, triggered by the death of the elven goddess Srasama. Twenty years ago, millions of them were resurrected, upending a society that had come to define itself by its seclusion and endurance.

When the old Elfaivaran Empire collapsed, the survivors—collectively called the **asocar**, after a tree associated with pride and sorrow—faced cruel horrors. Yet a tiny sliver of the Elfaivaran people were spared, convinced to hold fast by the poet **Vekesh**. Vekesh taught that defeat is only tragedy if one chooses to let the story end. In short, survival—slow, determined survival, in the form of rebuilding from weakness and prospering to strength—would be victory.

In time, the asocar population of Elfaivaran elves grew to perhaps a million people. The magical wealth of the old empire was consolidated among elite long-lived warriors and mages devoted to protecting their people. Time and again, younger Elfaivarans pushed for action, and wanted to fight back against the great powers that were colonizing the seemingly empty ruins of old Elfaivar. But their leaders—especially **Athrylla Valanar**, an asocar matriarch—held their people in hiding, thriving in obscurity.

Then right as the Great Eclipse ended, the souls of all who had fallen with Srasama were given a choice, and millions agreed to return. Each knew that five centuries had passed, and that the holy war was long over. They came to be called **gulmohar**, for a type of tree with flamboyant fiery flowers that grew around many of Srasama's temples.

Athrylla and other asocar matriarchs could not keep order, as the younger generations saw the returned gulmohar as a mythical miracle and a sign they must reclaim their land.

Eventually two leaders emerged: the legendary and aged warrior **Dhebisu**, and young **Adin Radhasi**, a temple sentinel who had died pregnant and gave birth soon after she returned to life. The firebrand Adin persuaded a large portion of her people to claim the southern coast, where they raided foreign-run colonies for supplies and to enslave the colonizers. Meanwhile to the north, Dhebisu gathered various groups who had been outcasts in the old empire, including a scorned ethnic group of elves named the **Harimau**, and began a subtle campaign of sabotage and assassination of her people's foes.



Hoping to bring peace and capitalize on the possibility of a restored Elfaivaran Empire, Athrylla Valanar assembled a formal Ranimandala, or ruling circle, consisting of female leaders of asocar and gulmohar. She invited Dhebisu and Adin into the Ranimandala and supported a decree laying *de jure* claim to all the territory of old Elfaivar. Together they founded the **Greater Elfaivaran Ran**.

The formation of the Ranimandala brought peace for a time. Adherents of Vekesh tried to share his wisdom and encourage patience, but their influence was fading. In their place, Adin's faction created a school of war, giving new life to long lost military tactics.

Then three years ago, Adin unilaterally invaded Crisillyir to sack and occupy the city of Vendricce, which triggered international backlash. Ber sent soldiers. Drakr sent arms. After a year of fighting, Risur's monarch—a hero who helped save the world from the Great Eclipse—managed to broker an armistice, but only after great unnecessary death and suffering. Though slightly humbled, Adin still considered the conflict a great success, as the armistice won large swaths of the empire's old land. Moreover, every nation had witnessed that Elfaivar deserved a place as a great nation.

- **Major Heritages:** Elf, Human.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Elfaivaran, Harimau, Settler, Wood Elf
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Acolyte, Hermit, Outlander, Noble.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Martial Scientist, Telemachian, Vekeshi Mystic.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Adept (durala carao), Wizard (enclavist).

Risur

Many diverse groups came together to drive Risur's recent ascendancy as the greatest power in Lanjyr. Native fey and their druidic allies, cutthroat industrialists, bold inventor entrepreneurs, an indomitable artistic working class, scholars of magic and war, and even the land itself, represented by five fey titans: all of these had loyalty to the recent monarch. But a new monarch has taken the throne, and she has a daunting task of keeping this coalition together if she hopes to maintain Risur's preeminence on the global stage.

The Unseen Court of the Dreaming had ancient political ties with the leadership of Risur. The connection between the two realms was so strong that, when the industrial revolution began, natives of the Dreaming would feel ill or anxious in places where industry or spinning gears operated in the Waking world. Several monarchs tried to appease the fey by limiting Risuri industry, and the nation suffered for it, losing territory to Danor in the Yerasol Wars.

Sixty years ago, **King Aodhan Lesterman** endured the anger of the fey by declaring the city of Flint to be Risur's new seat of industry. The next war with Danor turned into more of a stalemate than a defeat, but the Risuri people were still split on whether they approved of abandoning druidic traditions to embrace modern technology.

Folk prophets known as skyseers decried smog blocking their view of the stars, which hindered their prognostications.

Psychically sensitive mediums sensed growing darkness pressing out from the realm of the dead known as the Bleak Gate. Even those who worked in the factories of Flint joined the unrest, bringing wild color to the soot-cloaked grime of docks and industrial districts.

That friction threatened to turn the nation against itself when the Great Eclipse began and Aodhan was assassinated. But his successor, **King Baldrey**, had earned the respect of every faction, and not only did he hold his nation together, he guided them to beat back the darkness and ultimately bring an end to the Eclipse.

Spared from the internal damage the other great nations had faced during the Eclipse, Risur helped ensure stability as those lands tried to recover. Risuri citizens spoke of living in a golden age, where no harm could ever befall them, and no dream was unachievable.

That optimism faltered three years ago when King Baldrey abdicated, passing his crown to **Queen Iain Waryeye**. The power of Risur's monarchs is tied to the Rites of Rulership, little-understood by the common folk, save that the ruler must have the support of the people of Risur and have demonstrated dominion over the land itself. The new queen launched a massive military expansion to cement Risur's position as the axis of geopolitical power. But the other great nations don't trust her as they did Baldrey.

The government that is on the best terms with Iain is the **Unseen Court**, fey leaders of a land in the Dreaming that mirrors Risur's borders. Iain is said to always have an eye on Risur's "nearest neighbor," and she has offered great rewards to technologists who can invent machines whose whirling does not anger the fey.

Though times are bright for most of Risur's people, one place of concern is the High Bayou, a strange swamp in southern Risur that clings to the side of the Anthras Mountains, held together by dam-like webs of giant spiders. The High Bayou was once home to a titanic fey serpent named the Voice of Rot, who has not been seen since the Great Eclipse. Instead, hideous monsters—hybrids of spiders and other creatures, with blood-red eyes—have begun scuttling about the edge of the bayou, spinning webs, expanding their territory.

Technology and arcanoscience have driven Risur to its place as the most powerful nation around the Avery Sea, but if it cannot balance its enormous responsibilities, the world may start to spin off its axis.

- **Major Heritages:** Human, Elf, Halfling.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Collegiate, Cosmopolitan, Stout Halfling, Villager.
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Any.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Docker, Skyseer, Spirit Medium.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Ranger (titanist), Wizard (last raven).

The Yerasol Islands

The Yerasol Archipelago consists of six large islands, dozens of county-sized ones, and hundreds of tiny islets and atolls, enough that those seeking to disappear into obscurity could find many hideaways. The archipelago holds untold secrets, from the enigmatic ruins of an ancient orc civilization, to hidden bases of conspiracies, to mysterious tides that can ferry ships between worlds.

A Common Language

People of Lanjyr have their own cultural names for languages, but we use existing language names as stand-ins.

The primary language around the Avery Sea is "Common," a tongue brought to prominence by the Clergy, which once controlled the entire northern continent. Its dominance in trade and scholarship led to it being a second language for most people in Risur, and when Ber welcomed foreign advisors a few decades ago, Common was introduced to the national education curriculum.

Colonists brought the language to Elfaivar, and even among the resurrected gulmohar, many knew the old Clergy's tongue so they could understand their enemies.

Risur's national language, often called Primordial because allegedly it was passed down by the fey titans, is ironically both the traditional tongue of the nature-oriented druids and a popular shared language among researchers of arcanoscience.

These islands are lush with life, and many support thriving plantations. History here is a palimpsest of diverse cultures contesting for control of the most prosperous patches of land. For those who live there today, however, it seems like there never was a time when Risur and Danor were not vying for control of the islands.

For two hundred years before the Great Eclipse, a series of four Yerasol Wars dragged locals into fighting, piracy, and vassalage. One of the most contested objectives was the legendary **Axis Island**. Whatever happened to cause the Great Eclipse, it almost certainly started on Axis Island.

Reality around Axis Island always seemed fickle. Creatures would appear out of nowhere, completely foreign to this world, and then flicker away in a few moments. Travelers would glimpse distant landscapes or purple suns, but they'd quickly vanish. During the Great Eclipse, tendrils of light drifted into the sky from the island's center, and the Danoran military fired on any who tried to approach. The lights ended when the sun returned, but the strangeness of Axis Island seems to have spread wider, across the whole archipelago.

Today, Risur and Danor run a joint military fortress on Axis to defend the island's secrets. But in the seas anywhere in the archipelago, people now glimpse those same strange apparitions. Ships seem to vanish more than they used to. And sailors share wild tales of finding themselves on foreign tides, passing through a storm or a fog cloud and into another world, and undertaking a perilous adventure to find their way home.

Still, the islands are a source of great wealth, and their distance from domineering governments attracts many outsiders, for whom freedom—and exceptionally nice weather—is worth the risk.

- **Major Heritages:** Human, Elf, Orc, various extraplanar.
- **Suggested Cultures:** Caravanner (seafarer), Settler, Wildling.
- **Suggested Backgrounds:** Hermit, Outlander, Sailor.
- **Suggested Character Themes:** Any.
- **Suggested Class Options:** Bard (vagabond), Druid (axis slayer).



Colonies

Following the collapse of Elfaivar, the Clergy established several garrisons throughout the region, intending an eternal presence to keep the Elfaivarans from regaining any military might. In the following centuries, other nations looked to the resource rich remnants of the empire and began establishing formal colonies. The colonizers stuck mostly to the coasts and islands, leaving the rewilding interior jungle to the Elfaivarans.

After the Great Eclipse, the resurrected Elfaivaran women spurred a movement to reclaim what they saw as stolen territory. Though they understood these people were not the same as those with whom they warred before the Great Malice, they were still outsiders. The conquests were tactical, not vengeful pogroms, though of course they were far from bloodless.

Crisillyir ordered the evacuation and dissolution of its colony of **Vigilia** early on, claimed by the matriarch Dhebisu. **Tropaeum** was ceded to the Ran three years ago, and is controlled by the matriarch Adin Radhasi. **Angelus** is their sole remaining colony, and it is heavily militarized.

The Drakran colony **Otto** mostly evacuated and ceded less inhabited lands, but adopted a siege stance, lasting for years in their coastal forts before recently coming to a truce, thanks to an alliance with local fey secured by dwarven explorer extraordinaire **Kiegar Arukova**.

The Risuri colony **Kellandia** was always on good terms with the Elfaivarans, and today it has a nonaggression pact. Committed to preventing further war between Elfaivar and Crisillyir, Risur maintains a large military presence in their colony, intended to deter further warfare.

The strong military garrison of Danor's colony **Rationalis** initially clashed with the Elfaivaran reclamation, which desired the area's mining resources and industries. However, Danor strategically offered modest support to Elfaivar's attacks against Crisillyir, happy to create a balance of power between the two nations.

The seas between Kellandia and Rationalis were once rife with naval battles between the two rival powers, but the long pause in hostilities is making some colonists question whether they might not be better served by seceding and joining with the Elfaivaran Ran. Nowhere is this more evident than on **Titania**, the largest island in Risur's colony founded by druids who want to abandon technology and form strong alliances with the fey.

The Malice Lands

Where once the land constantly twisted with wild magic, today this loosely allied group of states churns with wild ideologies.

The Great Malice left Danor without magic, but in a swath of land between Danor and Drakr, magic went out of control. Spells would change targets, dangerously expand in scope, or even do something completely different from what was intended. Over the years, animals turned to bizarre, often surreal monsters that fed on emotions and whole landscapes were twisted into patchworks of mismatched terrain. In a few areas the effects were muted and tiny communities were possible, but the region only produced one small city, **Orithea**.

Twenty years ago magic in the region became stable, and once terrifying land became the focus of a land rush. The terrain was still strange and rough, but at least predictable. Two decades on, Orithea has doubled in size. Tens of thousands of homesteaders have started new farms and towns, and hundreds died in fights for the best soil.

The armies of Danor and Drakr made moves to annex the region, but guerrilla resistance from long-time residents led Danor to make a formal alliance, and the locals deftly managed to play the two nations against each other. So soon after the shared peril of the Great Eclipse, Drakran commanders were unwilling to start a new war, and ultimately neither country was able to claim much territory.

What resulted was a sort of laboratory of civilization, with twenty separate governments springing up in different areas, three of which have already collapsed. For each, the foremost goal is to maintain good enough relations with their neighbors that neither Danor nor Drakr can turn them against each other. Find compromise with the neighbor who annoys you every day, because the invader only has to conquer you once. This guiding philosophy, dubbed Clavelism, was championed by **Jeanette Clavel**, who started merely as a farmer but now is one of the few internationally recognized figures from the Malice States.

Folk of this region are a mix of rugged, ingenious families who survived here for generations—often with some strange mutations to show for it—and optimistic settlers who see the land as a chance at freedom. They are united in being quick to fight when their land is threatened, but apt to let people alone to their own affairs. In some ways they're kindred spirits to Berans, but without pretensions of civility. Indeed several of the Malice States are havens for ideas most of the civilized world would find vile, including slavery and human sacrifice. The most famous of these is **Arrovia**, which openly uses the fuel witchoil, a viscous black substance that absorbs the souls of those who die nearby.

City States, Border States, and Other Continents

Scattered between the great nations are a handful of city-states, such as the luxurious and magically powerful Nalaam in the mountains between Drakr and Crisillyir or the dreaded slavery market Shaha at the southeastern tip of the Elfaivaran subcontinent.

Several regions on the map of Lanjyr (see page 3) are labeled as "border states"; these are countries which have minimal influence on wider world affairs, but which could be home to any sort of societies that the players or Narrator need. For example, bugbears and aarakocra don't have an established place in the Zeitgeist setting, and we detail no magocracies or hereditary monarchies, but the border states can easily be used for such things.

And beyond that, there are tales of Lanjyran sailors seeking the dawn and finding only a sea where the clouds ripple with fire, or aspiring merchants trekking for months through the arid steppes beyond Elfaivar and finding a meteor crater the size of a sea that had punctured into some dark Great Below, or teleporting to the moon and looking skyward to see the whole of the world spinning above them, dotted with continents waiting to be discovered.



Stateless

In every great upheaval, people become displaced, fleeing or flocking to new lands which don't necessarily welcome them. Hundreds of thousands of people live without any state that will formally claim them, cast as interlopers or invaders or insidious criminals wherever they go. Most of them fall into one of four main trends.

The Diaspora

Shortly after the Great Malice, thousands of traumatized Elfaivarans fled the enraged paroxysms of violence in their homeland. Some were welcomed to Risur, but most lands vilified them as a threat. Though long-lived, nearly all of that first generation of refugees has perished by this point, but throughout the centuries since, more Elfaivarans—nearly all men—abandoned their grim prospects at home and sought a more hopeful future. Small communities of Elfaivarans dot numerous nations.

The mirror to this group are the tragic Elfaivaran women who survived the Great Malice, only for foreign aristocrats to abduct and enslave them as trophy wives and breeding stock. Even today there are wealthy families that keep generations of Elfaivaran elves as chattel, with Elfaivaran brides as a sick status symbol.

Several philanthropic groups in Risur gather funds to purchase the freedom of enslaved Elfaivarans. Less legally, cults of vekeshi mystics have long been committed to ending the slave trade, and over the centuries they have often acted with less restraint than their namesake the poet Vekesh would have desired. Terrorizing and slaying slavers often had the opposite effect as intended, creating a public opinion of the vekeshi philosophy as one driven by revenge. While abolitionist movements are rising in the great nations, the stereotype persists of Elfaivaran men as dangerous killers and their women as prized trophies.

The Dreaming

The real world, the Waking, is mirrored in the Dreaming, a plane of subjective reality, wild phenomena, and enigmatic fey. Risur's Dreaming is ruled by the Unseen Court, who have had an alliance with the rulers of Risur for seventeen centuries. But in recent decades, other nations have become more aware of their Dreaming analogues, which seem to have been rattled by the Great Eclipse.

Beran tropezaros have unearthed mysterious and dangerous fey dragons in their Dreaming, and the Crisillyir Dreaming is a chaotic land of picture-galleries and beings from paintings brought to life, though many Clergy scholars claim them to be demons. A handful of great Elfaivaran enclaves have long straddled between the two worlds, quietly fending off incursions from mischievous winged spirits on the Dreaming side. In Drakr, remote communities have vanished completely after radical solipsistic philosophers gained a foothold in their political discourse, and now their buildings are inhabited by tiny beings who hide from sight. Danor alone seems to have a Dreaming with no native inhabitants.

Vagabonds

There have always been people who simply wander, living on the outskirts of larger settlements with like-minded outsiders. But today this term more often refers to beings from other worlds—from the planets in the night sky: Jiese and its fiery salamanders, Caeloon and its windblown monks, Mavisha and its wide-eyed fishmen, and even rarer oddities. Nearly all arrived in storms somewhere in the Yerasol Archipelago, and when they couldn't navigate home, found their way instead into communities of vagabonds.

This welcoming of the alien outsider was promoted by famed vagabond and musician **Rock Rackus**, once a sailor and dockworker who rose to fame and wealth after claiming he'd shot the king of the Unseen Court and slept with the queen, in a dock opera known as *Vagabond of the Mirror Moon*.

The Midnight Revel

The Bleak Gate is normally just a place for the spirits of the dead and a handful of secretive, horrifying beings who are more like the concept of shadow given life than actual people. But on the darkest and most frightening nights, travelers who find themselves alongside rivers or streams anywhere in the world might hear boisterous, uplifting music seemingly carried along the water. Every few weeks, a pair of people will appear during these midnight revels—always a couple in love, seemingly human—and they are escorted by a being akin to an animated skeleton, but fully conscious and capable of speech, invariably with a jaunty disposition.

They claim to come from **Iratha Ket**, a city that survived the end of its world with its population in stasis, protected by the loving undead; after untold decades they were transported in their darkest hour to a remote corner of the Bleak Gate, where they have gradually been sending survivors out into the world to find a new life.

Heritage, Culture, Nation

In modern Lanjyr, scientists debate taxonomy for classifying different species of humanoids as they would animals and plants. But most people care more about what nation someone hails from than what they look like. Tieflings are invariably associated with Danor, as dwarves are with Drakr, but you can find some of each in every other country, and how welcome they are usually depends on if they share the nation's philosophy.

People often don't fit into clear categories, and ideas of what an "ethnicity" or "race" are vary by culture. There are people in the Malice Lands with orcish tusks and elvish builds living the next valley over from folk with gnoll-like fur and horns like tieflings, and they'd see each other as more kin than anyone from Crisillyir—whose human population they'd find startlingly homogenous. Whereas in Crisillyir, disparate subcultures that were once unified by religion are starting to demand local rule, and see neighbors with slightly different surnames or who pray to different gods as foreigners who need to be expelled.

That is not to say that bigotry based on appearance doesn't exist. The Clergy claims tieflings are trying to recreate the Demonocracy. In Drakr, class divisions between human villagers and the dwarven clans have petrified into racial distrust. Mainstream Elfaivarans scorn an ethnic group called the Harimau, who tend to have tiger-like patterns on their skin. The many cultures of Ber are still looked upon in some circles as merely painted-up primitives. And even the famously multicultural Risur is, since the coronation of gnomish Queen Iain Waryeye, grappling with long-held assumptions about the significance of "little folk" like halflings and gnomes.

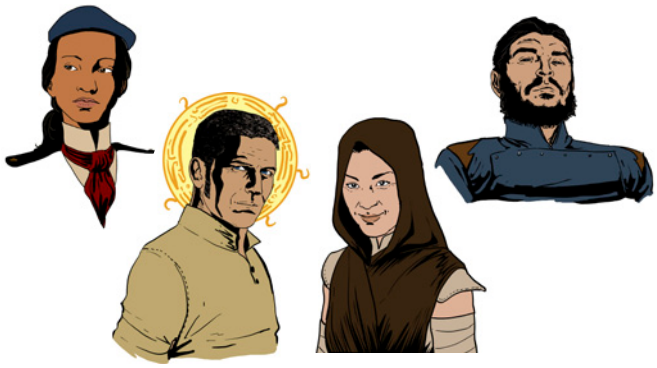
Major Heritages

The following heritages are most common in Lanjyr.

Humans

Lanjyr's humans come from three main migrations. The first settled the Yerasol Archipelago in preshistory. The second are believed to have sailed from the east around the time the Ancient orc culture collapsed. The third came from the north beyond modern Drakr in tandem with the rise of the Demonocracy. A new fourth migration may be imminent. A planar portal on a strange floating island off the southern coast of Ber links to the planet Caeloon, whose main population seem human but are descendants of a wholly different world. So far only a few dozen have come to Lanjyr.

The goliaths of the Anthras Mountains and the halflings of Risur's lowlands are sometimes also seen as humans, and similar diversity exists across the continent.



The Four Human Migrations



Dwarves

Drakran legends claim that the dwarven people existed on Lanjyr even before humans arrived. Anthropologists posit that at least two distinct populations that would today be seen as "dwarves" developed independently as offshoots of humans who survived some calamity by fleeing underground.

Some time after the Demonocracy fell, the dwarves of Drakr went through a brief period of racial nationalism, spearheaded by an archmage king who wished to resist Clergy rule. That king reached out through magic to others around Lanjyr he saw as dwarves and forced a great migration that brought tens of thousands to his realm against their will. Even then, though, he could not gather the numbers he needed to achieve his dream, and a thousand years later Drakr retains its human majority.

Since the Great Eclipse, a small movement has promoted the idea that dwarves came from another world, and that their fate is to find their lost home, somewhere out in the stars.

Elves

Elves have been present in Lanjyr as long as humans, though they lived in more remote areas, their more intuitive grasp of magic letting them support large communities without farming. Where humans claimed plains and coasts, elves were dominant in forests.

Though Elfaivar has by far the largest elven population, Risur is noteworthy for having a conflux of elves from many origins around Lanjyr. Oldest are the original inhabitants of Antwalk Thicket. Later they mingled with elves fleeing the rise of the Demonocracy across the Avery Sea. After the Great Malice, the Diaspora brought thousands of Elfaivaran elves, and during the past two centuries a few hundred Tundarasne elves arrived, survivors of a terrible genocide in northern Drakr (though Drakr denies it ever occurred). Half-elves and intermingling of elven communities have become so common that Risuri think nothing of it.

Other communities of elves, tiny by comparison, endure in parts of Danor and various border states, where they often try to keep their own identity separate from the country around them. Drakr today is actively hostile to elves, and due to old animosity with Elfaivar, the few communities of elves in Crisillyir often aggressively embrace the Clergy's faith as a shield against bigotry.





Orcs

As a people, orcs were known in the rest of the world mostly as the vicious soldiers of the dragon tyrants, or as frantic, violent tribes trying to eke out an existence between draconic domains. Some small pockets of orcs survived in other nations as well, nearly universally derided. But orcs have deep traditions carved into the very foundation of the world, evidenced by archaeologists who have in recent decades uncovered a continent-spanning pre-Risuri civilization which they call the Ancients. The Ancients lacked a writing system or most forms of metallurgy, but all their ruins are filled with astounding quantities of golden weapons, armor, and jewelry.

That great height came to an end thousands of years ago, but even without written records, orcish cultures have passed down oral traditions of their ancestors as great warriors who drove off extremely weird beasts and formed close bonds with the world. In their main creation myths, orcish mortals crafted the world from chaos, needing no help from any gods.

Physically hardier than humans, orcs often pride themselves for their strength while not voicing their anxieties over how others see them as unintelligent. Rather, they see it as a shared challenge for their kind to strive harder than others so that their victory—victory, in this case, taking the form of civility and polite fashion—will be something worth a grand celebration.

Tieflings

When the Great Malice struck, the capital city of the Clergy was located in what today is Danor. Most adherents of the Clergy there were transformed, growing horns and tails. People claimed they were "from the deep pit of hell," and over time the pronunciation has drifted from "deepling" to "tiefling".

Some fled in horror of their new form or out of remorse for the holy war's toll. Most simply adapted. By the time the region recovered and the nation Danor was founded, many positions of authority were held by tieflings. Their hold on power was certainly helped by the ability of most tieflings to invoke a supernatural fiery rebuke on those who injure them.

Racial tensions bubble in Danor, where the tiefling minority continue to treat the human majority as second-class citizens: a "common" folk compared to the more refined and honorable horned ones.

In recent years, scholars have drawn comparisons between tieflings and various sorts of vagabonds from other planes who closely resemble humans but possess magic from another world. This clade has been labeled "planetouched."





Minor Heritages

Most people won't blink at the sight of a gnome or halfling, though outside of Risur they might not be able to tell the difference at a glance. Dragonborn, gnolls, goblins, kobolds, lizardfolk, and minotaurs all are respected in Ber. Devas have spread from a single battlefield in Crisillyir to every corner of the world. Many other peoples have homelands of their own, unknown to all but the well-read and the adventurous.

Despite their small population, two of the most well-known uncommon heritages are deva and gnolls. We also present brief entries for common Beran races not present in the core rules.

Devas

Devas were those people—mostly human—who were present at the defeat of the goddess Srasama over five centuries ago. The divine energy released by her death granted them a sliver of immortality, and for hundreds of years whenever they died they reincarnated into a fully-grown adult form, reappearing within a few days somewhere generally three miles from where they died.

Reincarnated devas vaguely recall their previous lives and can reconnect with the people and places of they formerly knew if given the chance. But they can just as easily find themselves adopting new lives and training in new skills. But regardles of the paths they take, devas occasionally have flashes of memory from their former lives.

Physically, devas resemble their original species, but with unearthly beauty and an uncanny stillness. Their skin is covered in geometric patterns of light and dark. Some of noteworthy power will occasionally manifest insubstantial and wholly decorative wings, though they can conceal these with practice and concentration.

If a deva has a child, it does not inherit any of Srasama's divinity. Resurrection magic works the same on devas as it does anyone else.

Deva Traits

Devas gain the following traits.

Type. Humanoid. However, you can be detected by magic that can detect celestials.

Age. Devas reincarnate into adult bodies, and die of old age perhaps seventy years after their incarnation begins.

Size. Usually Medium, but Small devas who were once gnomes or halflings are not unknown.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Deathless Calm. You gain resistance to necrotic and radiant damage, and you cannot be blinded by bright light.

Memory of Past Lifetimes. When making an ability check or saving throw, you may gain an expertise die. (An expertise die is an extra 1d4 that you roll and add to your main d20 roll.) If you do this for a skill, tool, or vehicle you are not proficient with, you gain proficiency for the next minute. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Deva Gifts

Select one of the following deva gifts.

Pluripotent Form. You have one or more extra sets of spiritual arms, which are clearly magical and not attached to your torso, but instead float a short distance away. You can dismiss them or manifest them with a thought. You still only have two limbs you can use to wield weapons, shields, and the like, and you don't gain any extra actions. But these limbs do allow you to hold extra items, and they are quite useful at confounding those who would tie you up.

Additionally, you count as one size larger for the purpose of grabbing and shoving, and your unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. Once per round when you hit with an unarmed strike, you can deal an extra 1 radiant damage.

Presence of the Divine. You also know one cantrip of your choice from the cleric spell list. At 3rd level, choose one 1st- or 2nd-level cleric spell, which you can cast once without any material components; you must finish a long rest in order to cast the spell again using this gift. A 1st-level spell chosen this way can be cast as if you used a 2nd-level spell slot. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.



Deva Paragon

When you reach 10th level, you gain one of the following paragon gifts.

Combined Soul. Your memories now include those of many devas who lived before you. You now have proficiency in all skills.

Manifest Incarnation. You learn to call forth a past life more fully. When you gain this ability, create a 3rd-level deva character with identical base ability scores (though you can choose a different background).

As a bonus action, you can call forth a shimmering manifestation of this past life. You share senses intuitively. Each of you can move independently, but you share a single pool of one action, one bonus action, and one reaction per round. You share hit points.

When you fall unconscious, or if you and the incarnation are separated by more than 250 feet, the incarnation is destroyed. If the incarnation is adjacent to you, you can spend a bonus action to absorb it.

If the incarnation is destroyed without you absorbing it, you cannot manifest it again until you complete a long rest. If you do absorb it, you can manifest it again after a short rest. However, any limited-use abilities or spells it has used are still expended. The incarnation only regains expended abilities and spells when you complete a long rest.

When you manifest your incarnation, its spiritual essence has the equivalent of mundane equipment worth no more than 200 gp. Any of this equipment that leaves its possession vanishes after one round. The incarnation is corporeal and can wield other objects if it picks them up, but when the incarnation is destroyed or absorbed it drops those items.

For every five minutes the incarnation is active, you gain a level of strife, which goes away when the incarnation is destroyed or absorbed.

Deva Culture

Devas spread across Lanjyr, and only a handful of deva communities exist. However, all devas share a common concern: the Great Eclipse has disrupted their cycle of reincarnation.

Twenty years ago, around the same time the gulmohar returned among the Elfaivaran elves, the power that let devas reincarnate began to fade. Now two out of every three devas die just like any other mortal. Only one in three devas who die still reincarnate, but their flashes of memories from past lives seem to include jumbles of other devas who died but did not come back. Most surviving devas have been in their current incarnations for at least 21 years, so few devas today look younger than middle aged.

This renewed sense of mortality, combined with the rise of ceraunic wire communication, has led to a slow linking together of long-isolated devas.

Suggested Cultures. While you can choose any culture for your deva character, the following cultures are linked closely with this heritage: forsaken, godbound.

Gnolls

Gnolls resemble humanoid hyenas, averaging between seven and seven-and-a-half feet tall, with long limbs and jaws strong enough to crush and tear. They have difficulty pronouncing other humanoid languages, so even among Berans they are often seen as outsiders. Many of their tribes were slow to join with Vairday Bruse, and a region along the southern coast called **Tierra de las Bestias Moteado** was allowed to *de facto* secede, serving as a place for Berans who wanted to cling to the old hunter-gatherer ways, and the attendant warfare and tribalism, rather than feel compelled to pursue modern Ber's ideas of "civility." Gnolls make up the bulk of this region's population.





Gnolls demonstrate high rates of sorcerous potential. Ber is attempting to make inroads with gnollish communities by funding schools to train those with magical talent.

Gnoll Traits

Gnolls gain the following traits.

Age. Gnolls reach adulthood at age 12 and live up to 50 years.

Size. Medium.

Bristling Instinct. You gain an expertise die on saving throws against being frightened and against other effects that would alter your emotions. (An expertise die is an extra 1d4 that you roll and add to your main d20 roll.)

Speed. Your base walking speed is 35 feet.

Gnoll Gifts

Select one of the following gifts.

Magic in the Blood. You know one cantrip of your choice from the sorcerer spell list. At 3rd level, choose one 1st- or 2nd-level sorcerer spell, which you can cast once without any material components; you must finish a long rest in order to cast the spell again using this gift. A 1st-level spell chosen this way can be cast as if using a 2nd-level spell slot. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Predatory Body. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell. Additionally, your fanged maw is a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with it, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

While you aren't wearing armor, your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.

Gnoll Paragon

When you reach 10th level, you gain one of the following paragon gifts.

Free-Minded. Choose one of the following saving throws: Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. You gain an expertise die when using the chosen saving throw to resist magic.

Supernatural Hide. You can spend a bonus action and choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, electricity, fire, necrotic, poison, radiant, or thunder. You gain resistance to that damage type for the next minute. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short rest.

Gnoll Culture

Many gnolls see themselves as proudly Beran, but one large region resists the calls for modern internationalism and "civility." Some communities even praise the long-dead dragon tyrants. Most infamous of these are the steelmarked gnolls of Isla dolas Focas, who worship their old tyrant Gradiax as a sort of god of metal and technology.

Suggested Cultures. While you can choose any culture for your gnoll character, the following cultures are linked closely with this heritage: bloodmarked, Pedresco, steelmarked.

Goblins

Most goblins are short and nimble, living in caves or hillside burrows similar to halflings. Their appearance—green or yellow skin, mouths wide with sharp teeth, and black or red eyes—were enough for many other peoples to see them as monsters, and their knack for communing with beasts led to many claims they were themselves primitive animals. Even in Ber they were pushed to the margins, but that is changing.



Goblin Traits

Goblins gain the following traits.

Age. Goblins reach adulthood at age 12 and live up to 60 years.

Size. Small.

Darkvision. You have 60-foot darkvision.

Nimble Escape. You can Disengage or Hide as a bonus action.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Goblin Gifts

Select one of the following gifts.

Adaptive Fortitude. You gain an expertise die on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance to poison damage. (An expertise die is an extra 1d4 that you roll and add to your main d20 roll.)

At 3rd level, you gain the ability to cast *enhance ability* once; you must finish a long rest in order to cast the spell again using this gift. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Soothe the Beast. You can call upon instincts to calm a dangerous creature. Beasts and monstrosities with Intelligence 3 or less have disadvantage on attack rolls against you.

At 3rd level, you gain the ability to cast *animal friendship* once; when you cast *animal friendship* using this gift, it can target monstrosities with Intelligence 3 or less. You must finish a long rest in order to cast the spell again using this gift. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Goblin Paragon

When you reach 10th level, you gain the following paragon gift.

Unbreakable. When you succeed a death saving throw you can spend one Hit Die to heal 1 hit point. Once you use this gift, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

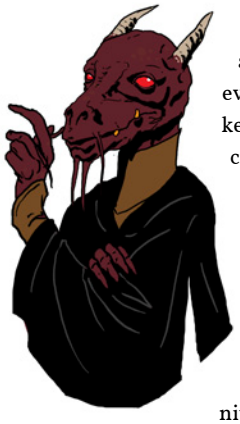
Goblin Culture

Many goblins live on the fringes of Beran society; in other parts of the world, they are seen with suspicion and even hunted.

Suggested Cultures. While you can choose any culture for your goblin character, the following cultures are linked closely with this heritage: De Guerra, stoneworthy, wildling.

Kobolds

Shorter on average than halflings, most kobolds possess reptilian features resembling those of lizardfolk or dragonborn, though some kobold lineages are known for their more rat-like, canine, or even feline appearance. All kobolds have "whiskers," though technically these fleshy feelers are called "barbels." Folk tales depicted kobolds as clever tricksters or as guardians of draconic treasures, relying on alchemy, traps, and (recently) technology to make up for their size. International history has few kobolds of note, and even in Ber, the joke is that kobolds don't really exist. The truth, though, is that until recently, most kobold communities kept their distance from settlements of larger humanoids to avoid being victimized.



Kobold Traits

Kobolds gain the following traits.

Age. Kobolds reach adulthood at age 16 and live up to 200 years.

Size. Small.

Darkvision. You have 60-foot darkvision.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Easily Unseen. When a creature first comes within line of sight of you, you can use your reaction to Hide, even if you don't have anything to hide behind. When you hide this way, you gain an expertise die on your Stealth check. (An expertise die is an extra 1d4 that you roll and add to your main d20 roll.)

Kobold Nimbleness. You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours.

Kobold Gifts

Select one of the following gifts.

Close Quarters. You have advantage on melee attacks made against a creature whose space you are in. Also, your sensitive whiskers grant you blindsight with a range of 5 feet.

Draconian Wings. You have a flying speed of 30 feet. To use this speed you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. Whenever you spend 3 consecutive rounds airborne without landing, you gain a level of fatigue. Any fatigue gained in this way is removed upon finishing a short or long rest.

Kobold Paragon

When you reach 10th level, you gain the following paragon gift.

Preternatural Senses. With a twitch of your whiskers, you can extend your senses. You can cast one of the following spells once: *arcane eye*, *clairvoyance*, *detect magic*, *locate creature*, or *locate object*. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You must finish a short or long rest in order to cast the spell again using this gift.

Kobold Culture

Kobolds have been part of Beran culture for a thousand years, little remarked upon in the history books but quietly innovating and thriving by avoiding direct conflict.

Suggested Cultures. While you can choose any culture for your kobold character, the following cultures are linked closely with this heritage: itinerant, Pedresco, villager.

Lizardfolk

Most common in the warmer climes of Ber and Elfaivar, various reptilian humanoids are commonly referred to by outsiders as lizardfolk. Though colorfully diverse in their various patterns of claws, scales, frills, and fangs, the many populations of cold-blooded lizardfolk share a mindset that can strike warm-blooded people as alien. Very few are driven by a desire for social status, unless they learn such ambition from other communities.



Lizardfolk legends claim their people were the first civilization, and that mammalian peoples descended from shamans who communed with the spirits of apes and took on traits of those beasts.



Lizardfolk Traits

Lizardfolk gain the following traits.

Age. Lizardfolk reach adulthood at age 14 and live up to 70 years.

Size. Medium.

Bite. You can use your teeth as a natural weapon to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with it your bite, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier.

Coldly Calculating. You can resist unwise impulses. When you fail a Wisdom saving throw or would become frightened, you can delay that effect until the end of your next turn. You cannot use this trait again until you complete a short or long rest.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Lizardfolk Gifts

Lizardfolk have diverse combinations of abilities, so choose **two** of the following gifts.

Aquatic. You can hold your breath for up to 15 minutes at a time, and you have a swim speed of 30 feet.

Autotomous. As a reaction you can detach one of your limbs, typically a tail, to escape from a grab. At the Narrator's discretion, this might also help you end other conditions as well. This detachment does no hit point damage to you. Without intervention, you can regrow a limb to full functionality after a week. However, if you receive 20 hit points worth of magical healing when you are already fully healed, your limb will regenerate during your next long rest.

Chameleon. You can change the patterns and colors on your scales, and with effort you can extend that ability to your equipment. You can spend an action to become invisible until the end of your next turn. This invisibility ends if you attack, cast a spell, or move more than 5 feet.

Climber. You have a climb speed of 30 feet.

Runner. You can Dash as a bonus action.

Spiky. When a creature grabs you it takes piercing damage equal to your proficiency bonus. Each turn it maintains the grab, it takes this damage again.

Tough-Scaled. When you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 13 + your Dexterity modifier. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

Venomous. When you deal damage with your bite, you can inject venom. The creature you bit takes poison damage equal to your proficiency bonus. At the end of each of that creature's turns, it must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) or else takes that poison damage again. If it succeeds its save, the effect ends. After you use this ability, you cannot produce venom again until you complete a short or long rest.

You can alternately spend a bonus action to release venom onto a weapon you're wielding, which will have the same effect when it damages a creature.



Your venom loses potency within an hour once it leaves your body, but someone proficient with a poisoner's kit can use it as one of the ingredients needed to create a vial of mundane poison. This reduces the cost of the vial of poison by 10 gp.

Lizardfolk Paragon

When you reach 10th level, choose one of the following paragon gifts.

Metamorphosis. Whenever you complete a long rest, you may choose one of the lizardfolk gifts you don't normally possess. Your body shifts to gain that gift until you use this ability again.

Torpor. Your metabolism can slow enough to put you into stasis. You can intentionally enter torpor as an action. You become incapacitated and appear dead, but remain conscious, and you do not need to eat, drink, or breathe until you emerge from torpor, which requires no action.

You may automatically enter torpor when reduced to 0 hit points. While in torpor and at 0 hit points, you do not normally need to make death saving throws on your turn. However, you still must make a death saving throw if you take damage while at 0 hit points.

Lizardfolk Culture

Most lizardfolk communities in Ber protected themselves from the old dragon tyrants by presenting themselves as methodical, quiet, and not driven by emotion—simultaneously not a threat to the dragons, but also an ineffective target of their oppression. After centuries, what was once an affectation became seen as a mark of distinction, and a restrained lizardfolk would be seen by their people as having the moral rectitude to resist temptation. Lizardfolk in Ber are often seen as trustworthy in matters of building effective bureaucracies.

Quiet doesn't mean dull or heartless, though. Their art and culture are simply more focused on internal reactions, and their festivals focus on serenity or cooperation rather than celebratory outbursts.

There are a few exceptions to this trend, as some lizardfolk tribes allied closely with one dragon tyrant or other, or lived in remote swamps that seemingly offered little of value to exploit. These communities have reflexively begun to revel in raucous behaviors, and make some of the loudest and most experimental music on the continent.

Suggested Cultures. While you can choose any culture for your lizardfolk character, the following cultures are linked closely with this heritage: cosmopolitan, Pedresco, villager.

Minotaurs

Minotaurs are humanoid but walk on cloven hooves, and their bodies are covered in a layer of fur, while their heads resemble cows, with all manner of color patterns and horn shapes. A few people outside Ber are also called "minotaurs" but have heads like goats, antelopes, or other cloven-hoofed animals. Despite stories of mighty minotaur brawlers, they aren't particularly much larger or stronger than humans, and most would never consider using their horns as a weapon.



Many other cultures have myths that claim minotaurs were born from a cursed king, or were sired by the fey titan Father of Thunder, or were minions serving the son of an ancient demonic mother of monsters. Even the various minotaur communities don't agree on their ancient history, though they have quite a lot of it. Minotaurs have a natural predilection to recall long stories and obscure details. This makes some minotaurs excellent scholars and bards, while others can be supremely petty in harboring grudges.

Minotaur Traits

Minotaurs gain the following traits.

Age. Minotaurs reach adulthood at age 18 and live up to 100 years.

Size. Medium.

Dominant Presence. Making use of your prominent size or deep voice, you can gain advantage on a Charisma check or saving throw. After you do, you cannot use this trait again until you complete a short or long rest.

Labyrinthine Recall. You can perfectly recall any path you have traveled. Your memory is similarly reliable regarding knowledge, though it can take you a while to methodically retrace how you learned something. Whenever you complete a long rest, you can choose one of the following skills: Arcana, Culture, Engineering, Nature, Religion. You gain proficiency in that skill until you take another long rest.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Minotaur Gifts

Select one of the following gifts.

Driving Horns. You can use your horns as a natural weapon to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with your horns, you deal bludgeoning or piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier. Also, whenever you hit with a melee attack (with your horns or otherwise), you may immediately spend a bonus action to Shove the creature you hit. If you make multiple attacks in the same turn, one bonus action suffices to let you shove with each horn attack that hits.

Guard Instinct. You gain an expertise die on initiative checks. Also, you can spend an action to stamp a hoof and sense vibrations and reverberations in the ground, granting you tremorsense with a range of 30 feet until the start of your next turn or until you move, whichever comes first.

Minotaur Paragon

When you reach 10th level, you gain the following paragon gift.

Mental Maze. Circuitous thought pathways make your mind harder to infiltrate and overcome. Whenever you fail an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, you may delay the effect until the end of your next turn.

Minotaur Culture

Minotaur communities are often centers of lore and learning, and everyone, from farmers to warriors, is expected to be well-educated. Throughout Ber it is common to see solo minotaurs or small bands traveling between tribes and cities, sharing news and stories among the nation's many peoples.

Suggested Cultures. While you can choose any culture for your minotaur character, the following cultures are linked closely with this heritage: collegiate, De Guerra, nomad.

New Cultures

The modern great nations offer some new cultures.

Bloodmarked

Bloodmarked gnolls are much more likely to be seen in Beran society or elsewhere in the world. They emphasize a feral menace but form bonds with allies that are almost as fierce as with family.

These gnolls and others who reject modern Beran society live in a patchwork of unincorporated tribes which all share the adulthood tradition of "blooding." To become an adult, one must kill an animal with one's teeth, which once had to be done on a hunt. Today, though, all but the most severe tribes have made this into a formalized ceremony with domesticated animals, sometimes drugged, presented for youths to slay.

Bond of Blood. You and allies within 5 feet of you have advantage on death saving throws.

Harrying Barks. When you deal damage to a creature you can bark, chortle, howl, or make other unnerving vocalizations. The target you damaged must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma bonus). If it fails, it is frightened of you until the end of your next turn. After you use this ability, you must complete a short or long rest before you use it again.

Speak with Hunting Beasts. Through sounds and gestures, you can communicate with carnivorous mammalian hunting beasts, such as bears, hyenas, and wolves. These animals have no special fondness for you.

Unyielding. When you fail a saving throw, you may reroll it. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Languages. You know Common, Gnoll, and one Beran language such as Draconic, Goblin, Minotaur, or Orc.

De Guerra

De Guerra orcs are more common in the mountains and highlands of Ber, with their strongest core on the northeast coast, along the shore of the Marrajado del Oro, where orcish sailors long raided Risuri lands. They take their name from the de Guerra family, whose matriarch **Corta Nariz de Guerra** is the current Bruse and ruler of Ber.

Since the establishment of modern Ber, many non-orcs have adopted de Guerra ways, especially those in the military, which often shuffles citizens around the country to train with those descended from other tribes, the better to foster national unity and pride in cultural heterogeneity.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, you can move your speed toward an enemy of your choice that you can see or hear. You must end this move closer to the enemy than you started.

Punch Above Your Weight. You are accustomed to dealing with much larger creatures. Add half your proficiency bonus on damage rolls for attacks against creatures Large or larger.

Reliable and Vigilant. When you would make an ability or skill check or saving throw, you can ignore one source of disadvantage. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short rest.

Steady Legs. Whether climbing mountains or crewing a ship, you've learned how to keep yourself and your allies from becoming unbalanced. When you or an ally within reach would fall prone or be pushed, you can grant them an expertise die on the saving throw or check to resist, or to their Maneuver DC. (An expertise die is an extra 1d4 that you roll and add to your main d20 roll.)

Languages. You know Common, Orc, and one Beran language such as Draconic, Gnoll, Goblin, or Minotaur.

Dialectician

Drakran culture is steeped in philosophical debate, and those who study and devise their own philosophies are the main drivers of society.

Epistemological Breadth. You are proficient in Culture, and you gain an expertise die when you make a check with a skill to debate or know about philosophy.

Ethical Imperative. You can cast *command* once per long rest. At 3rd level you can cast *suggestion* once per long rest. The saving throw DC for either of these is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom or Charisma modifier.

Hard to Sway. You have advantage on saving throws against illusions and to resist being charmed. Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks against you have disadvantage.

Languages. You know Common, Dwarf, and Primordial, enough to study nearly all major philosophies.

Elfaivaran

The largest woodland in Lanjyr is Elfaivar, the eponymous empire of the region's southeastern subcontinent. Elfaivar's elves developed wondrous magic and learned to blur the borders of the Waking and the Dreaming. But their holy war with the Clergy ended with the death of Srasama, the Elfaivaran goddess of womanhood, and the backlash slew all but a few hundred Elfaivaran women. The surviving men fought over the ruins or fled in a diaspora.

But secretive enclaves run by matriarchs were committed to protecting the surviving women, preserving Elfaivaran culture, and rebuilding the civilization. In time these enclaves grew into secretive cities, where women were revered and given the finest training in martial arts, spellcraft, and statecraft, while men competed in grand competitions of art and athletics, hoping a woman might favor them and choose to have a child with them.

The enclaves were sometimes aided by foreigners who felt a drive to help save a people from near death, and even sometimes sheltered those who were persecuted in the colonies that were slowly conquering the empire's old land. Then twenty years ago the gulmohar's return added millions of women, skewing the sex imbalance in the opposite direction and giving all Elfaivarans a hope for a new future.

Elfaivarans have a close connection to the Dreaming, which manifests whenever they use magic, causing their entire eyes to glow faintly with the color of their irises. Almost every Elfaivaran possesses the inherent power to step briefly into the Dreaming, allowing them to bypass enemies and difficult terrain before reappearing in the Waking.

Dreaming Native. Your time in the Dreaming has suffused your being with its very energy. In addition to being humanoid, you also have the fey creature type. Additionally, you are proficient in either History or Nature.

Elfaivaran Training. Elfaivarans must be able to defend their people, but art and beauty elevates life beyond mere survival. You are proficient in longswords, scimitars, and whips. You are also proficient in one tool or instrument of your choice.

Endure and Thrive. A story can only be a tragedy if we let it end. You can cast the cantrip *spare the dying*. In addition, at 3rd level you can cast *heroism* once per long rest. When you use either of these powers, you recite a verse from the Dirge of Vekesh or a similar mantra.

Fey Step. You know how to briefly slip between the Waking and Dreaming. You can cast *misty step*, but you must finish a short or long rest before you can do it again. If you aren't on the Waking or Dreaming, this power still functions, and to an outside observer you appear to instantaneously teleport, but to you it feels like you spend long moments in a void between worlds before arriving at your destination.

Languages. You can speak, read, write, and sign in Common, Elvish, and Sylvan.

Harimau

This rare community of elves in Elfaivar were for centuries shunned because they were accused of accepting the blessing of a violent bestial god, which gave them features that shift between those of elf and tiger. The Harimau, however, believe they have been blessed by **Hewanharimau**, bringing them closer to the purity and strength of nature.

Though their women did not perish with the death of Srasama, the Harimau were forced into hiding by Elfaivaran survivors who assumed they and their "curse" were somehow to blame. Once the empire had collapsed, though, the Harimau would sometimes let outsiders join them, even Elfaivarans who longed for the power their god offered in blessing. Today the gulmohar matriarch



Dhebisu has allied with them, promising them a role in restoring Elfaivar's greatness.

Hidden Intentions. Because of long-standing slander against your people, you prefer social restraint and subterfuge. You can gain advantage when you make a check with a skill or tool against a creature that you are hidden from, or if you are successfully disguised, or if you have deceived that creature somehow. After you do, you cannot use this trait on that same creature until you complete a long rest.

Jungle Predator. You are proficient in either Stealth or Survival.

Tiger Visage. Whenever you attack, you can shift your appearance to grow claws, deadly teeth, and striped fur like a tiger. While so shifted, your unarmed strike can deal bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, and deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier damage. Making this transformation requires no action, but once you do, you have to spend an action to revert back to your normal appearance.

Pounce. If you move at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hit it with a melee attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier) or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, you can make one unarmed attack against it as a bonus action, though you must use your tiger visage for this attack. You do not need a free hand to make this unarmed attack, since you could bite or perhaps use your feet to claw your enemy.

Languages. You can speak, read, write, and sign in Common, Elvish, and Abyssal (the blessed language of Hewanharimau).

Pedresco

Pedresco orcs are by far the most common, and their features a bit closer to humans, with smaller tusks and gentler brows. Other Berans, as well as de Guerra orcs, used to use the slur "half-orc" to insult the Pedresco orcs, and indeed the term might have some truth to it, as these lowland orcs were more likely to integrate with humans and perhaps even some elves. But after the founder of Ber, Vairday Bruse, hailed from among the Pedresco, the label has taken on a complicated role in orcish culture, co-opted to imply that the "other half" is Beran, a national identity rather than a racial one.

Today Berans of all heritages are drawn to the example of their nation's founder: confident and powerful civility, with a humility that respects that others might have wisdom you lack, and an unrelenting refusal to give in to tyranny.

Cultural Studies. You are proficient in Culture.

Relentless Endurance. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Wisdom of the Panoply. When an ally uses the Help action to aid you, you can reroll one of the dice you roll and use the new result. You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.

Languages. You know Common, Orc, and one Beran language such as Draconic, Gnoll, Goblin, or Minotaur.

Steelmarked

On a large island south of Ber lives a group of gnolls who belong to the **Cult of the Steel Lord**, and who have remained devoted to the dragon tyrant **Gradiax** even after he was slain over two centuries ago. These steelmarked gnolls have a somewhat paradoxical religion that commands them to avoid touching metal with bare flesh, yet to understand and master technology, for which their lord will reward them with bodies as strong as steel, free from weakness and hunger. As such, they adhere to fastidious sanitary standards and

Gold as Fashion and Fortune

In the Zeitgeist setting, the influence of Urim—a shattered chain of asteroids that glints in the night sky—causes rings of gold to block teleportation. This doesn't stop most cultures from using gold in jewelry, but Elfaivarans all learn to teleport short distances. Surprisingly, golden jewelry is far *more* prevalent in Elfaivar than other lands.

Before the fall of the empire, golden necklaces, earrings, nose rings, and bangles were a display of power and decadence, announcing that you felt no need to rush about by teleporting and that you had no fear you might need to flee. After the Great Malice, though, survival was paramount, so fashion adapted. Incomplete loops of gold became common, while necklaces might have a single link of silver.

The morbid truth, though, was that as the population collapsed, the survivors came to sit on huge caches of golden jewelry gathered from the dead. Today, stability is returning to Elfaivar, and as the country figures out how to build a functioning economy, gold is plentiful, and many workers are paid in weights of jewelry that would be a small fortune elsewhere.

A few groups of Elfaivarans—especially those among the Diaspora—make a point of wearing full golden loops as a symbol of being cut off from their culture's past. Likewise, in fraught negotiations, sometimes rivals will ceremonially don golden rings as a way of saying they don't intend any surprises.

avoid blooding ceremonies, with adulthood instead being achieved by proving one's understanding of some technology and devotion to the cult.

Their taboo only prohibits bare skin contact to metal, and as such they are fond of ornate kerchiefs and fine leather gloves. Forge workers have popularized garments with heavy padding over forearms and lower legs, and such accessories are common even among those who don't regularly work metal. Priests of the cult wear somewhat formless robes, but prefer ostentatious designs of vivid colors to catch the eye, especially when traveling among mainlanders.

Despite their exceptional grasp of modern technology, the steelmarked still hold many traditional violent customs. The cult has repeatedly raided the mainland, killing gnolls who speak out against them, and abducting children to convert to their faith. Steelmarked gnolls unnerve outsiders, as they seem to watch the world around them with more detachment, move less, even breathe less than they should.

Blessed Industry. You gain proficiency in Engineering, as well as in the tool or vehicle of your choice.

Metal Taboo. You believe only your draconic lord and those who have earned his blessing are worthy of the strength of metal. You try not to touch metal with your body directly. Gloves or kerchiefs are acceptable to insulate one from metal, and there is no shame in being wounded by someone else's metal.

Breaking Touch. Your people have developed the ability to break devices with a mere touch, even through a glove or other garment, which they see as a blessing and as proof of their lord's enduring guidance.

As a bonus action, you can touch an object with some mechanical complexity, such as a door, a lock, clock, ship rigging, steam engine, or animated construct.

If it is an unattended inanimate object, it breaks in a non-hazardous way. A door has to be shoved forcefully open, a lock falls apart, a timebomb stops ticking down, a ship loses its propulsion. If it's larger than 5 feet across, you only break a section of it, but repairs take at least an hour.

If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, or if you're trying to touch a creature, the creature can make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) to avoid your touch.

A mechanical creature touched this way takes 2d6 damage and its speed is reduced by half until the start of your next turn. The damage increases to 3d6 at 6th level, 4d6 at 11th level, and 5d6 at 16th level.

A firearm affected by breaking touch will automatically miss the next time it is fired, as if a natural 1 were rolled (which is a misfire with a nonmagical gun).

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Steel Endures. If you have obeyed the metal taboo for the past day, you have advantage on saving throws to resist poison and disease, and have resistance against poison damage. Additionally, double the amount of time you can go without food, water, and air.

Languages. You know Common, Gnoll, and one Beran language such as Draconic, Goblin, Minotaur, or Orc.

Backgrounds

Most backgrounds are still suitable to the Zeitgeist setting, though might warrant a few small changes. Guilds have fallen out of favor outside of Crisillyir and Drakr, so "guildmember" could be replaced with "factory worker." An "entertainer" might actually be a journalist, and the "charlatan" background could represent someone spying on behalf of a politician or industrialist.

Also, modern society and scholarship leads to a few new backgrounds.

Archaeologist

Though most eyes look to the future, the past fascinates you, and you have found wisdom in exploring the ruins of civilizations that fell to disaster, or that gave birth to today's world. Foremost in the public's consciousness are the prehistoric orcs known as the Ancients, who left massive stone edifices, fantastic golden treasures, and little else. But you might also study the Demonocracy, the brief philosopher state of Pala, pre-Malice Elfaivar, the magically unstable ruins of Methia, or any of the multitude of obscure peoples of the past. Perhaps some day you'll explore the planets above and the ruins of surely long-dead cultures there.

Ability Score Increase: +1 to Intelligence and one other ability score.

Skill Proficiencies: History, and either Arcana or Survival.

Tool Proficiencies: Cartographer's tools or navigator's tools.

Languages: One modern language and one historical language of your choice.

Suggested Equipment (cost 29 gp): A bullseye lantern, a miner's pick, traveler's clothes, a shovel, a two-person tent, a trinket recovered from a dig site.

Feature: Historical Knowledge. You can easily assess the monetary value of art objects that are more than a century old, and when you see ruins you can accurately ascertain who built them and for what purpose. Sometimes when you sleep near ruins, you faintly recall dreams of the people who lived there, which might guide you to where to search or dig.

Adventures and Advancement. Your archaeological finds earn you gratitude from scholars and researchers. When you donate a valuable object to a museum or library, you gain advantage on all ability checks made during Research downtime activities performed at that institution.

Archaeologist Connection

1. The museum curator who owes you a favor.
2. The sea captain with whom you've made profitable voyages.
3. The noble who believes you robbed their ancestral tomb.
4. The rival who is always one step ahead of you.
5. The vanished colleague who was close to a breakthrough.
6. The thief who was going to rob you but ended up fascinated by your work.
7. The rich one-time patron with a grudge against you.
8. The buffoonish but well-financed rival whose methods are clumsy and destructive.
9. The former partner who stole your map.
10. The inventor who will buy relics he thinks are keys to lost ancient technology.

Adventure Seed: Archaeologist

The Crystal Tomb. A Drakran project called the Chthonic Canal is excavating a hundred miles of tunnels to let ships navigate directly from the northern coast to the south, without having to travel around Danor. Thousands of prisoners with darkvision—mostly dwarves—work in subterranean camps, carving out the tunnel and assembling its locks. The PCs arrive shortly after a work crew of eight prisoners breached a chamber containing a mysterious crystalline temple, killed their overseers, and fled to the surface with all the gems they could carry. Though none of the prisoners were mages, the bodies of everyone they killed transformed and reanimated as a hideous tentacled undead.

Archaeologist Memento

1. A tablet with a fragment of the same poem in an archaic form of the languages of the Demonocracy and old Elfaivar, as well as unfamiliar pictograms of what appear to be hand signs.
2. A sealed clay flask, filled with liquid and painted with strange, skeletal humanoids around a crescent moon.
3. Half of a large stone key inscribed with pre-Malice iconography of the Clergy.
4. A solid gold arrow which you discovered embedded in the fossilized skull of an unfamiliar beast.
5. The charred case of an antique calligraphy kit with a brass nameplate that reads "Wm. Miller."
6. A typed letter from a representative of the Vsadni Tzertze pointing out flaws in a paper you published about the fifth-century B.O.V. Drakr.
7. A wooden case containing a map to a ruin or dungeon, with the initials "RR" penned in the corner, found at a pawn shop.
8. A graven idol of an unknown god, carved from purple stone and partially encased in black volcanic rock.
9. An inherited, found, or stolen diary which once belonged to a great treasure hunter. It contains the answers to several riddles required to access some site, but no information about the site's location.
10. A signature weapon or tool given by a mentor or old rival.

Faction Agent

You served—and may still serve—one of the organizations trying to influence events in Lanjyr, either a public entity like the Royal Homeland Constabulary of Risur, a criminal organization such as the Kuchnost that undermines government power through blackmail and misinformation, or a secret society that the public only knows through rumors and whispers, like the alleged Mandatu Mortuum, which seek to help the dead hold onto their power. For more information, your Narrator might suggest one of the conspiracies described in Chapter Eight: A Model of Obscurity, or create a new one for your campaign.

Ability Score Increase: +1 to Charisma and one other ability score.

Skill Proficiencies: Stealth, and either Culture or Deception.

Languages: Two languages of your choice.

Suggested Equipment (Cost 5 sp): Badge or emblem of your faction, a copy of a seminal faction text, a code book, a set of common clothes.

Feature: Safe Haven. Efforts taken by your group shield your secret activities from most blanket divinations unless the caster specifically suspects you, and you cannot be magically compelled to confess the organization's secrets. Additionally, in most large settlements and cities you can subtly signal to others in your organization to get access to a hidden safe house, free room and board, or assistance in finding information. Other agents won't risk their lives for you or risk revealing their identities, at least not before you've put in the work to establish a rapport.

Adventures or Advancement. When your plots begin to show fruit, your fellow agents notice. After you've had several successes at advancing your cause, you gain a contact with an agent who is highly-placed in society and can open doors for you. In addition, you gain the services of a low-level agent (your agent has the statistics of an NPC spy).

Faction Agent Connection

1. A former partner who defected to another organization.
2. A technologist or alchemist who frequently brings you new inventions to try out.
3. An ally you believe is a double agent.
4. Someone you're blackmailing.
5. A respected rival: you both know each others' true identities but haven't revealed them.
6. A mysterious figure who meets you at midnight to receive your field reports.
7. A local gossip who gives you useful information, but doesn't know that you're working for your faction.
8. One of your parents or parental figures, an admired agent whom you are always compared to.
9. The family member of a fellow agent who died on a mission.
10. A local gang leader who is aligned with your faction and takes orders from you.

Faction Agent Memento

1. A stack of mass-printed broadsheets filled with conspiracy theories about your faction.
2. A small ceraunic wave receiver you use to pick up transmissions—your faction's, and those from the Clear Waters.
3. The dossier you compiled about your superior in case you needed to blackmail them.
4. A thank you letter you found in your handwriting, which you don't remember sending, that was returned to you for insufficient postage.
5. Maps of several high-security locations, including hidden passages.
6. A letter of introduction to someone who died mysteriously before you could meet them.
7. A dagger with a hidden compartment in the pommel.
8. A code book that allows you to decode the messages of a rival faction.
9. Documents which give you a false identity.
10. A signet ring you discovered; the inside of the band has an inscription that has been scraped away.

Investigator

You might be a criminologist on the city payroll, a public prosecutor, part of a military tribunal, or a private amateur whom the local authorities rely on to help solve crimes. Consider what case might have most affected you, and whether you are still in contact with any of the victims or perpetrators.

Ability Score Increases: +1 to Intelligence and one other ability score.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, and either Insight or Perception.

Tool Proficiencies. Chemist's tools.

Suggested Equipment (cost 11 gp): A uniform and/or a badge, a set of manacles lined with a gold wire (to prevent teleportation), a magnifying glass.

Feature: On the Case. In any community you visit, you can easily locate local outposts of city watch or similar organizations, as well as dens of criminal activity. As long as you don't abuse the privilege, you can call upon someone (such as a Police Officer, see page 231) to help you on official business, providing enough authority to get most suspects to agree to be questioned (and maybe come in "for a few follow-up questions" when you intend to reveal that you've solved the case). This ally will defend themselves if attacked, but isn't loyal enough to go along if they know a fight is imminent.

Adventures and Advancement. After you solve a case or two, your exploits may make it to the papers, and would-be masterminds might taunt you with crimes intended to thwart your powers of deduction.

Investigator Connection

1. Your landlord who hid a witness for you.
2. A mortician willing to let you poke and prod the cadavers.
3. An urchin who keeps you apprised of the goings-on in one city district.
4. A highly-placed government bureaucrat who smoothed things over when you stretched the law to catch a criminal.
5. A criminal who got away and keeps in touch as a pen pal.
6. Another investigator who resents that you made them look like a fool by solving one of their cases.
7. A friend who thinks you haven't discovered their secret.
8. A criminal informant you keep having to get out of trouble.
9. The neighbor who seems too perfectly innocent and friendly.
10. A romantic flame who is in deep with the wrong crowd.

Investigator Memento

1. A photochemical camera plate depicting a suspect you could never identify.
2. A restraining order from someone you falsely accused.
3. A death threat you received warning you to stop an investigation.
4. An invitation to the wedding of a person you exonerated.
5. A notebook on the gait patterns and footprints of different humanoids.
6. The rare minerals you collected when an injury kept you from going out and solving crimes.
7. Your conspiracy board, stringing yarn between coincidences you think must be connected.
8. A piece of clothing you wore on your first case that you think of as a good luck charm.
9. A collection of encyclopedias from around Lanjyr published just after the Great Eclipse, each missing pages that would have held entries about something starting with "OB."
10. A true crime novel about the murders of the minorly infamous Ragman of Flint.

Adventure Seed: Investigator

The Mandala Effect. A strange madness is spreading in the Risuri colony of Kellandia after a recent storm: hundreds of people all claim Risur is at war with Elfaivar, even remembering the same specific details of battles and casualties. Many think their city's governor has turned traitor, and are preparing for revolution. The PCs discover an arcano-scientist researching the energy of the plane Teykfa murdered, his laboratory covered in paintings of Seedist mandalas, and his research notes missing.

Riven Mind

During the Great Eclipse you were drawn deeply into a hivemind, such that you lost your sense of self entirely. When the hivemind ended, you had to rebuild your identity, and even now decades later you sometimes feel like nothing mattered as much as when you were bonded so fully with the minds of others. You have a knack for understanding people's thoughts, but likely have drifted through life, perpetually disappointed by the shallowness of all your relationships, accomplishing little of note. Consider what has shaken you out of this long fog to begin adventuring. What do the people who were part of the same hivemind think about you, and do you keep in touch?

Ability Score Increases: +1 to Wisdom and one other ability score.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, and either Culture or Persuasion.

Tool Proficiencies: Two of your choice.

Suggested Equipment (cost 1 gp): Common clothes, a winter blanket.

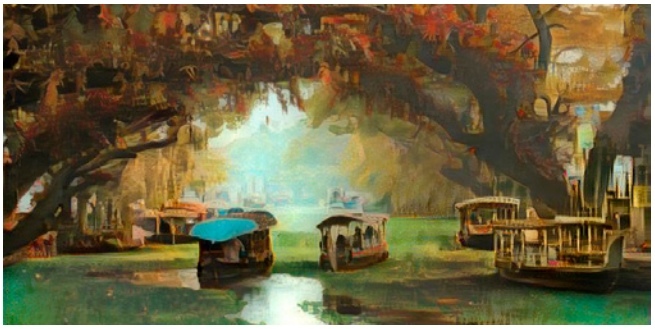
Feature: Whispers of the Many. Some lingering telepathic potential causes the emotions of those around you to bleed into your own, and it took a long time to learn how to keep them at bay (or perhaps you are still afflicted in the presence of crowds). You find it easy to blend into crowds and not appear out of place, regardless of your attire, as long as you don't draw attention to yourself. You can extend this same inconspicuous sense of conformity to creatures traveling with you.

Sometimes you can sense who in a large gathering feels out of place. You can focus and try to deliberately receive these epiphanies, but there is no guarantee you'll learn anything.

Adventures and Advancement. When you encounter creatures which were once part of your hive mind, you gain a bit of your old sense of purpose. Once you have met several such beings, you may gain a special form of telepathy which works at any distance, but only with your former hive mates.

Adventure Seed: Riven Mind

The Riven Map. A friend of the PCs who escaped a hivemind during the Great Eclipse has long had hazy memories of burying treasure and seeing a reflection in a golden plate that wasn't her own. By chance she meets a deva who also was trapped in the same hivemind, who has similar memories. They realize that each person who was in the hivemind might have a piece of a treasure map, but before they can set out in search of others, the deva is murdered. The friend asks the PCs to help her locate everyone else who was in the hivemind, to track down the riches.



Riven Mind Connection

1. A strong-willed member of your former hive who pushed the group to commit cruel acts.
2. A mysterious telepathic voice which sometimes speaks to you.
3. A valued and talented friend, once a member of your hive, now mired in despair.
4. A person seeking vengeance for an act your hivemind committed.
5. A former boss who feels responsibility for you.
6. The scholar who nursed you to health in the difficult months after your severing.
7. A sage, once a member of your hive, who provides you information.
8. The beautiful mind which you loved but never met in person.
9. A person who was only a child when they were caught in your hivemind, and whom you took care of because all their family shunned them.
10. Someone who claims to be a close friend from before you were in the hive mind; you have no memory of them from that time.

Riven Mind Memento

1. A collection of trinkets that seem to be made of flesh but never need to eat, which respond somehow to your thoughts.
2. Several sets of artisans' tools from various failed careers.
3. Scrawled notes of hivemind memories which are now vanished like dreams.
4. A vivid memory of a murder, with no clue of where it occurred or to whom.
5. A news clipping about the rampage your hivemind undertook.
6. A hoop skirt or broad-brimmed hat, part of a failed social distancing scheme.
7. An ant farm (strangely soothing!).
8. A sketchbook in which you draw the faces you see in your dreams.
9. A piece of someone else's flesh that remains merged into yours and sometimes feels alien sensations.
10. Two syringes filled with silvery fluid. You used to have a third one, and when you injected yourself with it, someone else took over your body for a few minutes.



Egregores

Egregores, also known as hiveminds or gestalts, are spectral entities of psionic power, forged from several intelligent creatures' minds and souls joined together. Such entities may have always existed, but they came to prominence during the Great Eclipse.

During that time, strange psychic magic caused any sufficiently large mass of people in close proximity to slowly link their minds together, unifying in opinion and gradually in behavior. Social distancing procedures were necessary to avoid having one's free will sapped, and in some rare cases large hiveminds actually manifested eerie thoughtflesh and trapped people inside a hideous monster until their minds could be freed.

The phenomenon ended after the Great Eclipse, except for in a few psychically charged places. Since then scholars have worked to understand and classify these beings. **Egregore** is a generic term. **Hiveminds** are unwilling egregores, which often are dangerous. **Gestalts** are groups that willingly connect their minds, forsaking individuality for some shared purpose.

Some theories of thaumaturgy see the divine magic of religions, and more obscure forms of magic such as Risur's rites of rulership, as all stemming from the same power of shared belief or collective thought.

For more information, see the bestiary entry on Egregores (page 246).

Character Themes & Feats

Choose one of the twelve themes below to provide a quick hook to link your character to the Zeitgeist campaign setting. Themes don't have a mechanical benefit, but can help your Narrator plan what sorts of adventures will appeal to you.

Each theme offers an associated feat for characters who are especially committed to the ideals of the theme. As you gain levels, you could potentially even take multiple theme feats. These feats may be selected as part of your normal allocation of feats.

- **Courseur.** Swift-moving innovators pursuing progress no matter the cost.
- **Docker.** Bohemian manual laborers who are also artists and performers.
- **Gunsmith.** Designer and wielder of custom firearms.
- **Martial Scientist.** Educated and analytical warrior.
- **Ottoplismist.** Political partisan whose strong loyalty can magically compel obedience.
- **Skyseer.** Folk prophet who see the future in the stars.
- **Sophist.** Philosopher whose beliefs can affect the nearby world.
- **Spirit Medium.** Person who can contact and control spirits of the dead.
- **Technologist.** Designer of small contraptions and complex devices.
- **Telemachian.** Hero of a war far from home.
- **Tropezaro.** Survivalists and environmentalists dedicated to improvisation and guerrilla tactics.
- **Vekeshi Mystic.** Member of a vigilante sect that defends the weak and punishes the powerful and cruel.



Courseur

The concept of *courseur* originated as a Danoran philosophy of battle tactics. Assess a challenge, and if it can be defeated, confront it at speed. If you cannot defeat it, route around it. If you *must* defeat it, keep on the move as you assemble the force necessary to accomplish your mission. Elite soldiers developed techniques of smooth movement across random terrain, and translated their philosophy from military strategy to all sorts of other endeavors.

When the military became discredited in Danor after Eloise Duffet's coup, courseurs found new paths to power. The intellectual nation's martial leadership encouraged officers to seek academic positions, and soon academic institutions integrated agility training into their physical fitness regimens. In cluttered cities like Beaumont and Cherage, where new buildings rise above historical structures, people marveled at the sight of courseurs dashing across rooftops, leaping alleys, clambering up rain gutters, and sprinting fearlessly through the tedious congestion of roadways and rail lines.

Playing a Courseur

As a courseur, you are likely indomitable and self-reliant, and encourage others to be so as well. But you aren't necessarily a loner. Many courseurs are researchers in science, engineering, and magic. Courseur also has a strong crossover appeal with followers of the philosophy of **muktism** (page 146).

Certainly, a fair number of courseurs are criminals, smugglers, and pirates, sharing insights in evading embargoes and tax collectors to get people what they need. Plays on the word "corsair" make their way into a lot of popular Danoran theater and literature. Courseur-inspired art is popular and transgressive, and includes many tales of adventure in alien worlds or using technologies not yet possible, often with wild optimism, though some of the most compelling carry a sense of anxiety about going too far.

New Feat: Brook No Delay

You move through a battlefield with inspiring grace. As long as you're not encumbered or wearing heavy armor, you gain the following benefits.

You have a climb speed equal to your base speed. If you fall intentionally while moving, determine the damage you take as if you'd fallen a distance shortened by 10 feet times your proficiency bonus.

When you have a running start, add your proficiency bonus to the number of feet of your high jump, and five times your proficiency bonus to the number of feet of your long jump distance.

Whenever you Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Hide, one ally who can see you can perform the same action on their next turn without spending an action.

More Information

You might learn to weave magic into your movement and take the Wayfarer Cirqueliste prestige class (page 224). Rumors tell of a cadre of circus performers who use their travels throughout the continent as a way to conceal various illicit activities, and whose dragonfly-winged leader Tiljann is quick with a teleportation ritual.

Docker

Flint's industrial docks—with their conflux of peasant workers, educated engineers, fortune-seeking immigrants, and hopeful refugees—are famous for spawning an unorthodox social movement. Graffiti artists brighten soot-cloaked warehouses with colorful murals and boastful self-portraits. Dancers and musicians bolster moods in breezy bars, while amateur philosophers giddy on fey pepper entertain drunken teamsters with humorous moral puzzles that often mock public figures.

This "docker" movement—a working class, bohemian mix of art and philosophy united through the shared toil of city living—spread by ship to every port of Lanjyr, creating an international grapevine of gossip, trade, and revolution. Every docker knows what it's like to be "the little guy," and shares a commitment to making a mark on culture regardless, usually through art and through pushing for social change.

Playing a Docker

The docker spirit is not limited to those who perform in public; it extends to anyone who does hard work for low wages and also appreciates intelligent art for its sublime beauty. The worse conditions get for the workers in factories, the more they turn to dockers for relief from their fatigue. And when things get heated, every good docker needs to be able to handle themselves in a scrap.

Sometimes a docker gets in over their head, and with a little help from sympathetic bar owners or police officers they'll drop out of the scene and find a new safer career. In this way, you might find dockers spreading their ideas to pockets of city slums and out in rural farmlands. A famous song tells of a graffiti artist who found her way to painting cathedrals in Crisillyir, and of course everyone knows the legendary Rock Rackus's claims of flying to the moon and cuckolding the fey king of the Unseen Court.

As a docker, perhaps you'll inspire great heroics, or perhaps you'll make a small difference in your community. Either way, people should know that they can rely on you in a bind. Flint in particular remembers how dockers helped defend the city during the Great Eclipse, but voices of authority have started pushing for crackdowns, claiming that these artful anarchists have begun to act with impunity.

New Feat: Docker's Jank

In a band, every musician has to know his bandmates' parts in case they need to switch places or pick up the slack. Choose up to four allies; you may change your chosen allies if you spend a few hours training with them. You and those allies can each use Help as a bonus action, but only to aid you or one of your chosen allies. Once a character uses this ability, he or she must take a short or long rest before doing so again.

Additionally, as a bonus action you can shout a line from an inspiring song to grant an ally a Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. The die becomes a d8 at 5th level, a d10 at 10th level, and a d12 at 15th level. This functions as the bard ability except that after you use this ability once, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

You are proficient with one type of musical instrument and with vehicles (water).

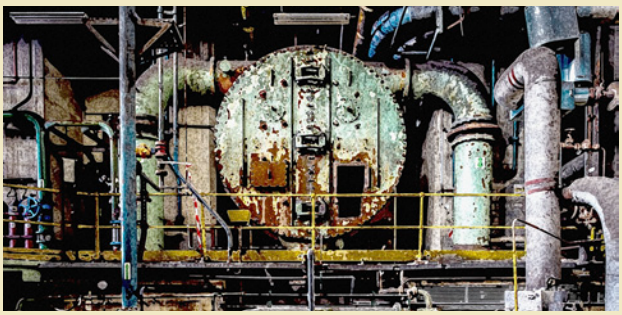


More Information

At higher level, you might take the Notorious Celebrity prestige class (page 218), having gained enough prestige or infamy to affect your foes by reputation alone.

Adventure Seed: Docker

Unstoppable Motion Machine. In the city of Cherage, a massive docker protest surrounds a manufactory producing armed constructs, of a sort meant to quell civil unrest and kill protesters. The PCs are traveling by monorail on the other side of the city when a friend from among the local dockers dashes onto their car just as it pulls away from the station. He has schematics of a new unstoppable juggernaut the factory is secretly building. He says he overheard that at sunset—in two hours—the mad technologist intends to test his invention on the protesters. He's being pursued by courseur goons of the inventor, who follow the party by rail, on foot, in carriage, and by airship as they race to stop the massacre.





Gunsmith

Knowledge of primitive alchemical fusils has existed for centuries, but these weapons were long considered inferior to magic. Danoran inventor Amielle Latimer refined fusils, which came to be colloquially called "guns," and by the Great Eclipse these weapons were ubiquitous among civilians and soldiers alike. But for some people, these killing tools are key to their identity, perhaps symbolizing the ascent of the common man over the aristocrat, or representing a philosophy of self-defense and self-reliance.

True gunsmiths are not content simply to purchase and practice with guns. They tweak and tinker with their own refinements, and whenever two such craftsmen cross paths they bargain and deal for each other's secrets, especially those that mix spellcraft with metallurgy or chemistry.

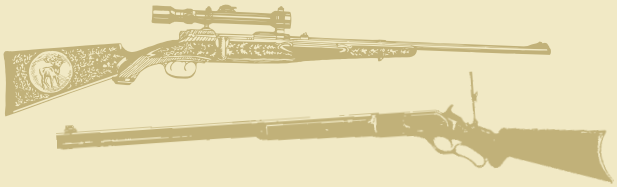
Playing a Gunsmith

Not all gunsmiths devote their combat training to wielding firearms; some merely romanticize their deadly purity. More often, though, gunsmiths practice endlessly to improve their aim, and try to learn as many trick shots as possible to prove the superiority of their chosen killing device.

You may decorate your weapons with baroque inlays and carvings, or maybe you take a bleaker view, rejecting any form of art and poetry. You just know guns are damned good at killing people, and that life's as good as worthless when a bullet costs less than a mug of beer.

Adventure Seed: Gunsmith

I Am Not a Gun. Foreign gunsmith-philosophers have come to the city of Seobriga for a Drakran cultural festival and arms exposition, hosted in an old sprawling draconic palace. Famous thinkers from both nations hold a series of unsympathetic debates and retrospectives about Ber's poor naval showing in the Elfaivaran Reclamation Crisis three years ago. But the PCs become trapped when a division of disgruntled veterans seize the palace, arm themselves with experimental weapons on display, and take hostages. They accuse the government of sending them to war and then abandoning them like a spent gun once the battle was over, and threaten to kill hostages unless their long list of demands are met. Do the PCs run, try to debate, side with their captors, or fight back?



In Drakr, a gunsmith's ability to design a firearm evokes the same reverence as legendary smiths who forged enchanted battle axes, swords, and warhammers. Devoted gunsmiths seek to create weapons worthy of passing down to their descendants for centuries.

In Crisillyir, the embrace of gunsmithing was driven by Ottoplismists, who rejected the Clergy's old claim that guns were infernal because Danorans invented them. Now it has become popular to style the stocks and holsters of firearms to evoke Clericist deities.

New Feat: The Man with Two Guns is God

You have discovered the coolest fighting style in the world. You are proficient with gunsmithing tools and with all firearms. Whenever you take a long rest, choose two firearms in your possession to maintain. Those weapons suffer no mishap chance for the next day.

If you are wielding two weapons, when you use the Attack action and attack with a one-handed weapon, you can use a bonus action to attack with a second weapon if that weapon is a one-handed firearm. You can reload firearms even if you have a weapon in both hands. If you are holding two firearms, you can reload both with a single action or bonus action.

After you hit or miss with a firearm, your target cannot make opportunity attacks until the start of your next turn.

You can draw and stow one-handed firearms without using your "object interaction" for the turn.

Additionally, during a short rest you can tinker on a firearm, using raw materials (i.e., directly spending money, without needing to buy accessories) to apply any of the firearm upgrades detailed on page 81. You can transfer an upgrade between weapons without needing to expend any materials.

More Information

At higher level, you might take the Mad Shootist prestige class (page 216), experimenting with freeze rays, rocket launchers, and the like.



Martial Scientist

In the war academies of Danor, students speak of combat like a science. They practice forms and maneuvers, but also write theses about renowned warriors and craft theorems regarding the mechanics of swordplay, unarmed combat, and suppressive small arms fire. Once, Danor honored the graduates of these battle colleges like other nations laud great poets and sculptors, but Eloise Duffet's military coup tempered the nation's enthusiasm for its martial expertise.

Nevertheless, the curriculum's efficacy led other nations to found similar schools, such as the Banhaman Academy in Risur's capital Slate, which has a reputation for elite siege engineers and artillerists. The Battalion outside of Flint trains the best wilderness forces in Lanjyr, while the College of Divine Trials in the Crisillyiri city Sid Minos teaches faith, fervor, and the mental and physical vulnerabilities of countless monsters, both terrestrial and extraplanar.

In Drakr, emphasis is given to testing the physiological and psychological limits of endurance. The lone war college in Ber has a vast library of battle songs from past generations of tribal warriors, which according to a disputed theory will inspire the courage and attack accuracy of soldiers.

Despite the sense that "martial science" is a modern invention, the return of the gulmohar in Elfaivar led to the resurrection of a pre-Malice school of war, Keataram or "The Palace." Elfaivarans eager to secure their homeland have looked to long-forgotten fighting techniques, and in one of the oddest developments of international cooperation in recent years, Danor's *Jierre Sciens d'Arms* martial academy has exchanged teachers with *Keataram*, offering insight into modern technology in exchange for training in the use of martial magic.

Adventure Seed: Martial Scientist

Vagabonds Under a Mirror Moon. The final exams of Flint's academy of martial science, the Battalion, take them into the city's Cloudwood district on the Night of the Mirror Moon, where they will have until dawn to apply their skills in a mock rescue mission in the Dreaming. They are accompanied by a skyseer with a novel timepiece with no moving parts and expensive magic items that can hold fey at bay. A tropezaro who belongs to the Beran gang La Liga de Oro enlists the PCs to follow the students into the Dreaming and steal their magic. But this is the first Night of the Mirror Moon since the Great Eclipse, and the PCs and the students find themselves not merely in the Dreaming, but on a new plane each hour. They'll have to work together with their quarry to get home safely before dawn.

Playing a Martial Scientist

Students of the war academies bring reason to the savagery of war. You'll have studied anatomy and performed autopsies to learn vulnerabilities of the body, debated theorems about the most effective angles of attack and defense, and taken time to ponder the political considerations of mortal conflict.

Every graduate is required to produce a thesis, expanding the body of martial knowledge, often with elaborate names such as *The Wounding Effectiveness of Stealthy Singular Rapier Contrasted with a Twin Strike of Dual Long Swords*. Despite the intense research, that particular thesis led to no real advancements. However, every Beran officer is required to read a brief treatise titled simply *How Not to Get Shot*, which is seen as a seminal work in the field of not getting shot. Consider what your thesis was.

New Feat: Martial Studies

Research is important for science and for combat. If you don't know just the right fighting technique, you're pretty sure someone else has published a thesis about it.

You gain proficiency in one martial melee and one martial ranged weapon.

Additionally, you can make limited use of tricks from the Savant class (page 45). You learn two savant tricks—typically *committee defense aegis* and *experimental flourish*—and can acquire other techniques in your travels.

You can spend a bonus action to prepare a trick you know, using the same mechanics as a Savant. However, after you do this a number of times equal to your proficiency modifier, you cannot do so again until you finish a short rest.

If you are a Savant with this feat, simply add the two tricks you picked to the list of tricks you know. You can prepare them as you would any other tricks.

You can also learn additional tricks by finding a copy of the thesis they wrote. If you have a copy of a thesis, when you complete a long rest you can replace one of the tricks you know with the trick detailed in the thesis. See Martial Scientist Theses (page 210) for a list of prominent theses and their associated tricks.

A Note about Martial Scientists

The Narrator should plan opportunities for the PC to interact with other martial scientists and learn techniques from them. In more freeform games, the Narrator should make sure to provide clear indications for how and where a martial scientist PC can find others to learn from. For games with more structured plots, though, this could entail teasing that an antagonist has a personal technique, which acts as a sort of "treasure" for defeating them. Or perhaps the adventure is about defeating a monster with a particularly dangerous attack, but the PC knows of a martial scientist who has just the right technique to defend against the beast, and who might be willing to share it if the party does them a favor.

More Information

At higher level, you might take the Polyhistor prestige class (page 219), using your deep well of martial knowledge to craft unique fighting techniques in the heat of battle. The legendary Henri Jierre who founded the *Jierre Sciens d'Arms* is said to have never needed more than three sword strokes to defeat any foe.

Ottoplismist

The Ottoplismo movement arose from a theological schism in the Clergy faith, driven by people in Crisillyir organizing to defend against fiends unleashed during the Great Eclipse. Ottoplismo today is a proud alliance of military, industry, and government, all structured as subordinate to the state religion.

The name comes from the eight deities executed in "god trials" during the Great Eclipse, whom Ottoplismists (sometimes called "Ottos" as shorthand) believe were unjustly punished. Ottos embrace traditional Clericist values of duty, faith, and self-improvement, but believe they are reimagining them for the modern age, criticizing pacifism and mercy to rivals as tantamount to betraying your people.

Above all, Ottoplismists reject the idea so common in this new age that people of many cultures need to "learn from their differences." To them, this is a threat, because one's culture might be subsumed without a fight. The same way that prayer and faith defends against demonic temptation, loyalty to one's people is the first line of defense, and an Ottoplismist's loyalty is rewarded with divine blessing.

Playing an Ottoplismist

You'll want to be familiar with the roster of eight martyred deities that your movement reveres (see Denominational Rift, page 72).

Many Ottos wear a pin or decorate their clothing with an icon called a "fasces": eight sticks bound together, with a stylized fish hook emerging from one end. This represents both Trigenes's link with the eight martyred gods, and the idea of unity producing strength. A single stick can be easily broken, but they are sturdier when bound together.



New Feat: Strength through Authority

As a bonus action, you can call upon creatures to demonstrate their loyalty to you and your cause. You and up to eight other creatures that can see or hear you can volunteer to be temporarily bonded together; if more volunteer, you intuitively choose which eight. Then, if at least one creature volunteers, choose yourself or one of those creatures to be the focus of the bond.

Each creature in the bond gains temporary hit points equal to your level plus your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier. These temporary hit points last up to one minute.

For the next one minute, whenever the person who is the focus of the bond takes damage or fails a saving throw, you are aware of this and can choose one of the creatures bonded to it (including yourself) to be "martyred." You then transfer the damage or the effect of the failed saving throw to the martyr, ignoring any resistances or immunities they might have. After someone serves as a martyr this way, the bond ends, but the temporary hit points persist.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.



Skyseer

Skyseers are folk prophets of Risur who observe the subtle connections between the movements of the night sky and the affairs of this world. They were respected for their wisdom and guidance, and as Risur's population swelled with immigrants from around the region, the reliable rituals of the skyseers helped unify people of diverse religious backgrounds.

Around the time the Danoran industrial revolution began two centuries ago, the clarity of skyseer prophecies began to fade, and with it their prominence in Risuri culture. But two short years before the Great Eclipse, the aged skyseer **Nevard Sechim** delivered his legendary prophecy of the three ravens, which protected the city of Flint from devastation and perhaps helped avert the end of the world.

After the year-long eclipse ended, the stars returned, but they were changed. Today the skyseers are only just learning to interpret their new signs, yet their visions are gradually growing clearer. More and more skyseers are accepting modern technology; many view Lanjyr's great telescopes as another tool to aid in divination. Other skyseers are joining the ranks of titanist zealots inspired by the newly active fey titans, gathering around Nevard's Henge in Flint to perform rituals.

The people of Risur have renewed respect and trust in these folk prophets, and many young people around the world aspire to learn their secrets and help foresee the course of this new age.

Skyseer: The Cosmology in Brief

Chapter Five explains all the planets and how they influence the world, but for first-time readers, here's what you should know.

- The influence of **Jiese** sparked the industrial revolution.
- The parallel worlds of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate seem to be tied to the moon named **Av**.
- The planet **Ostea** allows anyone to perform minor divinations with an offering of blood.
- The auric asteroids of **Urim** cause rings of gold to foil teleportation and planar travel.
- When making History checks, sometimes you get a vision of distant **Ascetia**, which grants you a bonus.
- **Mavisha** hinders divination on islands.
- **Amrou** lets traditional folk superstitions actually work, like salt being a barrier to the undead.
- And when times are desperate, **Caeloon** may grant you a buoying second wind.

Playing a Skyseer

Those who study to be skyseers usually have a close mentor among the druids of Risur. Apprenticed to an elder skyseer, they learn the names of the stars and planets, their patterns and influence. Though precise visions are rare, it is still indisputable that magic of travel works better under the full moon, and that any ship that sets sail the night when Jiese enters retrograde within the constellation of the Mad Pirate will face great misfortune before it reaches its destination.

Skyseers favor the night: with a glance at the starry sky, a skyseer can tell time as precisely as any clock. Most Risuri ship's captains won't sail beyond sight of shore without a skyseer aboard, and the prestige they enjoy at sea is spreading to the navies of other nations. And throughout Risur, every family, village, and organization of any prominence extends hospitality to skyseers—as long as they keep confidential any prophecies that might apply to their host's future.

You should definitely read the section on The Planetary System (page 183), and might be interested in Skyseers Against Industry (page 185).

New Feat: Skyseer Vision

As a bonus action, you choose yourself or an ally within reach and give that creature insight into future actions. The creature chooses one of the following—attack roll, saving throw, or ability check—and then rolls 1d20. One time in the next hour, when the creature would make the same type of roll, they may use the previously rolled result. If the creature has advantage or disadvantage, only the first roll is replaced.

After using this ability, you must take a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Once per day you can detect planar energy, similar to the spell *detect evil and good*, except that you can detect creatures from other planes and planets, and you can follow their trails like a dog follows scents. Trails fade within a few moments if a creature was only briefly on another plane (such as an Elfaivaran using their fey step ability), but most creatures native to other planes leave trails that linger for hours, perhaps even days. If a creature has been on this world for months, though, it loses a distinctive otherworldly scent.

As part of a long rest during which the night sky is visible, you may focus your mind on the future and receive a prophetic dream regarding one question. Upon completion of your rest you awaken with insights into the future as though you had cast a *divination* spell, which you receive in the form of imagery that requires interpretation.

More Information

At higher level, you might take the Applied Astronomist prestige class (page 213), letting you manifest the powers of the different planets in the night sky. Perhaps you'll brave the dangerous peak of Cauldron Hill, which still is a nexus of powerful visions.

Sophist

The country of Drakr values robust philosophical debates and is best well known for **Heid Eschatol**, a doctrine that frames existence from the perspective of endings and encourages people to plan good endings. The most studied eschatologists can call upon a shared certainty of the world's eventual icy end, manifesting this belief into reality. They might with a touch halt the death of those whose time they did not feel was right, or through will alone conjure a vortex of deadly cold around them.

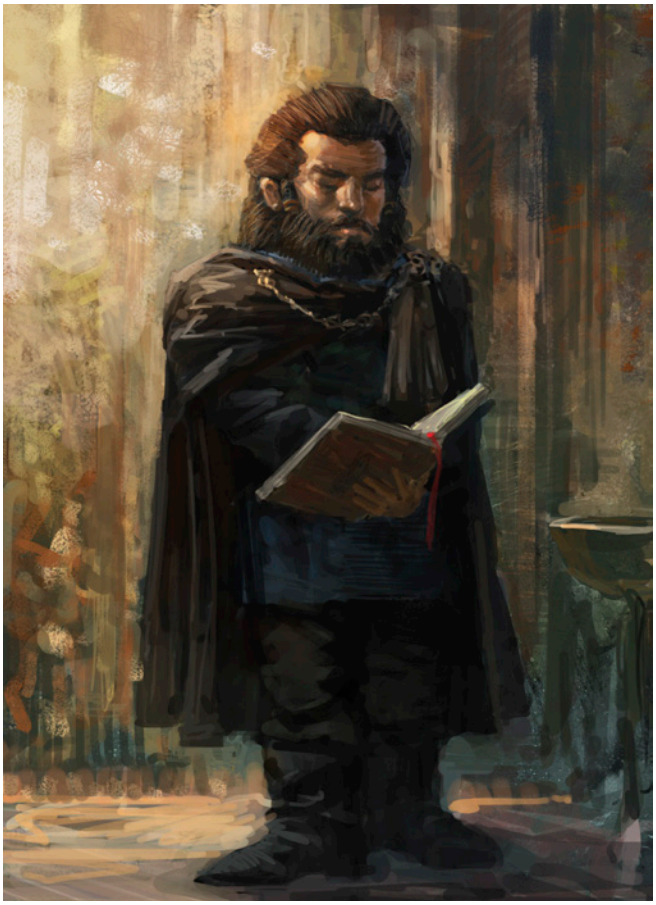
However, in the wake of a narrowly-averted apocalypse, the new age demands new ideas, and other philosophies are capturing the public consciousness. Like eschatologists before, these various sophists can wield the massed will of other believers to affect the physical world.

The two most common competing movements in Drakr are a brand of solipsistic nihilism called **Delkovich Nihisol**, and **Muktism**, a doctrine of transcendent libertarianism inspired by Elfaivaran philosophers.

Jaromir Delkovich questioned whether the world could even have survived the Great Eclipse. This tapped into the anxiety of many Drakrans who struggled with survivor's guilt, especially those in the north who witnessed apocalyptic devastation. Delkovich advises people to be attentive to their own psychology, which is the only thing anyone can be certain of, and the only thing they can control. The purpose of existence for each person is to decide what matters to them. However, many adherents only paid attention to the surface idea of doubting reality.

Isobel Travers is not Drakran, but an Elfaivaran woman who was enslaved in Danor for the first half of her life. She was rescued and returned to her people's homeland, but felt out of place, having gone from being a trophy bride to being treated like a sheltered child. After the Great Eclipse, she published her treatise on the Elfaivaran concept of *mukti*, a form of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release.

Muktists promote three goals. First: freedom from shame by living virtuously. Second: freedom from toil by achieving material prosperity. And third: freedom from desire by experiencing and understanding as much of the world as possible. This is often simplified into a fourth informal goal: freedom from the constraints of government.



Playing a Sophist

Eschatologists are likely to give regular thought to the future, especially to life's thresholds and endings. Every eschatologist regularly updates their will, and pays heed to their companions' desires in the event of untimely yet unavoidable deaths. Many are fascinated with extreme cold, which represents the icy end of the world that was averted during the Great Eclipse, thanks in part to the teachings of Heid Eschatol.

Solipsistic nihilists encourage others to put no faith in institutions, to be skeptical of everything, and to be attentive to one's own mind and emotions. Muktists frequently find themselves prone to travel, because they're often driven by a desire to experience the world and a desire to virtuously help others.

New Feat: Expression of Belief

Your philosophy can affect reality. You are proficient in the Culture skill and in the Dwarvish language.

Additionally, choose one of the following philosophies and gain its associated ability.

You can also spend a bonus action to grant that same ability to a creature you touch, which it must use in the next hour. After you grant the ability in this way, you cannot do so again until you complete a short rest. Granting the ability doesn't prevent you from using the ability yourself.

Eschatology. You are prepared to avoid bad endings. Once per hour when your hit points fall to 0, you may immediately stabilize. For the next round thereafter you cannot die, and damage you take doesn't cause you to start dying.

If you touch a creature to share your ability and that creature died in the past round, it is returned to life at 0 hit points, stable, and is treated as if it had failed no death saving throws. For the next round thereafter it cannot die, and damage it takes doesn't cause it to start dying.

Muktism. You can achieve brief transcendent freedom. Once per hour you may gain the benefit of *freedom of movement* for one round without needing to spend an action. During this time you have the Incorporeal Movement ability, and can move through creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If you end your turn inside an object, you take 5 (1d10) damage and are shunted to the nearest empty space.

Solipsistic Nihilism. You have clarity and control over your mind. Once per hour you can gain the benefits of *mind blank* for one round. During this time you can also ignore any effects that compel your actions or control your emotions.

More Information

At higher level, you might take the Logos prestige class (page 214), allowing your speech to alter reality. Or you might gather a sect around your particular interpretation of your philosophy.

You might be interested in other less prominent philosophies. Pre-modern cultures typically wedded religion and philosophy to ponder matters of virtue and metaphysics, so you could read On Religions and Deities (page 72) to learn about the gods of the Clergy, the druidic Old Faith, Guerro, and Seedism. Modern philosophies tend to more existential or political, as detailed in The Clash of Ideas in Drakr (page 146).

As a bridge between the two periods, the writings of the martyred thinker William Miller (page 119) encouraged skepticism and philosophical innovation. Miller's writings were highly influential on the famed Risuri king Baldrey Korrigan, who during the Great Eclipse wrote a modern interrogation and reexamination of Millerist philosophy (page 166).

Spirit Medium

The industrial revolution democratized many forms of power. With a gun, even the weakest person could kill the wealthy and well-equipped. Innovations like mechanical looms opened the way for mere factory workers to afford mass-produced amenities. Ceraunic cables spread news faster than governments could suppress it.

The new occult science of the spirit mediums has likewise disrupted the traditional power of the Clergy, who before could wield



the threat of damning one's soul in the afterlife to force the people of Crisillyir to be obedient and pious. Mediums in that nation sought to share the truth about spirits and souls, and their publications and magical techniques have spread to common folk across Lanjyr. They found especially fertile ground in Risur, whose own religious tradition—the Old Faith of the druids—had been in decline for decades.

Certainly, many mediums are simple enthusiasts who like to know trivia about spirits, and some are charlatans who prey on the bereaved. But a few have discovered how to contact the dead through a form of psionic meditation called a *séance*.

Playing a Spirit Medium

Contacting the dead can be dangerous. Attendants of a séance might discover secrets they weren't meant to know, or be traumatized when a pile of salt gains a face and shrieks to be released to the afterlife. Consider what your first séance was, and how it affected your view of the dead.

In Crisillyir, Ottoplismist inquisitors condemn mediums as a demonic threat to the faith, so many operate in secret. But in Risur, mediums have storefronts and will gladly wake the dead for a quick chat at the drop of a few coins. Risur's Royal Homeland Constabulary was perhaps the first law enforcement organization to retain the services of a medium for murder investigations, and others around the Avery Sea have followed suit.

This has led to some perverse innovations among killers, who have disseminated tricks to thwart mediums' talents. A body moved more than three miles from where it died loses its connection to the victim's spirit, and intense psychic activity can drown out the dead. Sufficient quantities of salt can drive the spirit away,

Adventure Seed: Spirit Medium

Secrets of the Dead. At a villa outside the city of Alais Primos, a medium who became famous hosting séances for grieving dignitaries asks for help after his daughter is murdered. The medium says her spirit told him that she'd been threatened by a group of Ottoplismist rabble-rousers who are politically protected. The medium's bodyguard meanwhile suspects one of the villa's old servants, an Elfaivaran man who was arrested for robbing his employer and just recently escaped. If the PCs investigate, they find the escaped prisoner is assisting an unlikely alliance of Ottoplismists and vekeshi mystics, whom he has convinced that the medium is actually a spy for a foreign power, using his séances to steal political secrets.

forcing a medium to search for some psychically resonant location it could take shelter in. And particularly vile assassins might have access to a vial of witchoil, a materialized essence of the Bleak Gate that can trap the soul of someone killed nearby.

Beyond the dead, mediums are sensitive to all manner of psychic manifestations, including egregores and various thoughtform creatures (see page 240). You may be recruited into military research projects into noetic magic, or feel yourself drawn to a location that seems to have a mind of its own.

New Feat: Unfinished Business

You possess a deep understanding of spirits and the ties that bind them to the mortal world.

With your urging, the spirit of a recently dead person will speak briefly with you. You can cast *speak with dead*. The body must be within three miles of where it died, and must not have died more than a day ago. You do not require a complete body as the ability speaks with the spirit and needs no corporeal connection. You can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

At the Narrator's prerogative, you could also use this power to communicate with uneasy spirits who have not yet moved on, regardless of how long ago they died.

Using this power against undead, or in any combat situation for that matter, is possible but very difficult. By expending this power as an action, you can control an undead creature you can see until the end of your next turn, as the *dominate monster* spell, if it fails a Wisdom save (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier). Alternatively, you can call up the spirit of a creature whose body you can see that died in the past five minutes. It does not receive a save to resist. Its spirit manifests in a space you choose within 25 feet of you, and performs a single attack of your choice as if it were still alive, then disappears.

More Information

At higher level, you might take the Urban Empath prestige class (page 221), gaining the power to communicate with the *genius loci* of cities, learning their secrets and calling upon their unique powers.

Technologist

Innovation is driven by those who tinker, invent, and create, and the greatest discoveries today are those in the field of arcanotechnology—or colloquially **arctech**, the wedding of machinery and magic. Even those who lack a talent with magic might collect, study, or simply nag every engineer and inventor they meet. Whether dabblers or professionals, these technologists often come up with ideas for devices that straddle the line between clever and impractical.

Many operate small shops, toiling in obscurity. Others find work serving their homelands' military needs, or accompanying adventurous expeditions around the world, hired so their ingenuity might solve problems no one can expect. Only a handful become rich, and an even smaller handful become famous.

One man who is both is gregarious industrialist Benedict Pemberton, who took the hoard he earned in Risur's manufactories and recruited thousands of clever engineers and mages to create a utopia for tinkerers in the gnoll city of Karch, on an island south of Ber.



Playing a Technologist

Be sure to read Progress and Innovation (page 75) to understand the state of technological and arctech development in different parts of the world.

Technologists tend to gather lots of disposable tools and weapons, so that they always have something handy in an unusual situation. Many make a point to learn a bit of magic or alchemy as well, though every technologist is inspired by a different vision of what technology can provide, and a different aesthetic sense.

Drakr is famed for its megaprojects, including turret batteries that can strike beyond the horizon, and the subterranean Chthonic Canal which will connect ships in the Avery Sea with the northern coast of Lanjyr. Danor, meanwhile, has a reputation for subtlety and trickery, especially since the restrictions of the Concordat have driven many of its technologists into hiding.

Crisillyir tends to lag, as the Clergy long punished tinkerers with holy flagellation, though a few famed creations have elaborate, cathedral-esque beauty. Elfaivar, though it lacks its own arcano-scientific scholarship, benefits from close ties to the colonies of Kellandia and Rationalis, and its inventions tend to mimic natural forms of animals and plants. Ber's technological reputation is one of humble reliability, often in fields of interest to everyday people.

And in Risur, Flint's industrial base made most Risuri citizens proudly confident in their mastery of arcanotechnology, though many of the city's worst disasters were caused by villains and their inventions. Traditionalists continue to see machinery as a threat to the nation's alliance with the Unseen Court in the Dreaming.

A Note about Yerasol Veterans

Too often the youth of a new generation are led by those who refuse to surrender the wars of the last generation. So it is with many veterans of the Yerasol Wars.

The islands of the Yerasol Archipelago were perhaps the most verdant, beautiful battleground in history. During two centuries of intermittent warfare, untold thousands of soldiers from Risur and Danor died among the windblown rainforests and flowered beaches of those isles, trying to protect their homelands' exceedingly prosperous plantations. Those who survived—the ones who didn't succumb to aberrant infections, crippling physical injuries, or unyielding mental trauma—often turned their wartime glory into profit or political clout.

Poets of the two nations memorialized the greatest acts of heroism from the Four Yerasol Wars, the last of which ended three decades ago. Many leaders today still cannot help but see Risur and Danor as enemies, and even those who didn't fight in those wars grew up with stories of two hundred years of animosity and bloodshed.

While these two nations have avoided open combat since the Great Eclipse, many people in positions of power today ache to return to what was left unfinished. Tensions seem low, but famed veterans of the Yerasol Wars make sure the public doesn't forget, funding parades and monuments. It is a point of great unease in Risur that Queen Iain is the first monarch not to fight in one of the Yerasol Wars since those conflicts began, and surely some aged warriors in secret would be quite eager to support a coup to remove her.

However, Queen Iain Waryeye has commanded the nation's technologists to devise technology that does not disturb the fey.

New Feat: Arctech Tinkerer

You are proficient in the Engineering skill and either smith's tools or tinker's tools.

Choose one gadget from the list available to the Gadgeteer fighter (see page 59). You have a basic codex with instructions to create that gadget. You can add more gadgets to your codex by learning from other inventors, spending one day of down time with that inventor's aid and spending 100 gp for the necessary materials.

Whenever you complete a short or long rest you can prepare one copy of any gadget you know how to make. If you prepare more gadgets, your previous gadgets cease to work. If you are also a fighter with the Gadgeteer archetype, the gadget from this feat stacks with the number you can prepare from your class.

Most gadgets can only be used once, then become inert. If a gadget calls for a saving throw, the DC is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

You also can cast a special version of *find familiar* as a ritual, requiring 10 gp of arcanotechnological parts, which must be assembled together into a pet contraption. The contraption uses the same list of beasts as *find familiar*, but it is a construct instead of a beast. It is resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine. It is immune to poison and psychic damage, and cannot be charmed, fatigued, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, or poisoned. It has darkvision out to 120 feet and understands your languages, but it cannot speak. If the contraption is reduced to 0 hit points, you can repair it by using this ritual again.

You can spend an action to place a gadget into your contraption, or to remove or swap a gadget you had previously integrated. Even if you can make more than one gadget at a time, your contraption can hold at most one. The contraption can then spend the appropriate action, bonus action, or reaction to use the gadget, using your attack bonus or other stats to determine its efficacy.

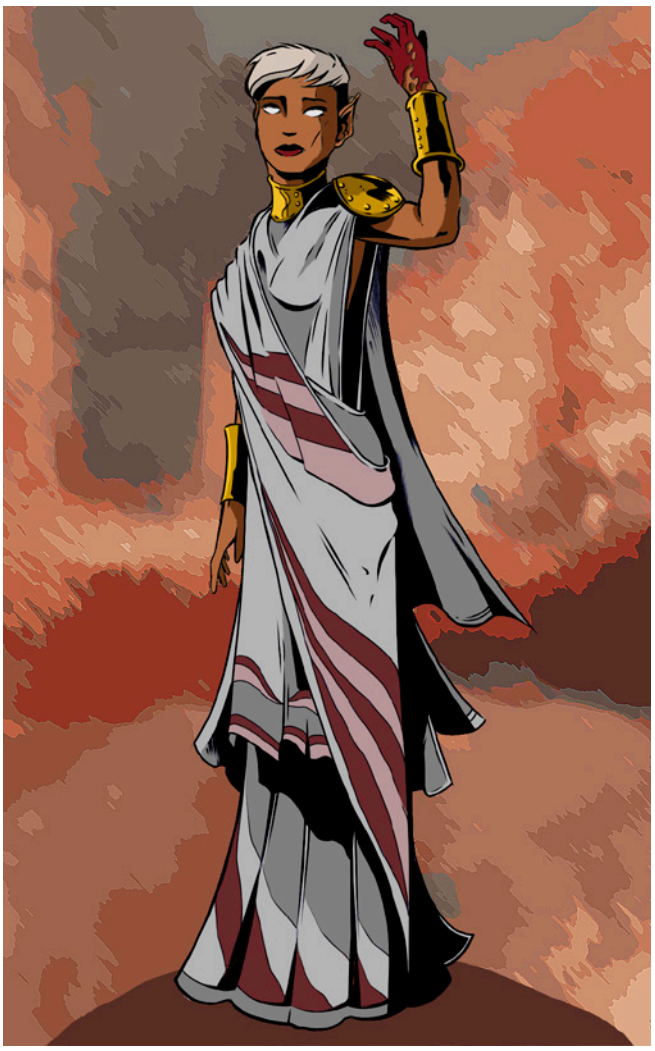
More Information

At higher level, you might take the Steamsuit Pilot prestige class (page 220), designing a machine you can wear into battle.

Telemachian

Defending one's home from invaders is different from *going* to war.

When Elfaivar's gulmohar were resurrected, they were displaced by five centuries, but felt like only moments had passed since they'd been at war. They knew their old foes were gone, and felt no real drive for revenge, but many still ached for a sense of purpose. Tens of thousands had been in distant, unfamiliar lands, battling whatever foes their superiors told them to defeat, constantly wary that some local peasant might attack them, always worried about their homes. As they returned to their much-changed homeland, entire regiments of women struggled to find a life that made sense without the structure of war.



The Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis three years ago similarly drew warriors from around the world, foremost among them Ber. Bruse Corta Nariz intended to daunt the Elfaivarans and prove her nation could be a model for the other great nations, but they instead suffered scarring defeats. The conflict nearly spiraled into a full war, but all sides pulled back, letting tensions remain at a simmer.

Once again, forces who had spent years in a war zone began to trickle home.

The name telemachian—far fighter—came to define these returning warriors. The most fortunate parlayed tales of their heroism into positions of power or celebrity. Others fell to poverty or despair, seething with physical wounds or haunted by memories of losing friends or dealing death. But for most, it's a slowly fading ache and a lingering question: what was the point of their ordeal?

Playing a Telemachian

Particularly in Ber and Elfaivar, everyone knows the names of a few veterans who distinguished themselves in battle—not quite famous, but certainly memorable. Every veteran of the Vendricce campaign has battle stories, though many do not enjoy recounting their tales. The fact that everyone likes a war hero doesn't lessen the trauma of having seen friends die.

Both Ber and Elfaivar have seen a strange influx of old soldiers from Danor and Risur, veterans of the Yerasol Wars from thirty years ago or longer. Those two nations had been at war for two centuries, and after much trial and error, they'd refined how best to exploit the most memorable of their war heroes, persuading the wealthy or the politically powerful to give them cushy jobs and trot them out occasionally as a sign of their patriotism. The Yerasol veterans offered their expertise, and often coordinate loose coalitions of Vendricce veterans, building them into pillars of their communities. Such aid quickly dries up, though, should a hero ever decide to publicly criticize his homeland's decisions during the war.

New Feat: Display of Heroism

You unfortunately have great experience rescuing allies on the battlefield. As a bonus action, you can choose one or two creatures within 10 feet of you, potentially including yourself. The creatures must have half or less of their hit points. If they are at 0 hit points, your heroic example rouses them to 1 hit point. If they are prone, you move to the nearest open space and lift them to a stand. The creatures can each move their speed without provoking opportunity attacks, and until the end of your next turn, attack rolls against them have disadvantage, and they have advantage on saving throws.

Once you use this feat, you cannot do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

You are proficient with vehicles (water).

More Information

At higher level, you might take the Monument of War prestige class (page 217), which lets you give form to your memories of war, calling in gunfire and artillery.



Tropezaro

Though the people of Ber take pride in embracing modernity, every town and tribe that makes up the nation has its own folk tales grounded in a wilder time, full of vast wilderness and mighty beasts, stretching all the way back to myths of the Ancients driving back monstrous invaders to secure their claim to this world. That ur-legendarium was an inspiration to the original tropezaros, whose name means "ones who stumble," in the sense of both stumbling upon something unexpected, and tripping and then picking yourself back up.

Tropezaros want to be challenged by nature. The ideal tropezaro can strike out into any natural landscape, stumble upon splendorous sights, hunt perilous beasts, survive off the bounty of the environment, then bring back stories to inspire listeners to greatness.

That fascination with triumphing over nature is tempered by a desire to conserve it. While most of Ber celebrates strip mining and fouling rivers for the sake of industrial growth, tropezaros seek to instill love of nature through education or mandate its security through legislation. A few have taken to militancy to defend their favorite patches from exploitation.

Taking some cue from Risur, tropezaros think one of the best ways to maintain ties with the natural world is to ally with fey from the Dreaming. Ber's connections to that realm were historically

rare, but today explorers are discovering new pathways between the planes. They may seek the magical blessings of merfey to help their ships be buoyed by waves, or trade curios to fill the hoards of fey dragons as payment so they'll defend villages on the edge of the wilderness. Often such interactions lead to conflict, though, and the broader Beran public blame the tropezaros whenever fey mayhem disrupts their more civilized lives.

Playing a Tropezaro

Though tropezaros feel at home in the wilderness, they are seldom uncouth and uncivilized. Especially due to the worldview of the movement's birthplace Ber, modernity is not something to be rejected, merely steered toward a sustainable connection.

You know how to prepare thoroughly for any expedition outdoors, and if you haven't personally trekked in a given environment, you've almost certainly read a book by another tropezaro who has. Perhaps you hope to contribute to the corpus of art or literature about the great places of the world. Or maybe you fear that as exploration pushes back the dark edges of mystery in this world, it is your responsibility to explore the new frontiers overhead.

Consider what experience or tutor fostered your interest in the natural world, and what threats you fear and prepare for. Do you have a favorite place to range, to hunt, or to get away from the stresses of crowded cities? What goals or obligations influence your life in urban civilization, and how might they relate to your time in the wilderness?

New Feat: Go to Ground

You gain proficiency in Nature.

Your trips and tribulations bond you with the environment. When you are prone, attacks against you don't have advantage. (A character can intentionally fall prone on their turn without spending any actions or movement, but cannot intentionally fall prone when it is not their turn.)

Additionally, when you become prone you can gain a link to the normally quiescent spirits of nature. When you stand up, choose yourself or a creature you are aware of. That creature gains resistance to all damage and advantage on all saving throws until the start of your next turn.

This might take the form of a tree branch blocking an attack, stones shifting under an ally's feet to nudge him to safety, a tendril of water harrying an enemy, or even a gust of wind screaming a distraction. The link then ends. A given creature cannot benefit from this protection more than once per encounter.

When you fail a death saving throw in a natural area, you can gain the benefits of *commune with nature* when you regain consciousness. After you use this ability you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Vekeshi Mystic

The cornerstone of Elfaivaran ideology is that living well is the best revenge.

After the goddess Srasama died and nearly all Elfaivaran women perished with her, there was a great drive in Elfaivar to fight to the last man in a short-sighted bid for vengeance. As the rest of the nation whipped itself into a frenzy, however, a composer named Vekesh performed a song of mourning that contained a simple sentiment: defeat is only tragedy if we choose to let the story end.

While many could not be swayed from their path to self-destruction, Vekesh convinced many others that willfully progressing from defeat to revenge to death is shameful. While revenge can distract one from grief, it is ultimately valueless. Instead, he said, choosing to respond to defeat with resilience and renewal is the best way to thwart the goals of enemies. The proper form of retribution, then, is to endure, rebuild from weakness, and prosper into strength. Sixteen years later, the Clergy found Vekesh and executed him.

For centuries, a loosely codified collection of vekeshi teachings and mantras buoyed the Elfaivaran people, and spread throughout Lanjyr, helping victims of oppression cope with loss and find a new path for themselves. But from that humble, resilient philosophy, which often discouraged violence, a splinter group adopted a sharper interpretation. They claimed that Vekesh also passed down secret lore that encouraged taking up arms to protect the vulnerable. Those indoctrinated into this mystic sect were told to train in secret and strike down tyrants, so that none would ever repeat the genocide committed against the Elfaivaran people.

To the general public of Lanjyr, "vekeshi" became synonymous with "murderer" and "terrorist." Dramatic accounts of mighty Elfaivaran warriors murdering influential public figures were easier to understand than the nuances of of a foreign ideology. Some, however, saw them as liberators and heroes, and sects of vekeshi mystics took root around the Avery Sea. They kept alive the memory of Srasama, and worked in secret—sometimes with soft power, sometimes with extravagant violence—to help Elfaivar survive and recover.

Vekesh himself could not have possibly imagined that five centuries later, thanks to his teachings, the awful wound of the Great Malice would be healed by a miracle. The return of the gulmohar was a grand statement that indeed, the Elfaivaran people had survived, and that their enemies had failed to destroy them. For the many thousand secret vekeshi mystics, it was the culmination of a long mission, and a sign that their path was righteous.

Playing a Vekeshi Mystic

The deepest secrets of vekeshi mysticism are taught only to a rare few adherents who demonstrate a skill for battle, and the wisdom to know when to use their power. To be initiated into the mystical side of the philosophy requires painful rituals. Aspirants are taken



in the night across the threshold of the Dreaming, where they experience the fall of Srasama through psychic illusions, making them keepers of the shared memory of the Great Malice. Thereafter they are held in a cage for days, along with poisoned food that they must resist, so that the starvation teaches them the importance of patience. Finally, they are burnt until their skin blackens, and then are magically healed to seal in the power of the flames.

If a vekeshi passes these trials, he rests and recovers in luxury as his teachers instruct him in the secrets of the philosophy, and drill into him the necessity of discretion. Upon leaving the Dreaming, vekeshi mystics return to their normal lives, but seek positions of power in military, law enforcement, or the underworld, where they use their authority to punish those who continually threaten people who are simply trying to make a better life for themselves. They seldom gather in large groups, but on certain irregular lunar holidays they slip into the Dreaming for secretive festivals.

Only on the rarest occasions will a mystic be called to act openly. Donning an iconic mantle of Elfaivaran armor and a mask that conceals his face, the mystic acts as the surrogate hand of the fallen goddess Srasama, with the sole purpose of meting out punishment against one directly responsible for large-scale suffering.

Risur's vekeshi played a key role in averting calamity during the Great Eclipse, and public opinion there is less wary. It has become tradition for vekeshi leaders there to reveal themselves when they retire, so that their character can demonstrate that the group is not just terrorists and murderers acting outside the law.

New Feat: Hand of Retribution

You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill and the Elvish language.

Once per month you can cast *sending* without components, but only to contact Vekeshi mystics you are aware of.

In battle, a vestige of the power of Srasama waits to punish those who harm you or your allies. When an enemy you're aware of deals damage to you or one of your allies, you can deal 2d10 radiant damage to the enemy who made the attack as a reaction. That enemy sees a faint burning outline of a six-armed goddess hovering behind you, armed with blades of fire. After you use this power you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

At 5th level, the damage increases to 3d10 radiant. At 11th level, the enemy also catches on fire, taking 1d10 fire damage at the start of each of its turns until it spends an action to put the fire out. At 17th level, the damage from being on fire increases to 2d10 fire.

More Information

The secrets of your order are not to be shared with other players, but speak to your Narrator to learn the truth of Srasama's fall, and the names and operations of mystics you know.

At higher level, you might take the Vekeshi Excoriant prestige class (page 222), which allows you to wield the power of the dead goddess Srasama.

CHAPTER TWO
THE SCIENCE OF ADVENTURE

Herein you'll find the new **savant** character class—clever individuals who hone their intellect to defeat their foes through tricks, teamwork, and talking. You'll also discover class options that are unique to the world of Zeitgeist.

- **Adept—Durala Carao.** Ascetic students of the "way of the gun," who run toward that which they fear, embracing the gun as a symbol that their traditions are still relevant in the modern day.
- **Berserker—Queen Bee.** Members of a courteous secret society whose members all connect to a hivemind that lets them control their rage.
- **Bard—Vagabond.** Students of this roaming camp reject national borders and learn tales and spells about travel.
- **Cleric—Aspirant.** Though made up of worshipers of many gods, the Clergy's foundational belief is that every person has the potential to perfect themselves and ascend to divinity.
- **Druid—Axis Slayer.** Member of the "axis circle," an ancient sect that taps the power of nature from alien worlds and excels in hunting interplanar monsters.
- **Fighter—Gadgeteer.** Tinkerers who know enough alchemy and mechanics to assemble personal gadgets to use in combat.
- **Herald—Executore.** The *executores dola liberta* are an assembly of wandering liberators who take an "oath of liberty," and savagely punish those who enslave or oppress.
- **Ranger—Titanist.** Warriors who draw upon the power of one of Risur's fey titans.
- **Rogue—Occult Blade.** Psychic thieves who steal their victims' memories of being attacked.
- **Sorcerer—Annihilator.** The near-destruction of the world granted scattered individuals powers of entropy and annihilation.
- **Warlock—Urbanist.** Form a bond with a particular city, and enjoy the benefits of urban life no matter where you travel.
- **Wizard—Last Raven.** Member of a mob of witches and scoundrels who steal magic and purvey curses.
- **Wizard—Enclavist.** A leader who learns to bond with an area in order to shield those within and control who can come and go.

New Class—Savant

Warriors rely on their physical prowess, and spellcasters have all manner of magic, but a savant needs no weapon or armor, only their mind. Brilliant ingenuity, meticulous planning, or keen deductions will win them the day and leave their enemies confused at how they were defeated.

Of course, you'd have to be a fool to not use weapons, armor, or magic when they're available, and savants are no fools. Knowledge is power, but power is *also* power. A savant is at their most effective when they have an array of tools at their disposal and an assortment of allies to enact their cunning schemes.

Creating a Savant

Consider why your character relies on wits instead of warcraft or wizardry. Were they physically feeble and had to think their way out of challenges? Did they receive a refined education and learn from history and literature how to deal with all manner of unlikely scenarios? Have they just picked up these talents on the job, perhaps working a trade or serving as a guard?

Quick Build

Your highest ability score should be Intelligence, followed by Dexterity. Get proficiency in Deception, Investigation, and Perception, plus disguise kits. Choose the Vanguard archetype, and choose proficiency with Culture, light armor, blowguns, pistols, scimitars, and whips. Learn the tricks Antagonizing Flourish, Improved Bastion Aegis, and Unbalancing Intervention. Learn the clever scheme Impromptu Persona.

Class Features

As a savant, you gain the following class features.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per savant level
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per savant level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: None
Weapons: Simple weapons, improvised weapons
Tools: Choose any one
Saving Throws: Dexterity, Intelligence
Skills: Choose three from Arcana, Culture, Deception, Engineering, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Perception, Performance, Persuasion, and Sleight of Hand

Equipment

You begin the game with 125 gp (plus the 30 gp each beginning Zeitgeist character gets, for a total of 155 gp) which you can spend on your character's starting weapons, armor, and adventuring gear. You can select your own gear or choose one of the following equipment packages.

- **Bravo's Set (cost 137 gp):** scimitar, 2 daggers, blowgun, pistol, whip, 20 shots (bullets and firedust), explorer's pack, leather armor, disguise kit.
- **Thinker's Set (cost 146 gp):** mace (a cane), 2 daggers, carbine, 20 shots (bullets and firedust), burglar's pack, leather armor, thieves' tools.

Adroit Defense

You constantly analyze combat situations to improve your defensive posture, proactively interfering to guide attacks away from yourself. While you are wearing no armor, your AC equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Intelligence modifier. You cannot use a shield and still gain this benefit.

The savant is not proficient in armor by default, but might gain those proficiencies through archetypes, feats, or multiclassing. When you are wearing armor you're proficient in, you can use your Intelligence in place of your Dexterity to determine your AC.

Archetype

Your Savant archetype defines what your greatest aptitude is. This book presents three types of savant: Steward, Vanguard, and Vox. The steward is expert at protecting and healing allies. The vanguard joins the thick of the fight, looking for tactical opportunities others miss. The vox deeply understands how words can manipulate people.

Your archetype gives you unique features at 1st level and again at 2nd, 6th, 11th, 14th, and 17th level.

TABLE: SAVANT

Level	Features	Tricks Known	Schemes Known
1	Adroit Defense, Archetype, Clever Schemes, Savant Tricks	3	1
2	Archetype Feature, Combat Poise	4	1
3	Analyzed Need, Skill Focus	4	2
4	Ability Score Improvement, Signature Move	5	2
5	Developed Poise	6	3
6	Archetype Feature	7	3
7	Intelligent Caution, Skill Focus	7	4
8	Ability Score Improvement	8	4
9	Focused Defense	9	5
10	More Tricks	10	5
11	Archetype Feature, Skill Focus	10	6
12	Ability Score Improvement	11	6
13	Exceptional Poise	12	7
14	Archetype Feature	13	7
15	Clockwork Mind, Skill Focus	13	8
16	Ability Score Improvement	14	8
17	Archetype Feature	15	9
18	Nothing That Can't Be Solved	16	9
19	Ability Score Improvement, Skill Focus	16	10
20	Ultimate Schema	17	10

Multiclassing Prerequisite: Intelligence 13
Proficiencies Gained: Improvised weapons and one type of tools

Clever Schemes

Introduced in *Level Up*, exploration knacks are a variety of abilities that help you deal with non-combat challenges. Each class gets its own collection to choose from, and savants' are called clever schemes. If you are not playing *Level Up*, your Narrator might ignore these clever schemes so that a savant doesn't outshine other characters.

You learn one clever scheme of your choice. These schemes are detailed at the end of the class description. The Schemes Known column of the Savant table shows when you learn more clever schemes.

Savant Tricks

You have developed a small number of clever gambits, deft maneuvers, and canny guards which help you prevail in battle by using your wits. The number of tricks you know is listed on the Savant table, and you can choose from the list below and from the list of tricks your archetype makes available.

To use a trick, you must first prepare it by spending a bonus action. You cannot prepare a trick outside of an encounter, but once a trick is prepared, it remains prepared until you use it, until the encounter ends, or until you spend a bonus action to replace it with a different trick. You can only have one trick prepared at time.

Different tricks can be used at different times. Some can be used without requiring any action, in response to some trigger. Others require your action, bonus action, or reaction.

Some of your tricks require your target to make a saving throw to resist its effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Trick save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Whenever you gain a level in this class, you can choose to replace a trick you know with a different trick.

Types of Tricks

Some tricks are called **Aegises**, which let you defend against some sort of attack. Other tricks are called **Flourishes**, which you can use when you hit with a melee weapon attack.

If a trick offers a saving throw, after you use it against a particular creature, that creature has advantage on saving throws against other uses of that same trick until the end of combat. If the trick doesn't permit a saving throw, after you use it against a particular creature, you cannot use the same trick against that creature for the rest of the combat.

Aegises

Attention Diverting Aegis. When a creature within 30 feet that can sense you makes an attack that isn't targeting you, you can use this trick to distract the attacker. If it fails a Wisdom saving throw, until your next turn it has disadvantage on all attack rolls it makes that aren't against you.

Canny Dodge Aegis. When an attack would hit you, you can use this trick to roll 1d4 and add it to your AC against that attack. Alternatively, when you would fail a Dexterity saving throw, you can use this trick to roll 1d4 and add it to your saving throw. In either case, you know how much the roll succeeded or failed by before deciding whether to use this aegis.

Committee Defense Aegis. When a creature attacks you, if it is not the first creature to attack you since the start of your last turn, you find an avenue of opportunity amid the massed assault. You can use this trick to impose disadvantage on that creature's attack. Then, you gain advantage on the next attack roll you make before the end of your next turn that targets a creature that attacked you this round.

Improvised Bastion Aegis. When a creature's attack, spell, or ability would damage you, you can use this trick to devise a momentary defense (using a chair as a shield, predicting a safe spot in an explosion, diluting a spray of acid with a solvent, etc). You gain resistance to one type of damage you would take, which protects you only against the triggering hostile act.

Mindful Reason Aegis. When you would fail an Intelligence or Wisdom saving throw, you can use this trick to roll 1d4 and add it to your saving throw. You know how much the roll failed by before deciding whether to use this aegis.

Serpentine Rush Aegis. When you are targeted by a ranged attack, you can use this trick and your reaction to move your speed. Until the end of your next turn, ranged attacks against you have disadvantage. Additionally, your movement might get you to a location where cover makes you hard or impossible to hit. Reduce your speed on your next turn by the distance that you move when using this trick.

Tangled Dance Aegis. When you would be hit with an attack and a creature other than the attacker is adjacent to you, you can use this trick to try to dodge so the attack hits that creature. If the attacker fails an Intelligence saving throw, change the attack's target to another creature within 5 feet, and the attacker uses the same result of its attack roll.

Undermining Taunt Aegis. When a creature misses with an attack or when a foe succeeds on a saving throw against an effect it created, you can use this trick to capitalize on their failure, warning the creature why another possible course of action will also turn out badly. If that creature can understand you, choose an action, such as Attack or Cast a Spell. The target must make a Charisma saving throw. If it fails, until the end of its next turn it cannot take that action.

Flourishes

Antagonizing Flourish. When you hit a creature with a melee attack, you can try to draw its ire. If it fails a Charisma saving throw, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against creatures other than you until the start of your next turn.

Disarming Flourish. When you hit a creature with a melee attack, you can attempt to disarm it. If it fails a Strength saving throw, its grip is loosened, and the creature cannot make use of the item until it spends a bonus action or attack on its turn to regain a solid hold. If the creature has disadvantage on the save and fails both rolls, it drops the item.

Experimental Flourish. Whenever you miss with an attack, you improvise a follow-up that doesn't directly attack a foe, such as slicing a rope to pin an enemy with a chandelier, or smashing a pipe to spray blinding steam on an enemy. Circumstances will dictate what the effect is, but some examples include shoving or imposing the blinded, deafened, grappled, or prone condition, and may also deal damage equal to your Intelligence modifier. Any conditions imposed should seldom last more than one round. Creatures affected can make an Intelligence saving throw to anticipate your trick and avoid the effect.

Guiding Flourish. When you hit a creature with a melee attack, you can try to trick it into moving. If it fails a Dexterity saving throw, it moves up to 10 feet in a direction of your choice. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. If this movement would cause it to take damage (such as by falling or entering fire), the creature has advantage on this saving throw.

Menacing Flourish. When you hit a creature with a melee attack, you can spend a bonus action to activate this trick and deliver a terrifying threat. The target makes a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, for the next minute it is frightened of you.

Surgical Flourish. When you have advantage on a melee attack and both dice results are high enough to hit, choose one of the creature's limbs or eyes to debilitate. If the creature succeeds a Constitution saving throw, you debilitate that body part until the end of your next turn. If it fails the saving throw, the body part is debilitated until the creature can take a short rest.

A creature cannot use a debilitated limb to attack, and cannot hold any items or effectively wear a shield with a debilitated limb. A creature with a debilitated leg has its speed reduced by half, it falls prone after using the Dash action, and it has disadvantage on Dexterity checks to balance. A creature with a debilitated eye has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and on ranged attack rolls.

Other Tricks

Assess Vulnerability. When you attack a creature, you can use your Intelligence bonus in place of another ability score bonus for the attack roll and damage roll. This applies to all attacks you make against it before the start of your next turn, but not to attacks you make against other creatures.

Choreographed Disappearance. On your turn, you say something to turn a foe's attention away from you or an ally. You or an ally of your choice who can understand you can move up to their speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from one creature of your choice that can understand you. If they end up having obscurement or cover relative to the distracted foe, they can Hide without spending an action.

Direct Ally. You identify an opening an ally can take advantage of. You can spend an action and choose an ally that can understand you, then choose a target. If that ally hits that target with an attack before the start of your next turn, their attack deals an extra 1d8 damage. The bonus dice increase to 2d8 at 5th level, 3d8 at 11th level, and 4d8 at 17th level. After you use this trick, you can choose the same ally again, but cannot choose the same target for the rest of the encounter.

Frightful Suppression. When you make an attack that causes loud noises—a firearm or grenade, or also items and spells that deal thunder damage—you can use this trick to force the attack's target (or creatures in the attack's area) to make a Wisdom saving throw to gauge when it is safe to move, and thus avoid being pinned down. A creature that fails cannot move until the start of your next turn unless it spends an action.

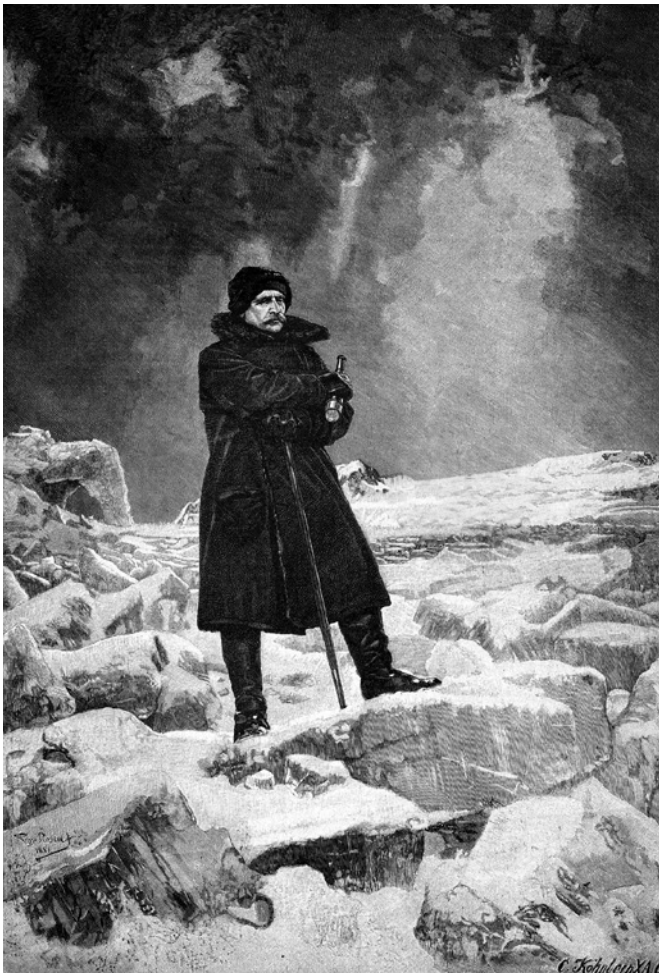
Rallying Word. You know just what to say to inspire an ally's flagging stamina. You can spend a bonus action to let an ally within 30 feet who can understand you spend a hit die. If it does, it rolls that hit die (adding its Constitution bonus) plus 1d8 and heals hit points equal to the total. The bonus dice increase to 2d8 at 5th level, 3d8 at 11th level, and 4d8 at 17th level. After you use this ability, the same ally cannot benefit from it again until you complete a short rest.

Saving Advice. Spend a bonus action to advise an ally who can understand you. Choose a saving throw. One time before the end of this encounter, that ally can gain an expertise die on one saving throw of that type, used at the time of their choice. An expertise die is 1d4 they roll and add.

Sweeping Stride. When you stand up, or when you move at least 10 feet and enter a space adjacent to a creature no more than one size larger than you, you can try to trip it. If the creature fails a Dexterity saving throw, it falls prone. If it succeeds, instead your movement ends in the space you entered to use this ability. If you used this ability while standing up, you remain prone.

Timely Tool. Spend a bonus action to use an item that normally can be used as an action. This cannot cause damage or require an attack roll. Examples include administering an antitoxin, potion, or other easy-to-swallow item to a willing creature within reach; lighting a torch; tossing out caltrops, or barring a door.

Unbalancing Intervention. When a creature within your reach makes a Strength or Dexterity ability check or saving throw, you can use your reaction to perform a series of pulls, shoves, and strikes that put a creature off-balance. The creature has disadvantage on its ability check or saving throw.



Combat Poise

Some savants are prepared to bloody their knuckles in a fight, while others make a point of staying out of the scrum. At 2nd level, you choose one of the following poises.

A Step Ahead

You have a deft ability to predict your opponents' responses and interfere with them. Whenever a creature within your reach that you are aware of attempts to take a reaction, you can expend your reaction for the round to try to disrupt them. That creature must make an Intelligence saving throw against your trick DC. If they fail, their reaction is wasted.

Combat Maneuvers

You gain the ability to use combat maneuvers. (Combat maneuvers are detailed in the *Level Up Adventurer's Guide*.) You gain an exertion point pool equal to your proficiency bonus.

Choose two martial traditions. (Most savants learn maneuvers of the traditions Biting Zephyr, Mist and Shade, Rapid Current, or Sanguine Knot.) Whenever you gain a savant trick, you can instead choose a maneuver from any of your chosen martial traditions.

You can initially learn maneuvers of the 1st degree. At 7th level you gain access to 2nd degree maneuvers, then at 13th level you can access 3rd degree maneuvers, and finally at 19th level you can access 4th degree maneuvers.

Analyzed Need

You can adapt your mind for whatever challenges you expect. Starting at 3rd level, when you complete a short or long rest you can choose a skill. Until you complete another rest, whenever you make an ability check using that skill, you use Intelligence instead of the ability score it normally uses.

Skill Focus

At 3rd level, and again at 7th, 11th, 15th, and 19th, choose a skill you are proficient with. You gain an expertise die on checks with that skill. (An expertise die is 1d4 you roll and add to your check result.)

Ability Score Improvements

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Signature Move

At 4th level, choose one savant trick you know. You are considered to always have that trick prepared, and it does not count against the limit of the number of tricks you can have prepared. When you use that trick, it does not stop being prepared. Whenever you gain a level, you can change your signature move.

Developed Poise

At 5th level, you refine your combat poise. Choose one of the following, or one of the combat poise options available at 2nd level.

Extra Attack. When you use the Attack action on your turn, you can make two attacks.

Rational Maneuvers. You can use your Intelligence bonus to calculate the DCs of your basic maneuvers and combat maneuvers.

Intelligent Caution

At 7th level, whenever you complete a long rest you may choose one ability score and gain proficiency in saving throws of that type until you use this ability again.

Quick Wits

Also at 7th level, on your turn you can prepare a trick without spending an action. You can do this a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus. Thereafter, preparing tricks requires the usual bonus action until you complete a short rest.

Focused Defense

At 9th level, you can use the confusion of a large battle to protect you. If there are at least two enemies within 30 feet, you can use a bonus action to choose one of them. Until the end of your next turn, that creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against you.

Adventure Seeds: Savant

The Good Word. A vox savant in the island city of Sid Minos has been speaking out against the nation's military build-up, calling publicly and often for more charity and mercy. This has earned the savant the ire of the city's quartermaster general.

A friend of the PCs who is one of the savant's favored followers asks them to help smuggle the savant, and a number of apostles, out of the city through the labyrinth under the island. But old fiends and defensive traps assail them, and the map they follow seems to send them deeper, not toward the shore. They notice the savant whispering to each of the apostles, who begin to vanish one by one as battles distract the party. What has the savant convinced them to do, and are the party under the sway of the savant too?

More Tricks

At 10th level, you can hold two tricks in reserve, in addition to your signature trick. Whenever you prepare a trick, you can fill both trick slots (or keep one that is prepared and replace another).

Exceptional Poise

At 13th level, your combat poise can achieve remarkable things. Choose one of the following, or one of the combat poise options available at 2nd or 5th level.

Confounding Defense. The first time each round that you use an aegis, you can immediately prepare another aegis trick.

The Opportune Moment. On your turn, you can take one additional action. You cannot use this ability on the first round of combat. After you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Clockwork Mind

At 15th level, your mental capabilities transcend the normal limitations mortal minds face. You gain an expertise die on all Intelligence checks and saving throws.

Nothing That Can't Be Solved

At 18th level, you can overcome obstacles with ease. When you or another creature that can understand you starts its turn you can grant it the ability to ignore all sources of disadvantage until the start of its next turn. After you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Ultimate Schema

At 20th level, you're clever enough to accomplish anything. Whenever you complete a long rest, choose an effect that could be accomplished by a spell of level 8 or lower. You can have that effect occur immediately, or keep it in reserve for the day, and cause it to occur at any point by spending an action. This can be because you acquired a magic item or spellcaster willing to perform the magic, or have a device or hirelings capable of matching the feat.

Steward

Some savants see themselves as guides, mentors, or helpers, using their knowledge to help their allies and generally eschewing a direct role in any physical altercation. It often falls to them to repair the wounds of battle—physical, mental, and spiritual—and they may find themselves repairing dented armor, coordinating watches, or preparing equipment for the day's adventures.

Stewards serve as physicians, military officers, constables of the law, academic faculty, and all manner of other roles throughout society.

Bonus Proficiencies

When you choose this archetype at 1st level, you gain proficiency with Culture and one language. You also gain proficiency in one of the following: light armor, Animal Handling, Insight, Medicine, Perception, or Survival.

Word of Advice

At 1st level, when you prepare an aegis trick, you can communicate the idea to an ally that can understand you within 10 feet. Until the end of your next turn, that ally can use that trick as if they had prepared it; the trick uses your trick DC.

If either of you use the trick, it expends it for both of you. If the ally doesn't use the trick before the end of your next turn, it remains available for you until you use it.

At 6th level, the range of this ability increases to 30 feet.

Bolster Ally

At 2nd level, you can use your reaction to let an ally re-roll a failed saving throw or ability check. Once you use this feature, you must complete a short rest before you can use it again.

Steward's Care

Also at 2nd level, you can optimize your group's resources to aid in resting. Whenever you take a short rest, you and any allied creatures regain additional hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

Additionally, you can choose one creature resting with you and give it extra care, perhaps involving emotional counsel, massage, or herbal medicine. That creature can remove a level of strife. (Strife is a mental and emotional version of fatigue in the *Level Up* rules.)

Expert Help

At 6th level, you can use the Help action as a bonus action. Additionally, when you use the Help action to aid an ally in attacking a creature, the target of that attack can be within 30 feet of you, rather than 5 feet of you, if the target can understand you.

The Best of Your Abilities

At 11th level, with a mix of planning and motivation you can help someone maximize their efforts at one type of task. Spend an action and choose a creature within 30 feet that can understand you, and choose one ability score. For the next hour, that creature gains the benefits of *enhance ability* for the chosen ability score. This is not a magical effect, and you do not need to concentrate to maintain it.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

I Will Please

At 14th level, you can spend an action and use a mix of soothing remedies and confident bedside manner to help an ally overcome some ailment. This can make the creature suffer no effects from one disease for ten minutes, or can let it ignore one of the following conditions: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned.

If you use this technique too often, you lose the necessary confidence for the placebo to work. Once you use this feature, you must complete a short or long rest before you can use it again.

This Is No Place to Die

At 17th level, your presence is enough to help allies cling to life a little longer, confident that you have a plan to save them. If one of your allies that you're aware died in the past round, you can use your action to entreat them to hold on. If you do, they briefly return to life at 0 hit points, are stable, and for the next minute cannot be required to make death saving throws from taking damage. If they remain at 0 hit points at the end of one minute, they actually die.

At the narrator's discretion, some actions can kill a helpless creature despite this ability, such as decapitation or falling in lava.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Vanguard

Vanguard savants have the training to engage in a fight directly. They employ tactics to disrupt their enemies' normal strategies, forcing foes to battle on their back foot. And by knowing their ally's talents, they can set up the perfect opening for a teammate to shine.

Bonus Proficiencies

When you choose this archetype at 1st level, you gain proficiency with light armor and four martial weapons. You also gain proficiency with one of the following: medium armor, shields, Arcana, Culture, Engineering, Investigation, Nature, or Religion.

The Stage of Battle

At 1st level, your ingenuity in combat spans the whole battlefield. You can use flourish tricks on ranged attacks you make against creatures within 30 feet.

At 6th level, you can use flourish tricks on attacks at any range.

Coordinate Attack

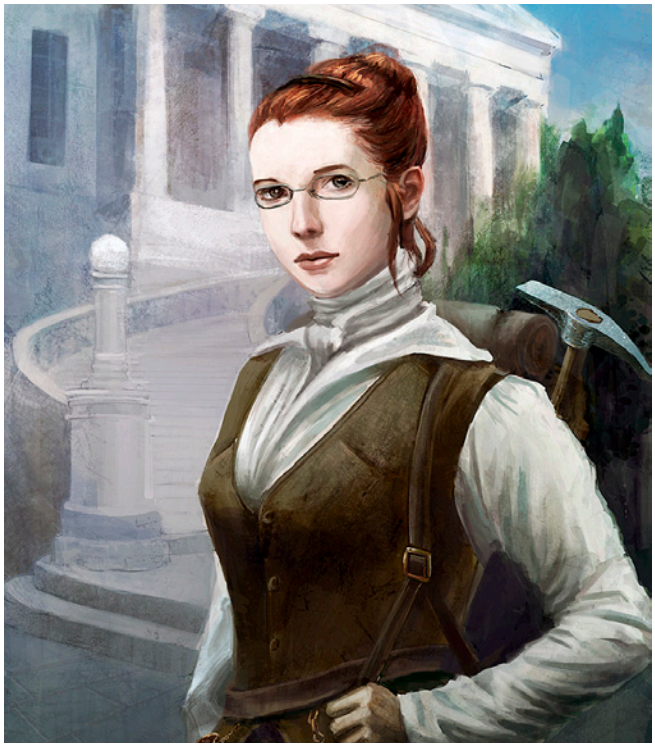
At 2nd level, when you take the Attack action on your turn, you may forego one of your attacks. If you do, one ally within 30 feet can use its reaction to make one weapon attack.

Burst of Inspiration

Also at 2nd level, when an attack you make is a critical hit, you can immediately prepare a trick without needing to spend a bonus action. If you already have a trick prepared, you can replace it. If you have a flourish prepared, you may use it on this critical hit, before choosing to prepare a new trick.

Engaging Footwork

At 6th level, when you hit a creature with a melee attack, you distract that foe through a mix of repartee and positioning, causing



them to move in the direction you want. If they fail a Wisdom saving throw against your trick DC, until the end of your turn when you move, you can move them an equal distance, keeping them within your melee reach the whole time. Their movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks, and if you would move them into a space that would cause them damage, they can choose to stop outside it.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it against the same creature again until you complete a short rest.

Combat Deduction

At 11th level, you can read your enemies like a book. You can use a bonus action to make an Intelligence (Investigation) check against the Maneuver DC of a creature you have spent at least one round observing in combat. If you succeed, choose three of the following items to learn about the creature: Armor Class, vulnerabilities, resistances, immunities, weakest saving throw, or highest ability score. At the narrator's discretion, you might learn other pertinent details of its combat abilities.

After you use this ability on a creature, you cannot attempt it against the same creature until you complete a short or long rest.

Seamless Teamwork

At 14th level, when you use Coordinate Attack, your ally does not need to use their reaction in order to make an attack.

Checkmate

At 17th level, you can predict an enemy's tactics with enough precision to thwart them with ease. When you use Combat Deduction and succeed the Investigation check, until the end of your next turn you have advantage on attack rolls against that creature, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against you, the creature has disadvantage on saving throws against your abilities, and you have advantage on saving throws against its abilities.

Vox

A savant with the vox aptitude manipulates people with their voice, using appeals to reason or emotion as well as outright castigation, intimidation, or prevarication.

They are common among the non-spellcasting ideologues in Crisllyir's shadow war between the Meliskans and Ottoplismists, with the earliest masters of this art having learned it in the heretical vault that once held prison the great temptress, Ashima-Shimtu, known as the Lady of the Forked Tongue and Seneschal of the Demonocracy.

The term vox means "voice" in the Infernal language, but these savants can influence people with any form of linguistic communication, including text and signing, though enemies may find these methods easier to ignore.

Bonus Proficiencies

When you choose this archetype at 1st level, you gain proficiency with Insight and one language. You also gain proficiency in one of the following: light armor, Deception, Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion.

Compelling Communication

At 1st level, you can manipulate people with words as easily as a warrior can with physical force. You can spend an action to affect a creature within 30 feet that can understand you with any flourish trick that you have prepared other than Surgical Flourish, without making an attack.

At 6th level, the range you can affect a creature increases to 60 feet. Additionally, you gain the ability to use flourish tricks other than Surgical Flourish whenever you deal damage to a creature with your Weapon of Choice ability (see below).

Ear for Languages

At 2nd level you train your mind to pick up languages as needed. By spending a short or long rest in the presence of a speaker of any language, you can acquire a rudimentary understanding of that language, enough to have a basic conversation. Any abilities you have that rely on sharing a common language and require a saving throw can work, but the target has advantage on their save.

The cognitive effort to decode the unfamiliar tongue means that if you use this ability again, you lose access to any other language you learned through it.

Weapon of Choice

Also at 2nd level, you can guide a foe to ruin with your words. You can use an action to insult a creature within 60 feet that can understand you, or undermine its confidence, goad it into exhausting itself, amuse it into giving up the fight, or similar verbal gambits. If the creature fails a Wisdom saving throw against your trick DC, it takes 1d6 psychic damage and its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The reduction lasts until the creature completes a short rest. A creature reduced to 0 hit points this way is not dying, but rather is conscious and incapacitated.

The damage increases to 2d6 and 5th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 17th level.



Hypnotic Voice

At 6th level, you are able to keep people and creatures' attention focused on you. Spend an action to cause creatures of your choice that can perceive you to make a Wisdom saving throw against your trick save DC. Creatures that don't understand your language have advantage on the saving throw. Creatures that cannot be charmed automatically succeed their saving throws, and if you or your companions are fighting a creature, it makes its saving throw with advantage.

On a failure, a creature is charmed by you for as long as you continue talking (with reasonable pauses, perhaps even conversation back and forth) and for the next hour after. While charmed by you, the creature has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to perceive creatures other than you.

The focus required for this mesmerism is mentally taxing. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

When You Put It That Way

At 11th level, as an action you can suggest an activity (limited to a sentence or two) to a creature that can hear and understand you. A creature that can't be charmed is immune to this feature. The course of action must sound reasonable, as with the *suggestion* spell.

If the target fails a Wisdom saving throw, it pursues the course of action you described to the best of its ability for as long as you are present, and for up to 10 minutes after.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Attentive Polyglot

At 14th level you know all languages, and cannot be magically silenced. If you would be affected by a language-dependent effect, you may choose to ignore that effect, as if you didn't understand the language.

Additionally, so deft is your understanding of language that when you make an ability check to influence someone with words, you gain an expertise die. An expertise die is 1d4 you roll and add.

Killing Word

At 17th level, you can spend an action to so utterly cut to the core of a person's identity that for a moment they might lose the will to live. One creature that can understand you is stunned. At the end of each of its turns it must make a Charisma saving throw against your trick DC or else it gains a level of strife. The effect ends when it succeeds one of these saving throws, or when it has six levels of strife.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Savant Schemes

You can choose from among the following talents that help with exploration.

Apothecary Basics

Whenever you take a short or long rest, you can use your medical knowledge to treat one creature. That creature can heal as if it had one extra 1d4 hit die during this rest, or it can ignore one level of fatigue for the next four hours.

Deductive Tracker

After observing a creature, however briefly, you make a deduction that gives you an edge when pursuing it. After you spend at least 1 minute observing a creature, you gain an expertise die on checks made to track that specific creature.

Hostilia Naturae

Following the path trod by Drakran naturalist Karl Evol, author of *A Theory of Noetic Field Adaptation Toward Terrifyingness Among Malice Ecologies*, you have studied the many perils of wild flora and fauna. You gain an expertise die on checks to avoid, locate, or understand the abilities of aberrations, beasts, and monstrosities.

Impromptu Persona

You do not need preparation to come up with a convincing fake persona, background, and excuse to cover anything suspicious you are doing. You can gain advantage on Deception checks to pretend to be someone else. However, the ruse won't hold up to prolonged scrutiny. If you spend more than a few minutes in someone's presence, you must make a new Deception check with disadvantage to maintain the ruse.

Just What Have We Gotten Ourselves Into?

When you are ambushed, you gain an expertise die on your initiative check. When you trigger a trap, you gain an expertise die on the first saving throw you need to make, or to your AC against the first attack the trap makes against you. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short rest.

Kleptology

When a creature makes a melee attack against you or otherwise touches you, you can make a Sleight of Hand check against them as a reaction. Additionally, when you spend at least a minute interacting with someone within arm's reach, you gain an expertise die on Sleight of Hand checks involving them until the interaction ends.

Local Informants

You quickly can locate people willing to share information. If you spend an hour reaching out to local residents or simply perusing a recent periodical or newspaper, for the next day you gain an expertise die on Culture and Investigation checks related to the area.

Meeting of Minds

You gain an expertise die on Charisma checks with Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion when trying to interact with someone who is trained in the same skill.

Motto of the Tropezaros

You make sure you're always prepared. Once per short rest you can produce a non-magical item that you could have purchased or prepared at some point, small enough to fit in whatever storage you have available. This could range from a forged passport in your pocket to a glider stowed in the hold of a ship you're traveling on. Pay the appropriate price for it. Limits of causality apply.

Physical Education

Once per hour, when you succeed on an Acrobatics or Athletics check to climb, swim, or jump you can offer advice and encouragement to your allies. For the next minute, each ally who attempts a check to traverse the same area gains an expertise die.

Read You Like a Spellbook

You can spend an action to make an Arcana check against the save DC of a creature's spell. If you succeed, you deduce from their demeanor, fashion, and accoutrements what cantrips they know and the last non-cantrip spell it cast, if any.

Reinforce Apotropaics

Apotropaics (page 82) are specific items that can repel or harm certain creatures, like bells driving away fiends. You can spend an action to reinforce an apotropaic you are touching for one day.

If you brandish a reinforced apotropaic to repel a creature, add an expertise die to your opposed Charisma check. If a creature tries to bypass the repellent effect of a reinforced apotropaic barrier (like an undead crossing a line of salt), add an expertise die to the flat DC the creature must overcome. If a reinforced item is used to harm a creature (like jade dust against an aberration), you can also make an opposed Charisma check to repel that creature without needing to spend a separate action (and you add an expertise die to your check).

Reserved Seating

You have forethought of when and where you might need to be places. If you knew you would be in a given area, once per day you can call upon this forethought to have a vehicle or mount waiting for you and your companions, or to have a reservation available at a venue. You pay any appropriate costs. For exceptional requests, you may need to make a Persuasion check or owe someone a favor.

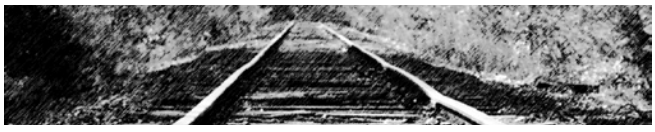
Run Silent, Run Deep

Once per hour, when you succeed on a Stealth check you can discreetly direct your allies. For the next minute, each ally who attempts a check to traverse the same area gains an expertise die.

When moving through an area you're familiar with or have had time to study maps of, you gain an expertise die on Stealth checks.

Student of Technology

You instead gain an expertise die on Engineering checks and when using tools to build, repair, or understand a technological device.



Adventure Seeds: Durala Carao

The Magnificent Seven-Shooter. In an inhospitable stretch of the Malice Lands, a Drakran ranching magnate asks the PCs for help, saying one of his villages has been overrun by bandits, and that he needs the party to kill them so his workers can return. They travel with the magnate's lieutenant, who is cagey about the fact that their livestock are trained malice beasts, which they control with emotion-evoking alchemicals.

When they arrive at the village, they're threatened by townsfolk wielding improvised weapons and a handful of firearms, demanding they leave in peace. An Elfaivaran adept with a seven-shot revolver at her hip fearlessly approaches the party alone and explains that she is teaching these people to defend themselves from the ruffians who are trying to steal their land. The PCs might decide they're on the wrong side, but the lieutenant manages to send word to his boss, promising retribution. When alchemically synthesized terror grips the village and malice beasts attack, will the wisdom of the way of the gun help the villagers and the PCs overcome their fear to survive?

Unstable Poison

You gain an expertise die on checks made with the poisoner's kit. You learn the recipe for creating basic poison. During a short or long rest, you can brew one poison for which you have the recipe without spending gold or using ingredients. This version of the poison lasts until your next short or long rest.

New Archetypes

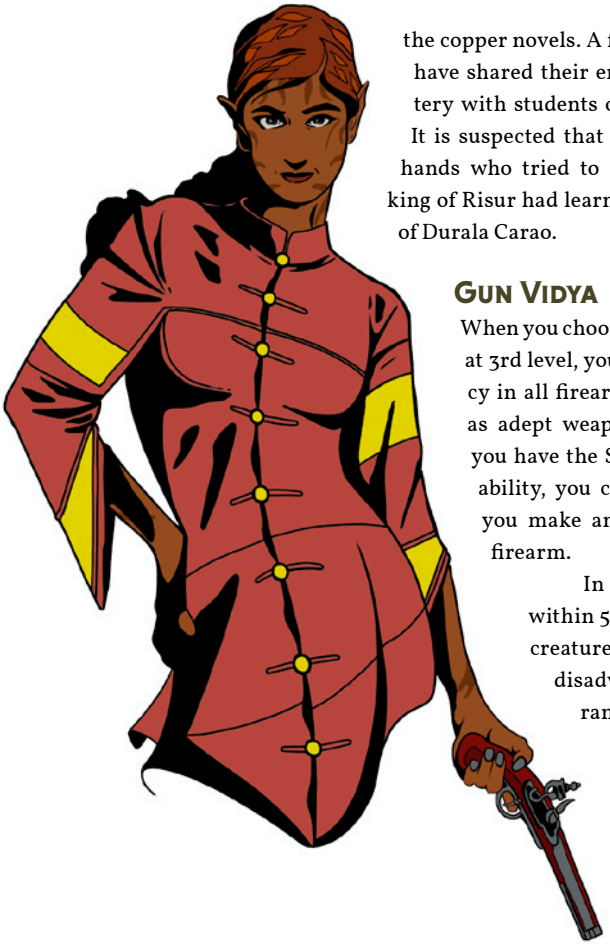
Adept—Durala Carao

Many of Elfaivar's resurrected gulmohar feel confounded by modern technology, but one ascetic order felt they were obliged to embrace innovations.

The Durala Carao are known to foreigners as "The Way of the Gun," but in Elvish the name means "Run Through Fear." Before the Great Malice, sadhus (religious ascetics) studied this order's teachings at an akhara (a monastery, or more precisely a "spiritual core"). Their training required them to seek out battle to master their visceral mortal fear, and thus free themselves from the burden of *any* fears. Anxiety of the unfamiliar was seen as just as debilitating as a dread of violence, and so the akhara actively sought outsiders to challenge them with foreign customs and unknown fighting styles.

After their resurrection, dozens of gulmohar sadhus found the grounds of the akhara, rebuilt the long-collapsed structures, and began training new students. Their first objective was to understand the primary weapons of the new age, firearms, which were wholly unknown to them. Many Elfaivarans refused to learn to use them, but the Durala Carao saw that as weakness, and instead they sought to master the weapons, especially pistols. Adepts of the Way of the Gun can dodge and even catch bullets, curve their shots around barriers, and perform other supernatural feats with firearms.

Due to their devotion to confronting fear of the unknown, nearly every student of the akhara undertakes a journey into foreign lands, and tales of wandering elvish gunslingers are popular in



the copper novels. A few such adepts have shared their enlightened mastery with students outside Elfaivar. It is suspected that the Clergy godhands who tried to assassinate the king of Risur had learned from a guru of Durala Carao.

Gun Vidya

When you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in all firearms. They count as adept weapons for you. If you have the Stunning Strike ability, you can use it when you make an attack with a firearm.

In addition, being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged attack rolls with pistols and target pistols.

Graceful Reload

Also at 3rd level, your firearms never misfire, and you can draw and stow one-handed firearms without using your free "object interaction" on your turn.

Additionally, you ignore the muzzle-loading quality of pistols, carbines, shotguns, target pistols, and rifled carbines (but not muskets or rifled muskets). You can load or reload those firearms immediately after drawing or attacking with them.

Understand the Weapon

You are proficient with gunsmithing tools, and can craft firearms and firearm enhancements.

One with the Gun

At 6th level, you can infuse your spiritual focus into your firearms. Your attacks with firearms count as magical for the purposes of overcoming damage resistance and immunity.

Additionally, when you hit a target with a firearm, you can spend 1 focus point to cause the weapon to deal extra damage to the target equal to your Martial Arts die. You can use this feature only once on each of your turns.

The Art of the Draw

At 11th level, you can almost always shoot first. If you have a holstered pistol or target pistol, whenever a creature you're aware of starts their turn you can spend 1 focus point to draw and make one attack with that holstered firearm against that creature. This attack deals extra damage equal to your Martial Arts die.

When you use this ability, you cannot spend an extra focus point to use the ability One with the Gun to add your Martial Arts die to this damage twice.

You can use this ability even if you haven't acted in combat yet. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Mystic Bullets

At 17th level, your bullets can weave through battle, potentially striking multiple foes.

While you are wielding a firearm, as an action, you can fire a single bullet that curves towards your enemies, even those behind barriers and those you are unaware of. As long as the bullet can trace a path to an enemy, the path is unblocked by barriers more substantial than a window, and the path remains exclusively within 60 feet of you, the bullet can reach the enemy. Each enemy the bullet can reach must make a Dexterity saving throw against your maneuver save DC. On a failed save, an enemy takes 10d6 force damage. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Other Adepts

Crisillyir has a tradition of personal perfection, and so many ascetic monasteries contain humble and pious adepts, the services of whom landed nobles often retain to train their soldiers. Likewise, Danor's military academies have long trained their officers in at least the rudiments of pugilism.

Not all adepts are so regimented. Various Beran tribes have warrior traditions focused on showing off and earning glory. In Risur, heroes of folk legend usually fought without armor, and various Old Faith holidays include competitions where people attempt to match their heroic feats. And in Drakr's mountain mines, enslaved prisoners have developed fighting techniques using their own forge tools, which have risen to fame after a few dramatic revolts.

The planet Caeloon appeared in the sky after the Great Eclipse, and a few of its inhabitants have made their way to this world through a portal on a flying island south of Ber. These first few visitors have all been students of the Monastery of the Paper Wind, whose fighting style involves maneuvers inspired by folding paper animals.

Berserker—Queen Bee

Modern society sees rage as a primitive and uncivilized emotion, but people misunderstand the role it played in earlier cultures. When someone insulted or threatened another person, a violent, enraged response by the victim and the promise of extreme harm *quite rationally* encouraged the aggressor to rethink the matter and behave with decorum. By contrast, modern civility often provides a pass to rude behavior. Without any physical punishment, antagonists can insult and mock with impunity.

When people repress their anger due to a desire for civility, they can come to feel powerless. Their ability to control their temper becomes frayed at even the smallest slight: a carriage blocking one's path in a street might provoke ill-directed rage.

Adventure Seeds: Queen Bee

Comb the City. In the city of Beaumont, a hunt is underway for one of the PCs' friends after the brutal murders of two members of the watch are discovered. Bystanders report the PCs' friend howling with rage and fighting with impossible strength, and reports say he broke into the Queen Bee Lodge.

The authorities call in the PCs for questioning, and their interrogation is observed by a silent, well-dressed man with a cane. The watch begins a systemic sweep of the city, and a short time later the PCs are approached by a vagrant who claims he saw their friend in the vagabond raft by the docks. What's going on? Is the PCs' friend a member of the lodge gone rogue? Did their friend steal the lodge's secrets but get poisoned with some hallucinogen? Or are the members of the lodge the only people who can truly figure out what's going on?

Studying this phenomenon of disproportionate anger led a group of scholars to create a psychic reservoir, siphoning off the simmering rage of unsuspecting citizens in the Danoran city Beaumont. After a few unfortunate mishaps, they developed techniques to let those with the proper meditative training deposit their pent-up fury, which others could then call upon when they really needed it.

They founded the Queen Bee Lodge, a secret cadre with members in most countries. They tend to be genteel members of high society, who see their connection to the reservoir as a means of controlling anger that their peers do not understand. Their symbol is a woman's head crowned by three hexagons, reminiscent of the honeycomb cells of a bee hive.

Abuzz with Rage

When you select this path at 3rd level, your rage extends into the minds of others.

Whenever you begin your rage, you may choose a creature within 10 feet of you with which to share your rage. An unwilling creature can make a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier). If it succeeds, you cannot try again to share this rage with it. A creature that fails this saving throw can attempt a new saving throw at the start of each of your turns.

A creature that shares your rage (willingly or unwillingly) has the following benefits and drawbacks until your current rage ends, even if it moves more than 10 feet away from you. It has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. It cannot cast spells or concentrate on them. It also adds your Rage Damage to any melee weapon attack it makes. A character already benefiting from another rage gets whatever bonus damage is higher.

During your rage, you can spend a bonus action to choose a new creature within 10 feet to share your rage. This revokes the rage from the previous creature.

Feel My Sting

Members of the lodge prefer not to invite battle, and rather than brandish an obvious weapon they'll often defend themselves with sword canes or weapons they could holster inside a suit coat or under a skirt.

At 3rd level, while you are wielding a light or finesse weapon in melee and not using a shield, you treat that weapon's damage die as 1d12, and you may have the weapon gain the heavy property while you're wielding it. The nature of this combat technique means that if you use a light or finesse weapon in this way, you cannot attack with a weapon held in your other hand on the same turn. You also cannot combine this higher damage die with the benefit from the Dueling fighting style, should you have access to it from some other class.



Hive Communication

At 6th level, your experience with tapping the psychic hive of your lodge lets you share thoughts with others as well. You can speak telepathically to any creature within 60 feet of you. You don't need to share a language with the creature for it to understand your telepathic messages, but the creature must be able to understand at least one language or be telepathic itself. When you communicate with a creature this way, you can sense whether it is under the effect of an enchantment spell or an effect that would charm or frighten (or anything that has no effect against creatures who are immune to being charmed or frightened).

Dull the Sting

Additionally, at 6th level, you gain resistance to psychic damage.

Dance of Thoughts

At 10th level, when an ally within 60 feet fails a saving throw against an enchantment spell or an effect that would charm or frighten (or anything that has no effect against creatures who are immune to being charmed or frightened), you intuitively sense it has happened, and you can use your reaction to transfer the effect to yourself. If you do, you can make your own saving throw to resist the effect.

Queen's Drone

At 14th level, others in a rage serve you like drone bees serve a queen. When you use an action to Attack, you can force a creature that is sharing your rage to expend its reaction. If it does, the creature makes a melee attack against a creature of your choice, other than itself. Before the attack, you can have the creature move up to half its speed toward your chosen target. You can use this ability once each time you rage.

Bard—Vagabond

Founded by wastrels and castaways, the College of Vagabonds has no formalized campus. Instead, its members roam the land and sea, gathering stories and recruiting outsiders and miscreants to be apprentices for a time before foisting them off on some other vagabond whose path they cross.

Vagabonds trade tales of odd nations and earn their keep with stories of grand misadventures in realms few will ever see. Many a vagabond bard starts as an outcast from a country they feel unwelcome in, or are tempest-tossed arrivals from other worlds, stranded in Lanjyr after a storm deposited them on an alien shore. Many feel a responsibility to take runaways and orphans under their wing, and feel a spiteful pride in defying borders.

Vagabond bards are often welcome on ships, but they cluster in Flint, home of the inspiration of the college: Rock Rackus, a legendary musician who rose to fame for braggadocious songs about his travels to the moon, where he cuckolded the fey king and had his pistol turned to diamond-encrusted gold by the fey queen. Full of unearned swagger and fearless in the face of the bizarre, Rackus is said to have saved Risur's Unseen Court during the Great Eclipse, then ventured into the stars, and loved a woman so passionately he brought her back from the dead. Then he ditched her on a beach and kept on wandering.

Members of the college learn to channel the very essence of their ceaseless travel into brief bursts of teleportation, which they share with their allies to get them into or out of exciting trouble. The true mark of a vagabond is one who can earn enough coin from his stories to buy a diamond-encrusted gold weapon or piece of jewelry, though they never wear gold rings, because they don't want their travel to be impeded.

Into the Unknown

When you join the College of Vagabonds at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in navigator's tools, vehicles (water), and three languages. You can easily make forged documents like passports to satisfy port and border authorities, and you know or can find a fellow vagabond to tell you about good paths to evade patrols on borders or along shores.

Additionally, since the walking staff capped with gold is a symbol of the college, you become proficient in the quarterstaff. In your hands, a quarterstaff deals 1d8 damage, and is versatile (1d10). You can use a staff you're holding as a spellcasting focus.

Wayfaring Stranger

Also at 3rd level, you learn to use your performances to literally transport people. You add *misty step* to your spells known.

A creature you have granted inspiration to can use a bonus action to expend that inspiration and teleport 30 feet as if they had cast *misty step*. This distance changes when you reach certain levels in this class: it increases to 50 feet at 5th level, 100 feet at 11th level, and 500 feet at 17th level. This also increases the distance traveled if you cast *misty step* using a spell slot.

Travel On

At 6th level, you feel at home in any environment. You gain a climb speed and swim speed equal to your walking speed. You can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free. You also can hold your breath ten times as long as normal.

Ever, Ever On

At 14th level, no obstacle can hinder your travel, not even gravity itself. You gain a fly speed equal to your walking speed. Additionally, you can spend an action to burrow or teleport a distance equal to your walking speed.

Cleric—Aspirant

The figurehead god of the Clergy is Triegenes, who was once a mortal fisherman. More than a thousand years ago, he caught the secret of divinity from the sea, after which he gathered loyal adherents, rallied armies to defeat the Demonocracy, and then ascended to godhood. The Clergy welcomes many gods to their pantheon, as long as they all accept the central dogma that people can and should strive to improve themselves, and that any mortal has the potential to become divine.

Different sects of the Clergy preach different paths to godhood, and so pervasive is the religion that the concept of self-perfection has filtered into religious movements that aren't formally recognized by the faith.

Traditional Clericists encourage people to master whatever drives them and to face ever greater challenges, earning the adulation and perhaps even worship from those who witness their deeds.

Some Drakran muktists who have absorbed Clergy worshipers claim that people should strive for freedom, and that the path to divinity requires an understanding of all possible skills so one can do literally anything. In Risur, though, a likely-misguided movement in remote villages claims that, because the fey lords of the Unseen Court are themselves gods, those with aspirations toward godhood should reject their personal identity, and attempt to conceal their true capabilities by acting with grand whimsy, with the ultimate goal of letting others imagine you as greater than you actually are.

Since Triegenes, there are no documented cases of anyone ascending to godhood.

POTENTIAL DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*expeditious retreat*, *jump*
3rd	*alter self*, *enlarge/reduce*
5th	*blinding smite*, *haste*
7th	*freedom of movement*, *stoneskin*
9th	*awaken*, *circle of power*

Possible Talent

It is easy to imagine how by taking a different course in life one could have ended up with an entirely different set of skills.

At 1st level, you can invoke this truth for yourself or reveal it to others with a brief prayer. Spend an action and choose yourself or a creature within 30 feet. That creature gains proficiency in a weapon, armor, skill, tool, language, or vehicle of your choice. This effect lasts until you take a short or long rest. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Godhands of the Clergy

The Clergy produce a type of holy warrior called **godhands**, who undergo training and mystical endowment in monasteries in cities so they can channel the faith of masses of Clericists. A fully invested godhand manifests a halo behind their head, and their fists carry the weight of worship.

In terms of game mechanics, the two most common ways to represent the path of the godhand are to play a cleric with the Potential domain or play an adept (perhaps multiclassed with cleric or herald). However, to be fully invested by a godhand monastery, a member of the faith must bond with their fellow Clericists and allow themselves to become a vessel of their will. Player characters who wish to become godhands should speak with their Narrator so they can find an opportunity during the campaign to complete this training, ideally with some sort of adventure that demonstrates their unyielding piety.

A prospective godhand's status is formalized by a religious ceremony, after which the character gains the *godhand investiture* supernatural gift (page 209); gaining this gift also causes a halo to appear behind the character's head.

Fighting Fitness

At 1st level, you combine your divine power with some of the martial arts techniques of an adept, the practice of which keeps your body healthy.

You gain the following benefits:

- While you are unarmed and you aren't wearing armor or using a shield, your AC equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Wisdom modifier.
- You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes.
- You can roll 1d8 in place of the normal damage for your unarmed strike. This benefit does not apply to the Martial Arts or Focus class features of the adept. You can treat your unarmed strike as a weapon for the purpose of the domain spell *blinding smite*.
- When you use the Attack action and hit with an unarmed attack, you can spend a bonus action to cause your body to glow briefly with holy power. If you do, that attack deals 2d6 extra radiant damage. The radiant damage increase to 3d6 at 5th level, 4d6 at 11th level, and 5d6 at 17th level. You can surge with holy power a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Channel Divinity—Potential Self

At 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to let a creature briefly manifest their full potential. Spend an action and choose yourself or a creature within 30 feet. That creature benefits from the spells *bless* and *shield of faith*, which last for one minute and do not require concentration. (Whenever that creature makes an attack roll or a saving throw before the spell ends, it can roll 1d4 and add the number rolled to the attack roll or saving throw. It also gains a +2 bonus to AC.) When you use this ability, the recipient can make an attack as a reaction.



The creature's physical appearance may shift slightly when it becomes its potential self, reflecting choices it might make in the future or could have made in the past. This could be as simple as changing hairstyle or removing scars, or as grandiose as glowing eyes and hair, rippling muscles, even possibly changing sex or species. These cosmetic changes reflect what the creature desires itself to be, and they disappear when the effect ends.

Possible Paragon

At 6th level, you can help someone strain the bonds of what they could normally achieve. When you use the Potential Self ability, the chosen creature also chooses one ability score to increase by 2. This can increase an ability score above 20 temporarily.

Holy Touch

At 8th level, you can momentarily hold divinity in your hands, which can devastate mortal foes. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with an unarmed attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 radiant damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

Transcendent Form

Starting at 17th level, your body becomes more than just crude matter, and you can shape it to match your spiritual essence. You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. Additionally, choose a damage type other than force or radiant (acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, piercing, poison, psychic, slashing, and thunder). You gain immunity to that damage type.

Druid—Axis Slayer

It came as quite a surprise to the members of the druids of the Axis Circle when their myths—which spoke of a primordial time when the world drifted in a void, beset by monsters from other dimensions—turned out to be true. The tiny sect had at most a few hundred adherents across the Yerasol Archipelago, with a couple thousand more whose grandparents had been believers before they fled to Risur or Danor during the Yerasol Wars.

They all knew the tales of Axis Island being a place where one might glimpse distant lands, and that the circle's leadership had tried and failed to defend the island from conquest and counter-conquest by the two warring nations. But those who had known the deepest secrets of the circle had died. Those who survived felt adrift, repeating their old rituals but not understanding their significance.



After the Great Eclipse, members of the circle pieced together scattered recollections of half-remembered legends, dug into research by archaeologists into the Ancient orcish culture, and tracked down people who were present on Axis Island. They told of fabulously powerful magic flowing from the center of the island from the moment the stars vanished until the moment they returned. The more the druids learned, the more secretive they became, sometimes trying to steal or destroy items in museums. This had the perverse effect of capturing the public's imagination, and pulp novels became popular about Axis Circle druids battling all manner of bizarre beings from beyond.

The truth of the circle is a mystery to the public, but it is known that these druids seem to have rediscovered their order's purpose, and that even powerful militaries call upon them for help when they discover strange, previously unknown monsters emerging from the Yerasol Islands. A few outsiders make the journey to Axis Island and slip past the military garrison to contact the druids. Some are vagabonds who hope the circle can help them find a way home. Others are monster hunters in their own right, with most coming from the Malice Lands which produces some of the world's mightiest beasts. Those deemed worthy take a vow of secrecy.

If you join the Axis Circle, your Narrator will share The Truth About Axis Island (page 278).

Shield of Ancient Knowledge

At 2nd level, you can sense the flow of planar energies within a creature, though only once that creature is wounded. As a bonus action, you can choose a creature you can see that doesn't have all its hit points. You learn its damage resistances, damage immunities, damage vulnerabilities, and condition immunities.

Sword of a Thousand Worlds

Also at 2nd level, you learn to fight with a variety of two-handed weapons, the better to strike down large monsters. You gain proficiency with all martial weapons. You can also use a weapon you're wielding as a spellcasting focus.

When you wield a weapon with the heavy trait and are not wearing heavy armor, you can use your Wisdom bonus instead of your Strength bonus for the attack and damage rolls.

Additionally, you can imbue your weapons with elemental power, allowing you to adapt your strikes to best wound a foe. When you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can expend one use of Wild Shape to deal 1d10 energy damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. Choose one damage type: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder.

The extra damage increases to 2d10 at 5th level, 3d10 at 11th level, and 4d10 at 17th level. If the target is an aberration, double the number of extra dice you roll.

I Kill Giants

At 6th level, when a Large or larger creature within 5 feet of you hits or misses you with an attack, you can use your reaction to attack that creature immediately after its attack, provided that you can see the creature.

Against the Alien Hordes

At 10th level, once on each of your turns, when you make a melee attack, you can make another attack with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of your weapon.

Invoke the Seal

At 14th level, you can alter the flow of planar energies around you. Spend a bonus action and choose one of the following effects, which manifests within 30 feet of you. After you use this ability two times, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Death Quickened. Creatures of your choice in the area take 10 necrotic damage.

Life Renewed. Creatures of your choice in the area regain 10 hit points if they have at least 1 hit point. If they are at 0 hit points, the next time they would fail a death saving throw, they instead succeed.

Space Secured. Until the end of your next turn, creatures of your choice cannot teleport into, out of, nor within the area, and no creature can be summoned or banished inside the area unless you desire it.

Time Tightened. Until the end of your next turn, creatures of your choice in the area cannot be affected by *haste* or *slow* (or similar effects that accelerate or slow time).

Fighter—Gadgeteer

Some warriors become fascinated with the possibilities presented by new technology and arcanoscience, and in their tinkering devise a variety of tools that can be useful in a battle. These gadgeteers keep a lot of tricks up their sleeves or, more often, on their belts.

Utility Items

At 3rd level, you learn to combine a mix of tinkering, alchemy, and the most basic magical prestidigitation to build single-use items useful in combat. You store various components on your person—often in utilitarian belt pouches—and prepare devices when you have a few spare minutes. These items only function for you, and fall apart if they're away from you for more than a minute.

When you gain this feature, you invent three gadgets of your choice (see "Gadget Options" below). You keep the details of the invention in a book called a codex. You invent an additional gadget when you reach certain levels of this class: 7th, 10th, 15th, and 18th level.

You can also add more gadgets to your codex by learning from other inventors, typically by spending one day of down time with that inventor's assistance and spending 100 gp for the necessary materials to tinker. You might also reverse engineer a gadget you find, though this could take longer and be more expensive, at the Narrator's discretion.

The interaction of alchemical energies limits how many gadgets you can have prepared at any one time. Whenever you complete a short rest, you prepare a number of gadgets equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier. You can prepare multiple copies of a given type of gadget in this way. If you prepare more gadgets, your previous gadgets cease to work but can be recovered for raw materials. Gadgets only work once, unless otherwise noted.

Activating a gadget requires an action unless otherwise noted, and you can only activate one gadget per turn. Thanks to your deft fingers and arcanotechnological riggings, you can use a hand holding a weapon to use a gadget. If the weapon has a magic bonus to attack and damage rolls, you can touch the gadget to the weapon as part of using it, giving the gadget the same bonus.

Weapon Gadgets. If a gadget is labeled "weapon," you can draw it like ammunition and use it in place of an attack. You are considered proficient with any weapon gadgets (that is, you add your proficiency bonus to any attack rolls they require, unlike other improvised weapons). No matter how many attacks you can make, however, you can still only assemble one gadget each turn.

Gadget Options

Choose from the following. If a gadget calls for a saving throw, the DC is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

Adaptable Antitoxin Applicator. As a bonus action you inject an alchemical variety of antitoxin that does not need to be drunk to provide its benefit. The recipient gains advantage on saving throws against poison for 1 hour and is immune to poison for one round.

Alchemist's Phlogiston. *Weapon.* A superior form of alchemist's fire, this sticky, adhesive fluid ignites when exposed to air. As an attack, you can throw this flask up to 20 feet. Make a ranged attack against a creature or object. The flask shatters on impact; on a hit, the target takes 1d10 fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to extinguish the flames.



Alkahest. *Weapon.* In place of an attack, you can splash a vial of this highly caustic acid onto a creature within 5 feet of you or throw the vial up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. In either case, make a ranged attack against a creature or object. On a hit, the target takes acid damage equal to 2d8 + your Intelligence modifier.

Animal Repellent Spray. As a bonus action you spray chemicals on yourself or another creature within 5 feet. For the next ten minutes, any living creature that comes within 10 feet of the doused target smells something so repellent that it feels a momentary instinct to flee. The creature must make a Constitution saving throw. If it succeeds, it can ignore the chemicals for their duration. If it fails, it is poisoned until the end of its next turn. Thereafter it is unaffected, though unintelligent creatures likely still avoid the doused creature.

Arcanoinveigling Rod. As a bonus action you plant a magically resonant rod into some solid object and choose a damage type: acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, psychic, radiant, or thunder. For the next ten minutes, any creature within 10 feet of the rod has resistance to that damage type. The rod functions somewhat akin to a lightning rod, so if the rod is moved, or if it is not planted into something solid, it ceases to function.

Ascension Gear. This gadget can be reused multiple times. As a bonus action, you aim and launch an advanced grappling device at a surface within 60 feet. You can then hold the gear or attach it to yourself, typically at your belt. A spool can reel you to the surface struck, as long as the surface is secure and heavier than you; or it can pull an item that is significantly lighter than you toward you. If the weight is comparable, both ends tend to get pulled toward each other. You can choose to immediately activate the spool, which retracts 30 feet. Each round thereafter you can maintain your grip on the gadget and retract the spool another 30 feet without spending an action, or you can simply maintain your current distance. A Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (DC 10) might let you use the anchor point to swing across a gap, effectively gaining a fly speed of 60 feet, with the limit that you generally cannot go higher than your anchor point. The grappler cannot grab onto held or worn objects, nor onto creatures unless they're unconscious or willing.

Autootolarynx. As a bonus action, you don a mask that enhances smells. For the next ten minutes you can detect creatures within 30 feet by sense of smell, and can easily track trails by their scent.

Bespoke Bane. When you prepare this item, choose a creature whose damage immunities and resistances you are aware of. As a bonus action, you can hold this item, or throw it at a point within 20 feet. If you throw it at a creature, the device clings to the target unless it succeeds a Dexterity saving throw, though the creature can remove the device by spending an action. The device emits an alchemical aura in a 10-foot radius that causes creatures of the type you chose to lose their damage resistances, and for their damage immunities to become resistances instead. This lasts for one minute.

Chiaroscuro Bomb. As an action you can throw this item at a point within 20 feet. When you do, you choose whether it produces a blinding flash or releases a cloud of obscuring smoke. If a flash, creatures in a 10-foot square centered on the target point must succeed a Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the start of your next turn. If smoke, the item creates a 10-foot square of concealment that lasts for one minute. Strong wind can disperse the smoke.

Cloak of Gliding. As a reaction when you fall 10 feet or more, you can cause this cloak to extend and stiffen like a wing, which momentarily stops you from falling farther. Thereafter, at the end of each of your turns you fall 10 feet (or more, if you desire). While descending, you have a fly speed of 60 feet, though you cannot increase your altitude. You do not take falling damage while using this cloak. When there is no longer air resistance from falling, the cloak returns to its normal shape. This gadget can be reused multiple times.

Instant Contrivance. When you prepare this gadget, pick any set of tools that weighs ten pounds or less. As an action, you can assemble a set of such tools, which last until you collapse it to an inert form. (You can assemble a set of smithing tools, for example, but not an actual forge.) This gadget can be reused multiple times.

Locative Lantern. As a bonus action, you cause this hand-held lantern to shed bright light in a 20-foot radius for one minute. During that time, creatures cannot teleport into or out of the illuminated area, creatures cannot use incorporeal movement in the area, and ethereal creatures in that area can be affected as if they were not ethereal. When a creature tries to move out of the radius of the light, they must succeed a Strength saving throw. If it fails, its movement stops. You can hold the lantern, or attach it to yourself, typically on your belt. The lantern functions even if you're not holding it.

Nocturnal Goggles. As a bonus action, you don goggles that grant you darkvision, letting you see in dim light within 60 feet as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. They function for ten minutes.

Redoubled Reaction Ram. *Weapon.* In place of an attack, you can shove a creature within 5 feet. You gain a +4 bonus on your Strength (Athletics) check to shove the creature, and if you succeed you deal force damage equal to your Intelligence modifier, and can either knock the target prone or push it 10 feet. Alternatively, you can spend a bonus action to place this device against a door and make a Strength check with advantage to break down that door (you retain the +4 bonus). You can use the ram in a similar way to shatter unattended inanimate objects.

Splattering Lubricant. As an action, you can throw this item at a spot within 60 feet. Slick lubricant covers the ground in a 10-ft. square centered on that point, which turns it into difficult terrain for ten minutes. Each creature standing in the area when the lubricant lands must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. A creature that enters the area or ends its turn there must also succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Synthetic Peril. You usually wear this item under clothes. When you start your turn and are charmed, this item jabs you with a wickedly barbed needle, without you needing to spend an action. It causes no actual damage, but is so shockingly painful that your mind reacts as if you have been attacked and damaged by the creature charming you, which often allows you to make a new saving throw against the charm. Once activated, the device continues to stab you at the start of each of your turns for one minute.

Tanglegrim Bag. *Weapon.* In place of an attack, you can throw this item up to 20 feet, making a ranged attack against a creature or object as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target takes necrotic damage equal to 1d8 + your Intelligence modifier, and it must make a Strength saving throw. If it succeeds, its speed is reduced by half for ten minutes. If it fails, its speed is reduced to 0 for ten minutes. Whether it succeeds or fails, it can spend an action to make a Strength check (DC 10), and if succeeds it can break free of the entanglement.

Thunderstone. *Weapon.* In place of an attack, you can throw this item at a point within 20 feet. The stone shatters and releases a deafening and painful boom. Each creature in a 10-foot square centered on the target point must succeed a Constitution saving throw. If it fails it takes thunder damage equal to 1d4 + your Intelligence modifier, is pushed 5 feet away from the center of the area, and is deafened for a minute. If it succeeds it takes 1 thunder damage and is not pushed or deafened.

My Own Design

At 7th level, you can devise a custom apparatus of exceptional power. Choose one spell of 2nd level or lower that any class can cast. Your apparatus can produce the same effect, requiring the same action to activate as the spell takes to cast, and using your gadget saving throw DC for any spell saving throw DC. If the spell requires any expensive components, the apparatus requires components of equivalent cost. After you use your apparatus, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Signature Item

At 10th level, choose one gadget you know how to create as a signature item. You are treated as always having one of those items prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of items you can prepare at a time.

At 18th level, choose another gadget as a signature item.

Ready for Anything

At 15th level, you can use any gadget you have in your codex without having to have prepared it first. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Herald—Executore

The *executores dola liberta* have served for six decades as Ber's most respected law enforcement group, composed of warriors and priests but especially heralds, and almost exclusively female. Berans hold their escape from enslavement under the dragon tyrants as core to their shared identity as a people, and the *executores* enforce this freedom by both laying and delivering the sentence upon those who abuse their power.

Executore punishments usually take the form of beatings. Someone who oversteps their authority but expresses remorse might be sentenced to a perfunctory beating: a slap or a single crack of a staff across the back. A person who actively forces others to toil for his benefit might receive a serious beating: blows to the belly and face, perhaps a cracked nose or a black eye, enough that they'd need a day to recover. Those who enslave others, abuse positions of public trust, or pervert the course of justice are delivered savage beatings: bludgeoned until bones break and the victim is rendered unconscious.

The order polices its own to ensure these decisions are received with respect and a confidence of impartiality.

The beating teaches those who were taken advantage of to see their victimizer as weak and nothing to fear in the future. When someone continues to abuse their power, the severity of beatings escalate, but *executores* are directed to only use lethal force against someone who clearly intends to kill if they're not stopped. Sometimes an *executore* will seize someone's assets and distribute them to the victims. All these tactics, of course, are only socially acceptable in Ber. Traveling *executores* struggle to attenuate their brutal punishments with foreign sensibilities. *Executore* heralds train in techniques to help them pursue wrongdoers, free victims from oppression, and battle dragons and other flying foes.

Tenets of Liberty

Members of the *executores* can come from any class, but they all share the same stern ideology.

A Dragon's Terror Is Its Power. Your enemies are those who use fear to make others serve them. You must act without fear.

A Dragon's Hoard Is Its Weakness. Wealth can buy *obedience*, but reputation earns *loyalty*. Seek a sterling reputation, not riches.

A Dragon Coils Within Our Souls. Every person is tempted by the control that power offers. Do not become a tyrant yourself.

Each Must Slay Their Own Dragon. Act to protect the innocent, but do not slay a foe unless you have no other way to keep them from harming others. To do so is to deny them the freedom to become better.

Oath Spells

You gain oath spells at the herald levels listed. *Executores* use these spells to investigate accusations and to travel where they're needed.

EXECUTORE SPELLS

Herald Level	Spells
3rd	*comprehend languages*, *speak with animals*
5th	*detect thoughts*, *knock*
9th	*clairvoyance*, *counterspell*
13th	*dimension door*, *freedom of movement*
17th	*scrying*, *teleportation circle*



Freedom in the Industrial Workforce

Early during Ber's adoption of industry, many factory owners were accused of being like dragons themselves, growing rich off the toil of their workers. Executores were often called to rule on nebulous economic matters, like how much wage is necessary for labor to not be considered enslavement. They often defaulted to siding with those who had less power, and delivered severe beatings to bosses who were simply following the examples of Risuri and Danoran businesses.

This crisis finally came to a head when a group of foreign investors hired assassins to target an *executore* and her family. Wary of provoking more violence, senior *executores* appealed to Ber's great unifier, Vairday Bruse. After receiving advice from his Minister of Dragon Affairs (who handled the nation's treasury) and a council of foreign economists, the Bruse personally purchased a small factory, and had a solitary worker endure two days of labor with no rest.

The worker reported his boss to the *executores*, and Vairday, the ruler of Ber, accepted his punishment: a savage public beating.

With that symbolic gesture holding the nation's attention, the government passed laws and developed a financial system that made it easier for factories, mines, and even farms to give workers partial ownership of the business. Some businesses operate with this model, others with the older model, and since workers nominally have a *choice* in which system they work for, bosses in the old system are given more leeway to set strict standards. This has oddly galvanized workers in the "Beran" system to work hard so they can prove their way is competitive, and that it is not necessary to serve dragons to be strong.

Channel Divinity

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Stand and Be Judged. As an action, you point at and denounce a creature for refusing to face judgment, using your Channel Divinity. Choose one creature you can see. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw, unless it is immune to being frightened. Dragons have disadvantage on this saving throw.

On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. While frightened, the creature's speed is 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed.

On a successful save, the creature's speed is halved for 1 minute or until the creature takes any damage.

Savage Beating. As a bonus action, you can use your Channel Divinity to empower your strikes with wild, righteous fury. Until the end of your next turn, you have advantage on Strength checks and saving throws and on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength. Those attacks deal extra radiant damage equal to your proficiency bonus.

While this effect is active, whenever you hit a creature with a melee attack you gain resistance to damage from their attacks until the end of your next turn, and you can shove them with a Strength (Athletics) check. If you push the target away with a shove, you can follow and remain within 5 feet without needing to spend any movement.

No Hiding

Guns and bows are the weapons of cowards, best avoided if possible. At 7th level, you can strike enemies with your melee weapons even if they attempt to keep their distance or hide. By spending a bonus action, you create a link between you and a foe you can see within 30 feet. Melee attacks you make on your turn targeting that creature ignore reach, range, half and three-quarters cover, and light obscurement. This ability does not let you make opportunity attacks at range. The link lasts for 1 minute, and the creature gains the same benefits from it as you.

At 18th level, the range of this ability extends to 60 feet.

Chainbreaker

Starting at 15th level, you can easily detect magical charms and compulsions. Whenever you use your Divine Sense, you also known the location of any creature within 60 feet that is not behind total cover that is charmed, frightened, or subject to an effect that allowed for a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw. If you detect such a creature, you automatically learn the nature of that effect, and if the creature that created that effect is within the area, you learn its location as well.

Additionally, instead of using your Cleansing Touch to remove a spell from a creature, you can use it to remove an effect that charms, grapples, paralyzes, or restrains, or an effect that would be ineffective against immunity to any of these conditions. This can break grapples and unclasp physical bindings. The creature can then move 5 feet without provoking opportunity attacks.

Whenever you use your Cleansing Touch ability, if the creature that cast the spell or created the effect being removed is within 60 feet of you, that creature takes 10 radiant damage.

Liberated Justice

At 20th level, you can physically embody the Beran ideal of freedom. You can use this feature as an action on your turn, or you can automatically use it as a reaction if you become charmed, paralyzed, or restrained. Your physical appearance does not change, but those in your presence feel exhilaration and sense in you a grand hope, and your foes sense they will fail if they are too cowardly to face you. For 1 hour, you gain the following benefits:

- You are immune to being charmed.
- You gain the benefits of *freedom of movement*—ignore difficult terrain, magical effects cannot reduce your speed nor make you paralyzed or restrained, being underwater imposes no penalties on your movements or attacks, and you can spend 5 feet of movement to automatically escape nonmagical restraints, such as manacles or a creature that has you grappled.
- You and allies you can see have resistance to damage from attackers who are more than 30 feet from them. For instance, if a creature 40 feet from one of your allies targets it with a gun or a *fireball*, your ally has resistance to that damage.

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

Other Heralds

While most modern philosophies concern themselves little with religion and the soul, there are still some who take up arms to serve their faith. In Risur, various small orders of cavaliers pledge oaths to both the Risuri crown and to the Unseen Court (or occasionally some other archfey), and concern themselves with ensuring the pact between the two nations is upheld. Foremost among these is the Green Knight, a title held by the personal bodyguard of Risur's monarch. Empowered by the loyalty of her fellow heralds, the Green Knight stands firm against darkness, and no wound can kill her if the sun is not shining.

But by far the greatest number of heralds ride in Crisillyir, devoting their hearts and their arms to any of the Clergy's myriad gods. Many of these knights in shining armor defend the holy city of Alais Primos. Others patrol the nation's heartland for supernatural evil, as most of them believe they shall be stripped of their divine blessings should they harm an innocent, and so they are reluctant to get involved in mortal conflicts. But some of the most zealous set forth to the colony Angelus, convinced the rising threat of a restored Elfaivar demands a new holy war to protect the homeland.

Ranger—Titanist

For most of Risur's history the fey titans were seldom seen, waking up just often enough that people would never get a chance to think them mere myths. Throughout the centuries, it was the duty of Risur's monarchs to subdue those titans so they could not harm settlements. But today the titans make their presence known on a monthly basis, and Queen Iain of Risur has chosen not to try to "subdue" them, but rather to rely upon Risuri loyalists to keep the titans satisfied, and to claim regular boons from the mighty beings.

Treating with the fey titans is perilous, and their minds can be daunting to understand, but such service is a sure way to win favor and prestige. To aid in these efforts, Queen Iain called for an assembly of rangers who would keep tabs on the behemoths.

Each member of the Conclave of the Titan has become familiar with the terrain of one of Risur's five fey titans, and in so doing has formed a close bond with both the titan and their domain. Some conclave members are loyal scouts for the queen, while others are secretly devoted to the titans, seeing them as akin to gods. There are enough rangers in the conclave that most members serve for a few months each year, then turn their talents to other matters. Whatever their motivation, a titan conclave ranger can call upon supernatural powers that mirror the nature of the titan to which they're bonded, and the close connection can lead to a struggle to maintain their own personalities and identities.

Devotion to a Titan

When you join this conclave at 3rd level, choose one of the fey titans as your focus. This determines the benefits most of your other conclave abilities grant.

The Ash Wolf long ago lost his mate to hunters during a forest fire in Risur's Antwalk Thicket, and as she died she birthed a vast litter known as the smoldering wolves, who burn with the same fire that consumed her body. Usually the Ash Wolf slumbers, and only a few of his children remain active to defend his lair, but when forest fires blaze more wake. During the largest and most devastating infernos, the Ash Wolf himself wakes and sprints through the blazing woods, seeking to find his love in the smoke and soot.

In Risuri iconography, the Ash Wolf is invoked in relation to grief, single parenthood, fires, hunting, and the forests in general.

The Father of Thunder is an immense creature like a mix of bull and gazelle, with dozens of horns that serve as lightning rods as he tramples across the plains of Risur's Weftlands. He'll normally only emerge during the mightiest of storms, leading a vast herd of horses, cattle, deer, and other hoofed beasts in a raucous tromp through his domain. He'll pause to have sex (usually with beasts in his herd, though occasionally he'll shift into a minotaur-like form to bed willing humanoids), but otherwise only stops if presented with a ludicrous amount of alcohol. Then he'll spend weeks snoring through his hangover.

In Risuri iconography, the Father of Thunder is invoked in relation to recklessness, alcohol, agriculture, ranching, stormy weather, and the plains in general.

Granny Allswell is a lanky, wrinkled goblin-like woman whose bewitching eyes can look in two different directions at once. She lurks in dark mountain caves, chortling grim lullabies to her gremlin children who, according to myth, are transformed from babies abandoned in Risur's Anthras Mountains. Her family bedevils miners and loggers, and demand gifts from new mothers lest they claim an infant as a sibling.

In Risuri iconography, Granny Allswell is invoked in birth, curses and dark magic (both to create and defend against), trickery and sabotage, and the mountains in general.

She Who Writhes is usually depicted as a mass of octopus-like tentacles interwoven with strands of seaweed, usually in a corona around a sexualized female form. Her true form seems to be malleable as the sea, sometimes a purple kraken with a gargantuan seductive face, sometimes tendrils of water moving of their own volition, but always somehow lithe and tempting. She'll rise at night or on overcast days, beckoning sailors with a glowing feminine shape standing atop the waves, who trills a longing song and offers the rewards of untold shipwrecks to any lover who can satisfy her. She has more complex interactions with cultures that live below the sea, including merfey, but those affairs are generally unseen by landbound nations.

In Risuri iconography, She Who Writhes is invoked in lovemaking, infidelity, seafaring, treasure hunting, secrecy, and the seas and islands in general.

The Hollow Widow is little known, perhaps not even a true fey titan. Since the Great Eclipse, no one has seen the previous titan of the High Bayou, a white serpent known as the Voice of Rot. But in those swampy highlands, people report heightened activity of the arachnoid species called ettercaps, and viscous crimson currents streaming through berms of freshly woven spidersilk. They say a creature that lies overnight in a pool of its own blood will split open at dawn and release a spider, leaving behind only a hollow husk. But most travelers are unaccosted, though some find their packs were rifled through at night, their books replaced by strange relics from centuries ago.

Though new to the public consciousness, the Hollow Widow shows up in Risuri iconography to represent an interest in history, blood rituals, libraries, rebirth, and swamps in general.

Adventure Seeds: Titanist

Hunt or Be Hunted. Outside the city of Bole, the Ash Wolf's demand for tribute strains the bounds of morality. Some dream has awoken his long-smoldering anger at the ancient murder of his mate, and he will not be appeased until someone understands his pain. A ranger tasked with fulfilling the titan's demand recruits the party under false pretenses of hunting a bounty: two murderous brigands who are husband and wife. In truth, they are minor Risuri nobles, not criminals, but were deemed appropriate sacrifices. If the wife is not found and slain by the hunter's moon (see page 192), the Ash Wolf promises to hunt and devour the party.

Titan Magic

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels of this class, with each titan providing a different spell. The spells you learn count as ranger spells for you, but they don't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

ASH WOLF SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*faerie fire*
5th	*mirror image*
9th	*fireball*
13th	*fire shield*
17th	*raise dead*

FATHER OF THUNDER SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*thunderwave*
5th	*gust of wind*
9th	*call lightning*
13th	*dominate beast*
17th	*cone of cold*

GRANNY ALLSWELL SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*unseen servant*
5th	*shatter*
9th	*bestow curse*
13th	*confusion*
17th	*passwall*

SHE WHO WRITHES SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*entangle*
5th	*suggestion*
9th	*hypnotic pattern*
13th	*control water*
17th	*telekinesis*

HOLLOW WIDOW SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*identify*
5th	*web*
9th	*vampiric touch*
13th	*giant insect*
17th	*legend lore*

Bond with the Land

At 3rd level, you are comfortable in the same environment as your chosen titan.

Ash Wolf. You have resistance to fire damage, and can safely breathe smoke and see through smoke. You can speak with wolves, dogs, and other canids. Your party leaves no tracks in forests unless you want to.

Father of Thunder. You have resistance to lightning and thunder damage, and you cannot be deafened. You can speak with hooved animals. Your party leaves no tracks in plains unless you want to.

Granny Allswell. You gain darkvision to 60 feet; if you already have darkvision, extend the range by 60 feet. You can speak with cave-dwelling animals, from bats to bears to blind newts. Your party leaves no tracks in caves and mountainous terrain unless you want to.

She Who Writhes. You can double your proficiency bonus when making Strength (Athletics) checks to swim or grab, you do not suffer disadvantage to attacks while underwater, and you can breathe underwater. You can speak with marine animals and animals with tentacles. Your party leaves no tracks in aquatic or coastal terrain unless you want to.

Hollow Widow. You have advantage on death saving throws. You have resistance to necrotic damage and damage from effects that drain blood. You can speak with arachnids. Your party leaves no tracks in swamps unless you want to. Additionally, you do not get caught in webs unless you want to. You can cast *spider climb* at will, though doing so requires spilling a bit of your blood, which costs one hit die. You do not need to concentrate to maintain *spider climb.*

Titan's Ire

Also at 3rd level, you are aided in battle by the power of your bonded titan.

You can spend a bonus action to designate a creature you can see within 60 feet as the target of your ire. Whenever you use the Attack action on your turn, if the target of your ire is within 60 feet of you, you can make a ranged spell attack against it. If you're wielding a magic weapon that provides an attack bonus, you can apply that bonus to your spell attack too.

This benefit lasts until you finish a short or long rest. It ends early if you designate a different creature. The effect of your ire varies based on the titan you are bonded with.

Ash Wolf. The target takes 1d8 piercing damage as a wolf-like figure of ash and cinders bites it.

Father of Thunder. The target takes 1d8 lightning damage as a bolt of lightning falls from above.

Granny Allswell. The target takes 1d4 bludgeoning damage as a random misfortune pelts the foe with whatever is at hand. The target also has disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

She Who Writhes. The target takes 1d4 psychic damage as a haunting song wriggles through its consciousness. The target can't take reactions until the start of its next turn.

Hollow Widow. The target takes 1d6 piercing damage as a swarm of insects bite and impale it, and if the target is alive, you gain that many temporary hit points.

At 11th level, add an extra damage die to each of these attacks.

Terrain Manifestation

At 7th level, you can call upon your bonded titan to alter the environment around you. You can spend a bonus action to create difficult terrain in a 30 foot radius around your current location. (The area remains in place if you move.) The effect persists for one minute or until you spend another bonus action to end it. You and your allies can ignore this difficult terrain. It takes on a different appearance based on the titan you are bonded with.

Ash Wolf. You create a blanket of ash.

Father of Thunder. You shake the earth as if there is a stampede.

Granny Allswell. You cause minor misfortunes that hinder movement: rocks shift, belts tighten painfully, rats scamper underfoot, boot heels slip, and the like.

She Who Writhes. The area fills with shallow water that remains in place without requiring anything to contain it.

Hollow Widow. Webs blanket the area.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Straddle the Worlds

At 11th level, you can call upon your bonded titan to slip between the Dreaming and the Waking.

You can spend a bonus action to flicker between the worlds briefly; this has the same mechanical effect as the *blink* spell, except you shift between the Dreaming and the Waking. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.



Additionally, you can spend ten minutes to perform a ritual to cast *plane shift*, without requiring any material components, to travel between the Dreaming and the Waking; cast this way, the spell can only transport you to the analogue of your current location. If you use the spell against an unwilling creature, it fails unless the creature was restrained for the duration of the ritual. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Titanic Aid

At 15th level, you can briefly summon an ally of your bonded titan. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Normally this summoning requires concentration. However, if you are in your titan's favored terrain or there is some manifestation thematically linked to the titan within 60 feet of you (such as your Terrain Manifestation area), you do not need to maintain concentration on the effect. The ally you summon varies based on the titan you are bonded with.

Ash Wolf. You can spend an action to conjure four dire wolves, as the *conjure animals* spell. Their eyes flicker red, and smoke smolders from their fur. You do not need to maintain concentration in a forest, or if there is a large fire or area of smoke within 60 feet.

Father of Thunder. You can spend an action to conjure two giant elks, as the *conjure animals* spell. Their fur is lustrous, and their antlers crackle with arcs of lightning. You do not need to maintain concentration on a plains or grassland, or if there is a storm, earthquake, or stampede within 60 feet.

Granny Allswell. You can spend an action to call forth a challenge rating 5 earth elemental, as the *conjure elemental* spell. Its stone is filled with rusted detritus or shiny trinkets. You do not need to maintain concentration in a cave or mountainous terrain, or if something has been dramatically broken or if you're aware of something being stolen in the past minute within 60 feet.

She Who Writhes. You can spend an action to conjure an immense tentacle, which functions as the *arcane hand* spell. You do not need to maintain concentration if there is a body of water at least ten feet across within 60 feet.

Hollow Widow. You can spend an action to conjure four giant spiders, as the *conjure animals* spell. You do not need to maintain concentration while in a swamp, or if a living creature of at least medium size is dead or dying within 60 feet.

Creatures conjured by this ability share your Bond with the Land boon, and their attacks are treated as magical weapons for the purpose of bypassing resistances and immunities.

Rogue—Occult Blade

Many criminal organizations in Lanjyr are infamous and feared. The Crisillyir-based Family has control of smuggling, racketeering, and political corruption in many great cities around the Avery Sea. The Last Ravens in Flint terrify the common folk with their curses and the elite with the threat of stealing expensive magical enchantments.

From Drakr, the Kuchnost are cleverly subtle, using targeted bribery, inconsistent extreme violence, and winking denials to leave people paranoid that anyone could be working for them. That uncertainty is why many theorize that a new group of thieves and killers are associated with the Kuchnost.

Operating in cultivated obscurity, they utilize magical techniques to occlude people's memories of their actions, so their crimes are only vaguely recalled by victims, and authorities know them more by their absence than by any evidence they leave of their intentions. The group's own name is not even known, but the press has dubbed them *Neizvestnost Lezviya*, or the Occult Blades.

After public interest in the group grew, the mayor of Beaumont, **Emiline Fitzlaurence**, disappeared from her residence in Danor and was next seen a week later in the center of Trekhom's train station, suffering an exotic bout of amnesia, wherein if she was ever asked about her abduction, she would feel compelled to recite a specific list. That list detailed the residences and family members of prominent judges and prosecutors in Beaumont, Cherage, Trekhom, Mirsk, Alais Primos, and Sid Minos.

Today there are no publicly acknowledged investigations into the Occult Blades.

Sleight of Mind

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn to stealthily project your consciousness into the mind of another creature, allowing you to see their thoughts. Every mind is different, though,

and to actually understand what you're seeing takes some finesse, as you pull out a thought and hold it in your mind for a moment.

You can spend an action to cast *detect thoughts*, which does not require any verbal, somatic, or material components, but has a distance of only 5 feet. You can prevent a creature from knowing that you're probing its mind by succeeding an Intelligence or Charisma (Sleight of Hand) check opposed to that creature's Wisdom (Insight) check. If you succeed, the creature does not realize its mind was being probed.

Your spellcasting ability modifier for this spell is Intelligence or Charisma, and if a creature does become aware you're probing its mind and uses an action to try to end the spell, you can use Charisma in place of Intelligence to oppose its Intelligence check.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Absent Recall

Also at 3rd level, whenever an attack you make deals sneak attack damage, you can choose to have those dice be psychic damage instead of being dealt by the weapon.

Whenever you deal psychic damage to a creature this way, you impede its ability to form long-term memories of this encounter. If at any point in the next hour you and all your allies who were in the encounter are out of that creature's sight for more than a minute, it forgets all details of your group's appearance and the specific actions you took during the encounter. It recalls that it was attacked, and understands that its memories are occluded, but won't remember, for example, where you fled, how many people there were, or what tactics you used.

A creature that is immune to being charmed is able to remember the encounter normally. And a creature that is aware of this ability might take actions before its memories fade to record details in text or by telling someone else.

Steal Your Shadow

At 9th level, your Sleight of Mind ability improves. When you dig deeper into a creature's memories and it fails its saving throw to resist, you gather a temporary imprint of its personality, which you store in your mind until you complete a long rest.

Until that time, you can turn your mental focus inward and interact with that creature's personality in a sort of mindscape. Initially the personality imprint believes it's in whatever situation it was when you gathered the thoughts, so this is mostly useful for asking questions without alerting the real creature. Once you spend about ten minutes interacting with the imprint, it loses cohesion and dissipates. It cannot actually be harmed, nor is it a "real" mind, so you cannot try, for example, to cast spells on it. The mindscape is limited, so many actions will tip it off that its existence isn't real, which prompts most mental imprints to become unstable.

Plant Memories

At 13th level, you can slip into a creature's mind and begin altering and adding memories. Spend an action to cast *modify memory*, which requires no verbal or somatic components, but has a range of only 5 feet. Your spellcasting ability modifier is Intelligence or Charisma. You can communicate the new memories telepathically.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Steal Loyalty

At 17th level, you're able to deftly rewrite a foe's mind in the middle of battle. When you would deal sneak attack damage to a creature, you may instead cast *dominate monster* on it, which requires no verbal or somatic components. Your spellcasting ability modifier is Intelligence or Charisma. If the creature succeeds its saving throw, or whenever the spell ends, that creature takes psychic damage equal to your sneak attack dice.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Sorcerer—Annihilator

During the Great Eclipse, an impossibly vast and dimly glowing cloud shaped like a pair of crushing gears floated in a starless sky, drawing ever closer as the world edged to the brink of destruction. That grinding Gyre vanished when the Eclipse ended, but some people who were either born or who had a near-death experience while it hovered in the sky became infused with its essence.

Annihilator sorcerers struggle to control the Gyre's destructive energies that thrum within them, but their own health is bolstered by nearby death and decay. Their existence is often invoked by philosophers and politicians as a reminder that annihilation has been delayed, not averted. Though people anywhere in the world can manifest these powers, many are invited to train in the Graftower, an arcane academy on a remote Drakran island surrounded by sea ice—at the literal icy ends of the earth.

Things Fall Apart

At 1st level, your mere touch can cause objects to decay as if with a great passage of time, or simply shatter in an instant. You can spend an action to destroy a small object you are touching, and that no one else is touching. Most magic items, and some particularly resilient materials like adamantine are immune to this. The manner of the destruction varies—rot, erosion, fractures, rust—but generally cannot cause more damage than a person with a sledgehammer spending a round smashing away. This doesn't let you break things faster than usual, it just avoids the need to have a tool or exert yourself.

Beginning at 2nd level, you can also focus this power on distant, massive objects by spending a sorcery point. If you spend a minute concentrating on an object you can see, you can cause it to fall apart in some way that would naturally be possible. The object must be something that has not been attended to by any sapient being for at least a year—something truly abandoned or wild, like a derelict house, a cliff edge upon which no one camps, or a wild drifting glacier—but can be as large as a hundred feet across. The destruction manifests over the course of a minute. This is seldom of use offensively, but serves as a terrifying display of the power that fuels you.

The Churn

Additionally, starting at 1st level, destruction and death in your presence cascades and feeds on itself.

At the end of each of your turns, if any creature was reduced to 0



hit points within 30 feet of you since the end of your last turn, you can choose another creature within that range, and deal 1d10 force damage to it. The force damage increases to 2d10 at 5th level, 3d10 at 11th level, and 4d10 at 17th level.

The range of this effect increases to 120 feet at 10th level.

Consuming Vortex

At 6th level, you can manifest the consuming power of the Gyre to draw creatures toward you or toward your magic.

When you cast a spell, you can choose either yourself, or a space within the area of the spell you are casting. Before your spell takes effect, creatures of your choice within 120 feet of that spot must make a Strength saving throw or be pulled 20 feet toward that spot. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Unboil an Egg

At 14th level, your understanding of the nature of destruction gives you the ability to undo its damage.

You can spend 1 sorcery point to cast *cure wounds* at the highest level spell you can cast.

Alternatively, you can spend an action and concentrate on a damaged or destroyed object, then spend 1 sorcery point for every 30 feet across that object is. Over the course of a minute, you reverse the damage to the object, potentially restoring it to its prime. This requires concentration, and if your concentration fails, the restoration fails as well.

This cannot restore items that were consumed as a material component for a spell, nor things that were reshaped into new items. You can rebuild a shattered boat, but cannot cause the metal in a suit of armor to turn back into an ingot or into raw ore.

The Teeth of the Gyre

At 18th level, you can manifest the heart of the Gyre, which can destroy anything. You can spend a bonus action to create a *sphere of annihilation* within 5 feet of you, which lasts for one minute. The sphere is a 2-foot-diameter black hole in the multiverse, hovering in space and stabilized by a magical field around it.

The sphere obliterates all matter it passes through and all matter that passes through it. Artifacts are the exception. Unless an artifact is susceptible to damage from a *sphere of annihilation*, it passes through the sphere unscathed. A creature whose space the sphere enters must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be touched by it, taking 4d10 force damage.

A creature within 60 feet of an uncontrolled sphere can use an action to make a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, that creature can move the sphere a number of feet equal to 5 x their Intelligence modifier (minimum 5 feet). On a failure, the Sphere moves 10 feet toward that creature.

You can use your Charisma in place of Intelligence when controlling the sphere you create. When you create the sphere, you can immediately move it as if you had controlled it, but thereafter the sphere hovers in place unless you or another creature spend an action to try to control it.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Adventure Seeds: Urbanist

A City Divided Against Itself. In Mirsk, a warlock has grown rich serving as the liaison between the city's spirit and the powerful clans who control the city's industry. But another warlock approaches the party, asking them to help him contact the *true* spirit of the place, which is trapped in the subterranean prison manufactories like so many of the city's workers. He hopes to form a bond with that spirit and use it to help the enslaved laborers revolt, but the existing warlock senses the threat and pursues them into the depths of a cruel gulag overrun by monsters.



Warlock—Urbanist

People personify cities, describing Slate as stately and mature, Flint as boisterous and creative, Cherage as conflicted and yearning, Rumah Terakir as resolute and charming. This is not mere metonymy, where a city's name is a stand-in for its government or its citizenry. In many pieces of modern discourse, writers describe cities as having intention, as being a driver of behavior rather than a vessel of it.

And in a world where psychic collectives can manifest as physical creatures, and where unified pious faith can conjure miracles, surely it is possible to understand—even communicate with—a city's spirit: its *genius loci*.

Public awareness of these esoteric entities first arose in the Beran city of Ursaliña, which during the Great Eclipse was held in a shared psychic field created by otherworldly monsters. Even after they were defeated, people began to claim they heard the voice of their city call to them, beckoning them to come underground or to climb the highest spire, sometimes even warning them of unstable bridges or guiding them to just the right person they need to find out of tens of thousands.

Most arcane scholars have dismissed such stories as poppycock, but if these claims of metropolises enlisting avatars true, is it a benign manifestation of the will of the public, or something malevolent feeding on the dreams and desires of citizens? What do these cities want, what if any opinion do they have of the people who live within them, and worryingly, what do they know of each other?

People seem eager to believe these accounts however. An inspired pulp novelist named Kimble Aether recounted what he said were the true adventures of a magic-user called The Masked Malice, who did the bidding of the city Orithea. And in Flint, the druidic skyseers have funded advertisements in local newspapers, inviting anyone who can speak with the city's spirit to help them appease it, so that their stargazing will not be occluded.

Expanded Spell List

The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

GENIUS LOCI SPELLS

Spell Level	Genius Loci Spells
1st	*disguise self*, *sanctuary*
2nd	*find traps*, *knock*
3rd	*meld into stone*, *speak with dead*
4th	*private sanctum*, *stone shape*
5th	*passwall*, *wall of stone*

The Talk of the Town

Starting at 1st level, you are adept at talking in a city—any community of at least 5,000 people. You intuitively can speak in the prevailing language of the city and use an accent and slang like a local if you desire.

More importantly, you can speak with any city's genius loci. Typically, you simply speak out loud, and if the city chooses to respond, it does so telepathically, often in a flood of sensation.

The Narrator should consider the city's spirit to be an amalgam of the general will of the community. It is knowledgeable of things that an average city dweller would know, and you can ask it about things going on in a crowded public place at that very moment, but it cannot convey events that happened at another time, unless those are commonly known. For example, you could learn from Flint the generally agreed upon description of a fugitive seen fleeing down a street a few days ago, or perhaps hear from afar a speech being given to a crowd at that very moment, but the city could not tell you where that fugitive went after the public lost sight of him, nor whether someone in the crowd was planning to assassinate the speaker.

Spend one minute and make a Charisma-based check—usually Persuasion, but sometimes Deception, Intimidation, or Performance might be appropriate. The higher your result, the more useful the city's response is or the more obscure information it can share. You have advantage on this check in the city you personally are bound to. If you don't speak the most commonly used languages in the city where you use this ability, you have disadvantage on this check. The same city will only respond to only two of your requests in the same day.

For example, learning basic information like directions to a business, or the general situation at a crowded event across town, might be DC 5. Learning something a few hundred people witnessed a few days ago might be DC 10. Getting information that only a dozen people saw would be DC 15, and even that would only be possible if those people would freely share that information to someone who asked. Remember, the city's spirit is an amalgam of its population, and if the people who know something would be secretive, so would the city.

A city might sometimes ask favors of you in exchange for information, though the nature of the request will vary based on the city's personality. Alais Primos might request you help an aged petitioner make her way to church for a particular holy day, while Trekhom could ask you to hide a gun behind a toilet stall in a restaurant.

Beware of lying to or intimidating a city, unless you conceal your identity from it. If you tell a city that you're looking for a popular local vigilante to help her, and then locals see you attack the woman, people on the street may find themselves instinctually distrustful of you. If you threaten a city that you will burn down a landmark unless it tells you what you want to know, law enforcement might later on interfere in your affairs. A genius loci cannot physically retaliate, however.

Secret Shopper

At 6th level, you always maintain an odd liminal presence in your bonded city. This allows you to purchase any commonly available good from that city at any time. Items you buy this way must be something you can carry in your hands, so no producing boats out of your sleeve. Also, you can only buy items that the seller would freely offer to a random, anonymous buyer, which typically precludes anything of uncommon or greater rarity. However, you could easily get a meal from your favorite restaurant, get clothes from any public shop, and even buy a newspaper to keep abreast of current events.

You can use this ability at any time. You simply spend an action to hand your money to empty space. The money vanishes, and the item you purchase appears in your hand.

Public Transportation

At 10th level, while in a city you can spend an action to teleport to any location you are aware of within that city that is serviced by public transportation options, including subrail stations, gondola docks, and—if there are carriages for hire, rickshaws, or similar vehicles—basically any place along a public street. When you use this ability you can bring along up to eight willing creatures you can see.

Instead of teleporting within your current city, you can travel from any location (even if you're not currently in a city) to a public entrance to your bonded city, such as the main docks, the city gates, or the primary rail station.

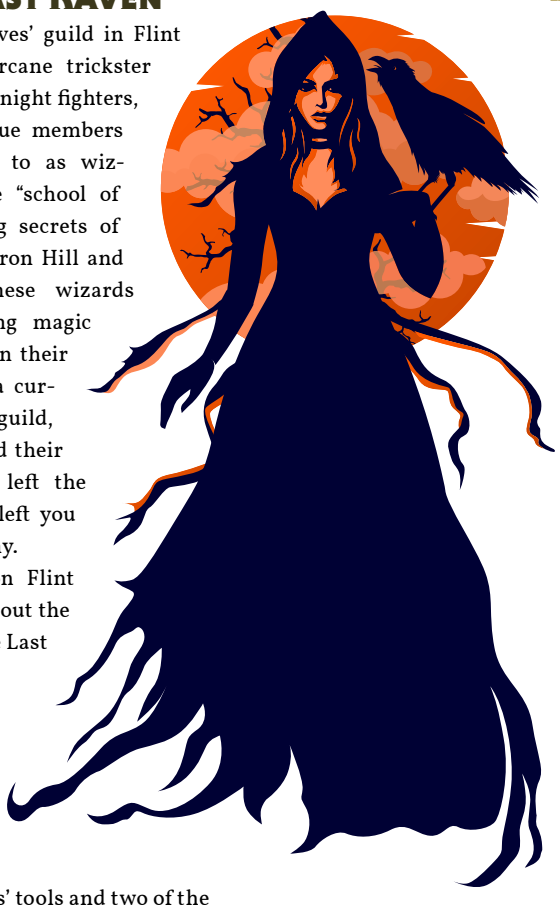
After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Get Lost

At 14th level, you gain the ability to lure foes into a demiplane that resembles a stylized version of your bonded city. You can spend an action to have the essence of your bonded city bleed into a 60 foot radius around you. Enemies in that area see phantom images of streets, alleys, tunnels, and other pathways, and feel their sense of place being assaulted. If a creature ends its turn in the area, you can end the phantom images and cast *maze* on them, trapping them in your demiplane until they can escape. Maintaining the phantom images or the maze requires concentration.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Wizard—Last Raven



The Last Raven thieves' guild in Flint consists of many arcane trickster rogues and eldritch knight fighters, but their most unique members are darkly referred to as wizards who study the "school of ravencraft." Learning secrets of the witches of Cauldron Hill and other occultists, these wizards specialize in stealing magic and levying curses on their foes. You might be a current member of the guild, or could have learned their arcane secrets and left the group, which likely left you marked as their enemy.

See the section on Flint (page 174) to learn about the varied schemes of the Last Ravens.

Ravencraft

When you take this arcane tradition at 2nd level, you gain proficiency in thieves' tools and two of the following skills: Deception, Intimidation, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth. You add *hex* from the warlock spell list to your spellbook.

You can cast *hex* one time without expending a spell slot at the highest level you can cast. Afterward, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

Whenever you cast *hex*, instead of having the target take extra damage when you hit it with an attack, you may choose an ally, and instead the target takes the extra damage whenever that ally hits that target.

Spellthief

At 2nd level, you learn how to steal the magic of other spellcasters. You can prepare one extra spell, and you need not change this spell when you finish a long rest.

Whenever you end a short or a long rest, you can choose a creature within 60 feet that you are aware of, even through solid barriers; you gain knowledge of all spells the creature has available or currently expended, and you can replace your one extra spell with one of those spells. Whenever a spellcaster within 60 feet of you casts a spell, loses concentration on a spell, or has their spell countered or dispelled, you can replace your one extra spell with that spell.



Cauldron of Curses

At 6th level, your curses tap into the lingering malevolence of Cauldron Hill. If you do not already know the spell *bestow curse*, add it to your spell book. If you do, add another 3rd level spell. When you cast *bestow curse*, the spell runs its full duration without requiring concentration.

Retaliatory Curse

At 10th level, your magic is as vindictive as your guild leader. When an attack hits you or a spell affects you, you can use a reaction to cast *bestow curse* without using a spell slot on the person who attacked you or cast the spell, regardless of range or line of sight. If you were incapacitated by the attack or spell, the target of your curse has disadvantage on their saving throw.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Exceptional Spellthievery

At 14th level, your ability to steal magic extends to magic items and ongoing spells. Spend a bonus action and choose a magic item within 60 feet of you or a creature within 60 feet of you that is affected by an ongoing spell. If you choose an unattended magic item, you transfer its powers to an item you are carrying. If you choose an item being worn or carried by a creature, that creature makes an Intelligence saving throw. If it fails, you transfer the powers. If you choose a spell on a creature, the creature makes an Intelligence saving throw, and if it fails, you transfer that spell to yourself. If that spell required concentration, it no longer does.

The transfer lasts for ten minutes, or until the stolen spell's duration expires. This ability cannot steal magic from artifacts.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Wizard—Enclavist

Only a few wizards are trusted enough to be taught the magic of the Elfaivaran enclaves. Much as Risur's rites of rulership give a person dominion over a nation, enclave wizards learn to lay claim to a small local domain by partially manifesting the Dreaming. In so doing they can shield their allies from discovery, restrict movement by interlopers, and even create guardians from their very dreams.

Enclave Talents

When you choose this school at 2nd level, you gain proficiency in Stealth and add the spell *sanctuary* from the cleric spell list to your spellbook. You always have it prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare.

Mystical Demesne

Starting at 2nd level, you can spend a bonus action to magically bond yourself to an area extending 15 feet in each direction from your space, declaring it your domain. The area shifts slightly into the Dreaming (or, if you are in the Dreaming, the area becomes loyal to you). The environment becomes imbued with your mysticism—glowing, sprouting flowers, shimmering with exaggerated colors, filled with soft sacred chanting, or something similar—though you may suppress these sensory features if neither you nor any of your allies are taking hostile actions within the domain. This can hide the presence of the domain from those looking for you.

The area remains your domain until you move more than 3 miles away from it, or until you end it as an action. You cannot declare a new domain until you complete a short or long rest. When you declare a new domain, your link to your previous domain ends.

Your domain grants the following benefits.

- **Subterfuge.** You and your allies have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks within your domain. Creatures that aren't

your allies that cast divination spells that would affect or learn about the domain or creatures in it must succeed an ability check against your spell DC with their casting ability score. If they fail, the spell reveals an innocuous result.

- **Defense.** You can use your reaction to either grant advantage to a creature that you can see within the area making a saving throw, or cause a creature that you can see within the area making an attack roll to do so with disadvantage.
- **Offense.** You can have the environment within your domain briefly come alive to attack an interloper—rocks lunging, winds gusting, leaves thrashing, and the like. Whenever you spend an action, you may deal bludgeoning damage to one creature within your domain. The amount is equal to your proficiency bonus.

Sole Power

At 6th level, when you declare your domain it affects an area extending 50 feet in each direction from you. As long as your domain is active, you can spend an action to cast *clairvoyance* to look at your domain, without spending a spell slot.

Additionally, you can use one of your spell slots of 3rd level or higher to cast *counterspell* or *dispel magic*, but only targeting a creature, object, or magical effect inside your domain. When you do this, you have advantage on any ability check the spell requires. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Guardian Force

At 10th level, when you have an area declared as your domain, you can conjure one or more beasts to defend it, tethering a bit of your soul to the Dreaming to bring your will to life. You can spend an action to cast *conjure animals* as if you used a spell slot of the highest level available to you. In addition to the normal options for the spell, you can conjure a single beast, elemental, or monstrosity with a challenge rating equal to the highest spell level you can cast, or lower.

You can use this ability even if you are not in your domain, such as if you have spotted an interloper through *clairvoyance* or have been alerted by an *alarm* ritual. If so, the conjured creature appears in the center of your domain.

Any creatures you summon this way must remain within your domain. They vanish when slain or when your link to the domain ends. If you would fail a concentration check and would lose this spell, you can spend a Hit Die to keep the spell active. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Unquestioned Authority

At 14th level, you can declare your domain without spending a bonus action.

Additionally, you can spend an action to forbid a creature from entering your domain. That creature makes a Wisdom saving throw against your spell DC. On a failure, if it is inside your domain, you can teleport it to the nearest space outside your domain. Additionally, it cannot enter your domain, make attacks against creatures inside the domain, or target them with spells or other abilities. Each turn thereafter when it tries to enter or attack, it can attempt the saving throw again. If it fails, it cannot enter or attack into the area. If it succeeds, the effect hedging it out ends.

After you use this ability, you cannot do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

Establish Enclave

Also at 14th level, by settling a region and ensuring none oppose your claim, you can choose an area of roughly one cubic mile to be your enclave in perpetuity. You can only have one such enclave at a time, and changing its location requires at least a month of effort. You can use any effects that apply to your domain in your enclave as well, and you do not lose your link to it by moving more than three miles away.

Your enclave can have additional magical and mundane defenses, which you should work out with your Narrator.

While you have a declared domain, you can use an action to teleport any number of willing creatures within your domain to your enclave, as long as you are on the same plane. After you use this ability you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Other Wizards

All the great nations recognize the strategic and economic value of arctech, and so nearly every major city has a growing academy of the arcane sciences, and military academies compete to hire the most talented teachers of war wizardry. The city state of Nalaam is even ruled by wizards, and it maintains its autonomy through careful cultivation of elite spellcasters. But most wizards seldom progress beyond minor spells, useful to enhance existing careers, from theater to architecture to the mystical arts of accounting.

People do whisper, however, about more esoteric societies of wizards. *Il Basso Globo* are a Crisillyiri occult order who commune with beings beneath the earth and carve spells into orbs of strange black stone instead of scribing them in books. In Ber, the *Violadores* revel in mind control and blood magic, cutting and scarring their flesh with arcane formulae, and often serving as indirect assassins by compelling bystanders to kill their targets. The major clans of Drakr specialize in divination and illusion (Clan Andreevna); necromancy and ice magic (Clan Vladimirovna); stoneshaping and magical weapons (Clan Volodovna); or contracts and binding (Clan Vyacheslavovich).

Finally, the Masked Knights of the Pentalon Order are five affiliated schools of wizardry in Danor, whose sigil is a brand of five bestial claws arranged like a star. Before the Great Eclipse only the wealthiest could afford to study the arcane arts in Danor's dead magic zone, and so the Pentalon were ruthless in the pursuit of power. They operated behind the scenes for centuries, and in that secrecy they grew fond of the darkest magic. As Danor embraced scientific research and discovery, so too did the wizards, and to this day they keep oubliettes of research subjects who possess rare magical abilities, and eagerly offer sacrifices to distant fiends to gain their service. But the Pentalon Knights believe themselves noble, for it was they who kept alive their nation's understanding of wizardry.

Today the Pentalon are considered a dirty open secret in Danor proper, but in the splinter Imperium, the Empress has promised her nation's unlimited support to any of the Pentalon Order who pledge their loyalty to her.

On Religions and Deities

The four main religions in Lanjyr are the pantheistic Clergy of Crisillyir, Ber's contentious Guerro, the Seedism of Elfaivar, and Risur's druidic Old Faith. Danor is explicitly atheistic, while Drakr has no strong religious identity.

Clergy

Over a thousand years, dozens of religions and their pantheons have been absorbed by the Clergy. The sheer number of gods meant that, aside from Triegenes himself, none were universally venerated. Different regions had their particular favorites, and sometimes even small sects would splinter off from Elfaivaran, Drakran, or Risuri religions and make a few doctrinal changes to fit with the broader Clergy.

Often churches or cathedrals would be dedicated to one or to a small handful, so for instance the city of Sid Minos contains many depictions of **Haspagios**, a god of shelter against disaster, but in rural Crisillyir the local priest might only vaguely know of him.

The general who reclaimed Vendricce after the Great Malice was a worshiper of a war goddess, **Manshera**, who then became popular for a generation, but later faded back to relative obscurity.

And while the grand librarium in Alais Primos is sanctified by **Inez**, god of translators, and her symbology appears in a widely-distributed register of the universal doctrines of the Clergy, she is afforded as much worship as a bureaucratic office might be in another country.

Indeed, bureaucracy and politics is one reason no gods ever cemented their place as a major part of the Clergy's pantheon. Many gods have overlapping portfolios and their priests compete for parishioners, and factions among the faith's hierarchs would work to undercut any growing power base, often with the blessing of the Prime Cardinal. The unspoken goal of such efforts was to prevent factionalism that might lead to a religious schism.

Alas, the terrible death and upheaval during the Great Eclipse nearly destroyed the Clergy's bureaucracy, and the split between the Meliskans and the Ottoplismists is just what generations of cardinals feared.

Denominational Rift

Meliska is goddess of eclipses, lovers, and reconciliation, the Keeper of the Sun and Moon, the Dimpled Hand, the Renewer of Fellowships. Before the Great Eclipse, she was depicted as the wife of the god Chalthus, but Chalthus was executed in the god trials. Today, depictions of her prominently display dimpled skin on her ring finger where her wedding band once was.

She was next in line for execution when the god trials ended, which united many Clericists in reverence of her. They proclaim her a savior of the faith, having ended a dark period through her purity and steadfastness.

Ottoplismists resent this depiction, since they believe the eight gods who were executed were killed unjustly. Those gods are not quite worshiped any more, but Ottoplismists will often devote their prayers "to the memory" of these eight, or pray to Triegenes to fulfill the responsibilities of the martyred gods.

- **Annad Elmest** was goddess of beasts, magnolia trees, and harvests, the Song of the Wild, the Dancer with the Serpent Amphora, the Bounteous Scarecrow.
- **Chalthus** was god of storms, weddings, and funerals, the Artist of Thirteen Rings, the Mourning Scribe, the Lover Lost. He was married to Meliska.
- **Kelida Buia** was goddess of the night, perseverance, and secrets, the Reed Fletcher, the Barefoot Companion, Maiden of Knots.
- **Kelide Splendente** was god of the day, archery, and pilgrimages, the Four-Hinged Scroll, Gazelle-Runner, the Eightfold Longwalker.
- **Marlanter** was god of seas, tidepools, and inevitability, the Torch at Shore, the Tidereaver's Master, the Merchant on the Horizon.
- **Sethaba** was god of winds, mountain air, and echoes. He is the Heroes' Storyteller, the Swift-Striker, the Distant Roar.
- **Vanesi** was goddess of stone buildings and pottery (and thus is associated with the foundation of early civilization), who taught the first people how to give offerings to the gods, the Triumphant Wind, the Spurned Sister, the Lady of Heavenly Ways.
- **Verus** was god of forges, evocation, and discovery, the Bringer of Lights, the Gatherer of Boasts, the First-Seer and the First Sword.

The ideals represented by each of these gods led to a change in doctrinal focus for Ottoplismists. Some are subtle, like organizing more pilgrimages in honor of Kelide Splendente, or adding more heroic myths about Sethaba to sermons. Others are contentious among Clergy traditionalists, like using Marlanter and Verus's focus on "inevitability" and "discovery" as justification for adopting firearms and steam engine technology long seen as infernally inspired.

Guerro

Religion in Ber is not as prominent an institution as in Crisillyir, but it helped create a common identity in the region stretching back to ancient times. In the Guerro faith, there are thousands of gods, their origins lost to history. These divine beings expected mortals to vie for land and power, but they were far from all powerful. They could control pathways to different afterlives, and would grant boons and blessings, but they were dependent on worshipers.

If one tribe's priest were abducted or if some great totem they revered was stolen by another tribe, that second tribe would be able to command the loyalty of that god. Gods would be fought over, traded, sometimes killed or forced into marriages. Tribes that splintered would bicker over who got to keep which gods. Even small tribes might dream of one day wresting control of another tribe's strongest deity and then rising to prominence.

After the time of the dragon tyrants, Ber's relationship with hoarding changed, as did how they view the idea of "owning" another being. While few Berans are particularly devout, they still passed laws that formally emancipated the gods. Organized religion is barely present, though the Panoply philosophy (page 94) has persuaded some Berans to find value in foreign techniques of worship, creating syncretic faiths that resemble Clergy churches, with Guerro gods.

Seedism

Elfaivar's Seedist faith is famous for the slain goddess of womanhood **Srasama**. However, the resurrected gulmohar generally do not recognize how other Elfaivarans practice Seedism. In the five centuries after the Great Malice, it became focused around Srasama despite her death, like a morbid monotheism. Indeed, many gulmohar feel "modern Seedism" has taken on the shape of the Clergy's faith, with Srasama serving the same role as Triegenes.

The resurrection of the gulmohar led to a blossoming fascination with the Elfaivaran pantheon, lifting many gods from obscurity. This originalist Seedism has a complex metaphysics where reincarnation and an atypical perception of time links souls of mortals and gods, and often nests multiple beings into the identity of some greater entity.

Hewanharimau is known to outsiders as a terrifying rakshasa god of beasts who blessed some of his worshipers by turning them into weretigers. Several popular copper coin novels and vulgar plays popularized an epic battle where the hero Dhebisu slew this god centuries ago, before the Great Malice.

Actual Elfaivaran mythology and history is a bit more ambiguous. Hewanharimau was a god of beasts corrupted into a foul rakshasa, or perhaps was a protector god favored by an outcast ethnic group, the Harimau. He was perhaps slain by Dhebisu in her prime, or she may have been responsible for driving the Harimau from their native homeland. Whatever the truth, the Harimau ethnic group is a culture of elves who manifest mild lycanthropic transformations, typically resembling tigers. Surprisingly, when Dhebisu was returned to life, many of the Harimau allied with her, as the old warrior is willing to ally with any caste as long as they are loyal to her mission.

Ingatan is a god of knowledge and memory, sometimes depicted as a trickster or even actively malevolent. His most prominent shrine was occupied by the weretigers of Hewanharimau. After millions of gulmohar returned to this world after five centuries of absence, many Elfaivarans were drawn to his esoteric faith, out of a sense that they had an obligation to understand the vast scale of time, and to use lessons from the past to ensure an eternal survival of their people.

The hero-goddess **Shalosha**, said to have once been a mortal elf from a foreign land, was falling out of favor before the Great Malice, and was basically forgotten afterward. A group of gulmohar who chose not to align with the new Ran have sought to revive worship of her. Though she is just one deity among many, her faithful think she has much to teach the Elfaivaran people in this new age.

Shalosha was acclaimed as a warrior queen so beloved that her subjects raised her to divinity, but she stood for principles of peace between nations, reconciliation with enemies, and being willing to hold one's allies—even family members—accountable for their injustices. Worship of her is often seen as a direct challenge to the goals of the Reclamation. A rarity among the Seedist faith, Shalosha is typically depicted as pale and blond, with blue eyes and a blade that shines as bright as the sun.

The Old Faith

Risur's folk religion advises people to honor the spirits of the land and teaches how to draw power from nature and interpret the prophecy from the stars. The druidism of Risur is only distantly connected to the Axis Circle (see page 57), but it has several circles of its own, which have gone through cycles of being on good terms or fighting each other for influence.

The circles all have several formal and informal titles, but today, the group colloquially known as the Circle of the Land has risen to have Queen Iain Waryeye's favor, since their druids help appease the fey titans.

A few years ago the *Flint Tribune* published a bitter exposé by **Sokana Rell**, a former royal aide who claimed she was revealing state secrets as punishment for the king breaking a promise to the Circle of Dreams. The whispered truth of that mystical order, according to Sokana, is that the Dreaming responds to the behaviors and beliefs of people in this world. She claims the dreaming circle druids cultivated the landscape and fey culture of Risur's Dreaming like a garden, and that the Unseen Court and their rivals the Hedgehog Court are more like pets of the Risuri nobility, rather than peers.

Though the outlandish and somewhat scandalous accusation was denied by the Circle of Dreams, the response from the fey of the Dreaming was unexpectedly positive. A courier of the Unseen Court claimed that the fey monarch Thisraldion found the whole story a capital idea, and that their kingdom would offer good trades for cats, dogs, and obedient reptiles from the Waking.



CHAPTER THREE
AN EXPOSITION OF INVENTIONS

Within, discover the equipment produced by the industrial revolution to which your characters have access.

Progress and Innovation

On a rural Risuri farm, the family might own a musket and some pistols, but never have seen a steam engine in their lives. They try to avoid any machinery that might anger the fey of their fields.

A prosperous land-owner in Danor makes use of a steam-powered combine, and delivers some of her goods to the markets of Cherage on the railroad. She'd love to hire a druid to speed the growth of her crops, but when she tried to pay her workers less because she didn't need them as much, they protested and threatened to refuse to harvest.

In Drakr's capital city Trekhom, factory workers risk their fingers in an arcane refinery producing firegems, while in a nearby laboratory, arcanoscientific researchers tinker with enchanting an artillery cannon hoping to launch a metal vessel to the stars instead of obliterating it, as has happened with all test fires to date.

In Crisillyir, desperate churchgoers barricade the door while their priest blesses salt and packs it into the barrel of a shotgun, hoping it will drive back whatever *thing* is clawing its way in. A young boy prepares to dash for the town's telegraph station to signal for help.

In a ruin in Elfaivar, druids study the latest botanical science texts as they try to rebuild their nation's lost agriculture. The steamship they take upriver is old and battered, seized from a Danoran colony over a decade ago, but it's still more reliable than summoning water spirits to tug a vessel.

In Ber, happy families spend the winter taking vacations by rail to learn about the rest of their nation, and the future seems bright. But invention is not without danger. In the repurposed lair of a dead dragon tyrant, under careful guard against psychic contamination, a warlock shipwright guides the construction of a frigate using thoughtflesh harvested from a slain alien beast, hoping the warship will be able to heal its own wounds.

Technological advancement has reshaped major cities and the travel between them, but different places have access to different innovations. Adventurers will often have the funds to equip themselves with the best, but for some parts of the world it can seem like the industrial revolution never happened.

Notable Innovations

Two supernatural technologies are prominent in Lanjyr today. People refer to items that use them as arcanotechnology, or sometimes just arctech.

Planarite is a physical substance that contains the energy of another plane. When integrated in everyday objects, planarite can imbue them with magical properties, albeit often at great expense.

For example, **firegems** are solid elemental fire that can be burned to heat steam engines, while the banned substance **witchoil** is liquid death, capable of trapping the souls of those who die near it. Alchemists long ago discovered ways to produce those substances in large quantities, but today many other varieties of planarite are being distilled. Most must be created in small batches by spellcasters or gleaned in the wild near natural pathways between the planes, so a breakthrough in mass production of a new substance could be revolutionary.

A **wayfarer engine** is a device designed to burn liquid planarite like oil in a lamp, then direct the magical energy into an object to let it move and grant it supernatural traits. Spellcasters have used much rougher implementation of the same principle throughout history, such as to animate constructs, but each such creation had to be custom built. While certainly not cheap, the wayfarer engine is much more efficient at harnessing magical energy, and its design adaptable to numerous uses.

The most well-known inventions that use these engines are Danoran steam walkers and Risuri levitationals for its new airships. In Ber, the eccentric industrialist Benedict Pemberton has begun mass producing his BEARs—Battle Enhanced Animalistic Replicants.



Modern Technology

The Zeitgeist setting has a technology level roughly equivalent to about the 1870s on Earth, with some throwbacks and some revolutionary leaps. There are five main fields when equipment is different from your traditional fantasy RPG: industry, weapons, materials, transportation, and communication.

Industry

Water-wheel power allowed for mass production of textiles in the real world over two hundred years ago. In Danor, advances in chemistry, particularly the use of coke in producing iron, allowed for the development of steam engines not long thereafter, and those engines were much more efficient than water wheels. Steam engines originally used coal as fuel, but Drakran elemental alchemy eventually replaced coal with firegems.

Now inventors are more focused on finding a way to mass produce wayfarer engines, which can directly power devices in place of a bulky steam boiler filled with water.

Since the Great Eclipse, Risur has experimented with electricity, produced by using steam power, wayfarer engines, and lightning gifted to followers of the fey titan Father of Thunder. A few districts in the city of Flint have replaced gaslight street lamps with incandescent filament bulbs, but for most of the world, magical light is a staple, and many train in basic cantrips because lamplighting is steady work.

Weapons

Firearms, from personal small arms to cannons and artillery, are over two centuries old. They were first invented in Danor, and spread almost immediately to the Malice Lands and Drakr. Risur and Ber have been using guns for over a hundred years, but Crisillyir and Elfaivar only took them up in any real numbers after the Great Eclipse.

Old gunpowder has been replaced by smoke-free firedust; smokeless gunpowder is only crafted by a few innovative gunsmiths. Certain alchemical limitations hinder the creation of firedust cartridges, so most firearms are muzzle-loading.

Ships and armies can make use of cannons and artillery, whose range exceeds all but the rarest combat evocations.

Danor produces a small quantity of arcane fusils, which use planarite to produce bolts of elemental energy without ammunition, including large fusil artillery for warships. However, a treaty called the **Orithean Concordat** makes these illegal everywhere except Elfaivar, which was not a signatory.

Travel

Steam-powered ships have been in use for about one hundred and fifty years, and railroads for about a century. Both were developed in Danor, and it wasn't until about fifty years ago that Risur, Drakr, and Ber started to develop their own. Crisillyir let Danor build some railroads through their land but only began building its own trains and steamships in the past two decades.

Briefly during the Great Eclipse, magical flight became exceptionally easy, which led to short-term use of great flying ships. After the sun returned and the nature of magic changed, inventors and national navies tried to develop new airships, to limited success. Balloons and dirigibles have some limited military scouting use, and some civilians enjoy them for recreational purposes. Meanwhile hobbyists have developed a grand variety of gliders. The city of Flint in Risur is a hub for such technological aeronautics.

With the right spells, of course, any heavier-than-air vehicle can fly for short periods of time. And air planarite, a tricky substance to master, inspires the imagination of people who long to soar the skies.

Risur has invested heavily in designing arcane levitationals and maintains a small fleet of sail-powered windskiffs, as well as the retrofitted ironclad warship RNS *Coaltongue*. Soon that legendary vessel will be supplanted by the nearly complete flying warship, the RAS *Burning Sky* (see page 177).

Elfaivar uses any technology present in the colonies it recaptured, but it generally does not make any new technological items. Instead it applies the new scientific understanding about planarite to enhance traditional magic, such as controlling elementals with water planarite, employing them to propel boats, or weaving golden earth planarite into the flesh of elephants, enhancing their strength as pack animals and warbeasts.

Communication

Just before the Great Eclipse, Risur began experimenting with electric telegraphy, using metal wires extended between "ceraunic cable towers" to transmit coded pulses of text at near-instant speed across vast distances. During the Great Eclipse, a small network of ceraunic towers was set up in Crisillyir, intended as the first step of unifying northern Lanjyr. When the god trials of Alais Primos led to the execution of eight deities, their deaths were announced to the rest of that nation in a series of brief and anguished coded transmissions. So memorable was this period of slowly-unfolding disaster that even today the cipher used for telegraphy is referred to by an old Crisillyiri word for death: *Mors* code.

Character Starting Wealth

The industrial revolution has been a rising tide lifting all ships. Each player character starts with an extra 30 gp.

Adventure Seeds for Technology

Communication Breakdown. In the Senesi Desert of Crisillyir, followers of a radical preacher are hijacking the ceraunic cable towers to send their lies across the country. Killing the preacher would just inflame sectarian violence, so a capo of the Family crime syndicate tasks the party with capturing five gremlins from Risur. They're to keep them under control for the long journey over sea, smuggle them into Crisillyir, and deliver the critters to the radicals' outpost, which will disrupt their communications in a way that they won't be able to easily repair.

The New World Regatta. Queen Iain of Risur has just announced a six-nation race at sea, with a reward drawn from the royal coffers. Competitors will be required to travel in a preplanned path and stop at each city with a ceraunic wave tower along the coast, so that their progress will be transmitted across the world. Iain hopes this—the first truly global event since the Great Eclipse—will help foster cooperation between nations.

Since the Eclipse, Crisillyir has spread ceraunic cable towers to nearly every town and village in the country, with construction and maintenance usually supported by Ottoplismists and their sympathizers. Telegraphy allows them to communicate their ideology around the country and earn the trust of even remote Crisillyiri by dispatching soldiers to defend against demons and other evils.

By contrast, in Risur most efforts to maintain a ceraunic cable network have been stymied by fey who knock down wires in wilderness areas. Ber and Danor each use ceraunic cable telegraphy to connect their cities and large towns, but growth to other areas is slow. Elfaivar has only the most rudimentary connections.

Drakr is an odd case. It built a fairly robust ceraunic cable network, but the lines were quickly co-opted and corrupted by criminal syndicates, which learned to tap wires and spoof messages. The network became a liability for government use, and superstitious Drakrans spoke of ghosts in the metal threads. Today most of the network is in disrepair, with any message sent using some basic encryption cipher to ensure it hasn't been tampered with.

The oddest communication development, however, is Risuri spark-gap radio transmission. Priests of the fey titan known as the Father of Thunder have stoked interest in lightning and all things electrical, and since telegraph *wires* were infeasible, various inventors have developed transmitting towers—called ceraunic *wave* towers—that can send invisible energy pulses through the air, which require a receiving antenna. These pulses still use Mors code.

Ceraunic wave communication is still experimental, mostly due to the challenges of storing the necessary electric charge. Additionally, transmissions travel in all directions at once, limiting their use for personal communication. Their range is potentially unlimited, though anything beyond the horizon requires a major source of energy. So far they have mostly been used to coordinate ship traffic and deliver word of major news events. Most Risuri cities have at least one ceraunic wave station, as do Danoran cities along the Avery Coast. Risur has funded the construction of a few in the other great nations, though they're seen as a novelty for now.

Equipment

The technological revolution has produced new weapons, and some items are unique to the Zeitgeist setting. More importantly to society at large, today is a civilized time, and fashion is important to showing one's class.

Civilized Gear

Item	Price	Weight
Fey Pepper, week's supply	10 gp	—
Gentleman's Outfit	30 gp	6 lb.
Goggles	5 gp	1 lb.
Lady's Outfit	30 gp	12 lb.
Leaf of Nicodemus, week's supply	1 gp	—
Pocket Watch	25 gp	—
Photochemical Camera	100 gp	10 lb.
Photochemical Plates, 10	2 gp	1 lb.
Surgeon's kit: bone saw, debriding curette, ether, forceps, morphium, probes, retractors, scalpels, scissors, sutures, syringe	50 gp	2 lb.

The following items are available for discerning characters of taste—or anyone who can afford them.

Fey Pepper. This rare plant only grows near paths to the Dreaming, and after the fall of the Elfaivaran empire five hundred years ago it became a black market item in most of Lanjyr. When chewed or smoked, the pepper makes the user giddy and upbeat. With a sufficient dosage, the user begins to hallucinate, though many claim these visions are actually glimpses into the Dreaming.

Gentleman's Outfit. This fine outfit includes tailcoat, vest, cane, top hat, and more. In Elfaivar, this might take the form of an ornate embroidered sherwani over a kurta, with an accentuating stole. Gentlemen of distinction *do not* wear goggles.

Goggles. Designed for protecting the wearer's eyes in factories or laboratories where searing chemicals or embers might be afloat in the air, these goggles are also handy for airship crewmembers who need to keep the wind out of their eyes. While wearing this sturdy, protective eyewear, you have advantage on saving throws to resist effects that would blind you. However, you have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that involve sight.

Lady's Outfit. This ornate dress has an excess of weight composed of frills, whalebone corseting, multiple layers of fabric, and possibly a small hat with a lace veil. Elfaivaran fashion is less weighty, consisting of a sari or anarkali dress with luxurious mixed patterns, possibly with veils of silk scarves. Proper ladies wear neither goggles nor mechanical parts of any kind.

Leaf of Nicodemus. Monks cultivate this herb, which grows best on the islands of the Yerasol Archipelago. When crumbled, rolled, and smoked as a cigarette, the monk's leaf soothes nerves and sharpens perception slightly. It can be addictive if used extensively, but has no social stigma, unlike fey pepper.

Photochemical Camera. This tripod mounted device has an aperture to keep out light until a picture is ready to be recorded. A treated photochemical plate is slid into the camera and the aperture is opened for about a minute, or longer in dimmer conditions. Exposure to light in the presence of a certain gas causes the image to set on the plate, and a quick saline rinse ensures the image will

Optional Rule: Sartorial Defense



Campaigns in the world of Zeitgeist often focus on cities, where strolling about in full plate with shields out can be socially unacceptable, while also sometimes venturing into wilds where monsters would gladly tear through a wool coat to devour you.

Our assumption is that characters will simply have to accept that they can't wear armor all the time, and that they'll have to be less fashionable if they want to be as well protected as possible. However, if you prefer a game where heroes can dash into battle in their finest attire, you can use this optional rule. It reinterprets "armor proficiency" as "defensive training." The Armor Class a character can gain from this training is roughly comparable to wearing low cost armor. If a character wants the highest AC possible, however, expensive armor is still superior.

Defensive Stance. Any character with any shield or armor proficiency can take time to stretch, meditate, and enter a defensive stance that prepares them to defend themselves as if they had armor. The time it takes to enter a stance is comparable to how long it would take to don armor of the appropriate type. When you finish a short or long rest you can choose to adopt one of these stances without taking any extra time. The stance persists until the character spends a minute relaxing their muscles and readjusting their mindset. The character even remains in the stance if they fall unconscious, are stunned, or die.

Shield Proficiency. Any character proficient with shields can treat a cane or similar sturdy item they hold as though it were a shield in any turn it isn't used for another purpose (such as attacking or activating a magic item).

Light Armor Proficiency. Any character proficient with light armor can enter a light defensive stance with one minute of preparation. This stance provides an AC of 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

Medium Armor Proficiency. Any character proficient with medium armor can enter a medium defensive stance with five minutes of preparation, which leaves your limbs heavy—the better to block and parry, but less able to move nimbly. This provides an AC of 14 + your Dexterity modifier, to a maximum of +2. You have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Heavy Armor Proficiency. Any character proficient with heavy armor can spend ten minutes to enter a heavy defensive stance, which is even more of an exertion than a medium defensive stance. This provides an AC of 16. You do not add any Dexterity modifier to your AC, and you have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. If your Strength is 12 or lower, reduce your speed by 10 feet.

Drawbacks. Being in a stance has similar effects to being in armor of that type. For example, some adept special abilities might not function if you are in any sort of defensive stance.

Magic Items. Any clothes of sufficiently fine quality can be enchanted, as with armor. Most provide their benefits regardless of what stance you're in. At the Narrator's discretion, however, some might only work with particular types of stances.

not develop further if exposed to more light. These photographs are popular among the lower classes, who cannot afford proper portrait paintings.

Pocket Watch. In addition to telling time, a pocket watch deters the attention of minor fey. Watches will occasionally stop, skip, or run backward in the presence of powerful fey creatures.

Surgeon's Kit. Whenever you treat an injured ally during a short or long rest, make a Wisdom (Medicine) check (DC 10). If you succeed, the first Hit Die that ally spends restores an additional 5 hit points. If you fail by 5 or more, that first Hit Die is wasted and restores no hit points. At the Narrator's discretion this item might also aid the treatment of long-term afflictions.

Explosive Alchemicals

Early firearms used smoky black gunpowder as propellant for its ammunition, but alchemical advances produced ruby-red firedust. This powdered variant of alchemist's fire produces no smoke when used in firearms, has a lower risk of fouling or corroding the weapon's internals, and is hydrophobic, allowing it to burn even after immersion in water.

Many other firearm accelerants exist, including magmite (a granular black substance rendered in alchemical furnaces) and phlogistite (transluscent red vapor slime that floats in globules if exposed to open air), but firedust is by far the most widely used. Steam engines use a variant form of firedust, firegems, which burn slower but longer.

While it is the source of a firearm's deadly power, firedust is relatively harmless as a weapon in its own right, since it burns too fast to cause serious wounds like traditional alchemist fire. If someone ignites a cask full of firedust, though, the resulting explosion could seriously hurt those nearby. National militaries field grenadiers who use hand-held explosives, particularly in Drakr, but city-dwellers—even criminals—find little use for such indiscriminate destruction.

Example Explosion

A 20-pound cask of firedust, roughly 1 foot across, explodes in a 10 foot radius, dealing 7d6 damage (Dexterity save DC 12 for half damage). A one-ton pallet that explodes deals 7d6 damage in a 30-foot radius, while those within 10 feet instead take 15d6 damage (Dexterity save DC 12 for half damage). Any attack that deals at least 5 fire damage to a space containing the cask or pallet would be sufficient to cause an explosion; simply shooting firedust with a bullet won't cause it to explode.

Firearms

Most armories will include pistols, carbines, shotguns, and muskets, with each nation's manufactories producing subtle differences. Those who can afford costlier investments carry superior rifled firearms. Additional innovations such as metal cartridge ammunition are known to exist, but they are the domain of specialized gunsmiths, and as yet are only produced in limited quantities, almost never for sale.

Usually only soldiers bother to carry grenades. Most countries have restrictions on civilian use.

Common Firearms

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Pistol	75 gp	1d10 piercing	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 20/60), muzzle-loading
Carbine	75 gp	1d12 piercing	5 lb.	Ammunition (range 50/150), muzzle-loading, two-handed
Musket	90 gp	2d8 piercing	10 lb.	Ammunition (range 60/180), heavy, muzzle-loading, two-handed
Shotgun	75 gp	1d10 piercing	6 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/90), muzzle-loading, two-handed, scatter

Common firearms can be acquired easily in almost any small town.

Advanced Firearms

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Arcane Fusil, Fire	300 gp	1 fire	3 lb.	Trigger charge (range 20/60), burn
Arcane Fusil, Lightning	300 gp	1d8 lightning	3 lb.	Trigger charge (range 20/60), shock
Grenade	50 gp	3d6 bludgeoning*	1 lb.	Thrown (range 20/60), inaccurate
Target Pistol	300 gp	1d10 piercing	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 40/160), muzzle-loading, rifled
Rifled Carbine	300 gp	1d12 piercing	5 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/320), muzzle-loading, two-handed, rifled
Rifled Musket	315 gp	2d8 piercing	10 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), heavy, muzzle-loading, two-handed, rifled

* Grenades do not add your ability score modifier to damage.

Advanced firearms are more expensive, and so they are usually available only in cities. While a well-heeled gunner will likely want to arm themselves with one, common criminals and soldiers are unlikely to possess these firearms. Arcane fusils—sometimes called lantern blasters—are rare outside of Danor, and are illegal everywhere except Elfaivar.

Simple Melee Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Short Bayonet	5 gp	1d4 piercing	2 lb.	Finesse, light
Standard Bayonet	10 gp	1d6 piercing	3 lb.	Versatile (1d8)
Long Bayonet	15 gp	1d8 piercing	4 lb.	Heavy, reach, two-handed

Ammunition and Explosives

Item	Cost	Weight
Ammunition, bullets and firedust (20 shots)	1 gp	2 lb.
Firedust, cask	20 gp	20 lb.



Weapon Descriptions

The following weapons are available to characters who have access to the advanced technology found in most of Lanjyr.

Arcane Fusils. A few gunsmiths have learned to integrate planarite into their weapon designs, though these weapons are forbidden by international treaty. They resemble normal pistols, but the inside of their barrels are lined with planarite, and most are exquisitely decorated along their handles.

Bayonets. These weapons are affixed to a firearm. Short bayonets affix to pistols, standard affix to carbines or shotguns, and long affix to muskets. These hybrid weapons function as two distinct weapons, and each would need to be enchanted separately. Their main benefit is to allow a wielder to switch between ranged and melee attacks without having to draw a new weapon.

Some firearms integrate a bladed weapon into their designs, such as a dagger with a pistol that fires along the crosspiece. This sort

of weapon is treated the same as a firearm with an affixed bayonet, except the blade cannot be removed.

The Narrator can decide whether other combinations are feasible. A shotgun/axe that does 1d8 slashing damage could theoretically work, but a whip/musket is ridiculous. (Some groups might like ridiculous, though.)

Carbine. Like a pistol, but with a stock and barrel, with a total length of three to four feet.

Grenade. This heavy metal hand-thrown explosive resembles a somewhat rounded dodecahedron. Small firegem percussion caps at its vertices ignite the firedust inside when they are struck with sufficient force, which sends shards of metal in all directions. Sometimes these caps do not ignite at first impact, so grenades hold the risk of bouncing and exploding somewhere other than their intended target. Grenades are destroyed after use.

Musket. The extended barrel of this firearm, bringing it to a total length of over five and a half feet, is an attempt to grant long range accuracy.

Pistol. A muzzle-loaded one-handed firearm with a firegem percussion cap. Pistols fire lead ball ammunition.

Rifled Carbine. This weapon is a carbine which has had the last few inches of the barrel rifled. These weapons use different ammunition—the Latimer bullet, which is more conical. The bullet's hollow flared tail expands from the force of the ignited firegems, forcing the edges of the bullet against the spiral grooves of the inside of the barrel, imparting a spin that stabilizes the bullet and enhances accuracy at range.

Rifled Musket. This design is similar to the modern conception of a rifle, with a total length of three and a half to four feet, and a barrel that is fully rifled.

Shotgun. This smoothbore weapon fires pellets that spread out, striking a roughly 5-foot radius at a range of 90 feet. It is not particularly effective at distance, but can be devastating point-blank.

Target Pistol. A pistol with a rifled barrel.

New Weapon Properties

These properties are shared by several technologically advanced weapons as shown in the weapon tables above.

Burn. The fire fusil only deals a base of 1 fire damage, but the target also catches on fire. It takes 1d10 fire damage at the start of each of its turns, and can end this damage by using its action to extinguish the flames.

Inaccurate. Grenades do not add your ability score modifier to damage.

When you throw a grenade, choose a creature or an unoccupied 5-foot space. (If the creature occupies more than one 5-foot space, choose one of the squares it occupies.) Make an attack roll against AC 10. If the attack misses, the grenade veers off course, missing by 5 feet in a random direction, or 10 feet if the target area was at long range. Each creature in a 5-foot radius of where the grenade lands must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity save or else take 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

If you targeted a creature and the attack roll is a critical hit, the grenade directly strikes that creature. The grenade does double damage to that creature without allowing a save. Other creatures in the area are affected normally.

Compatibility with the Core Rules

For the specific period of firearm development of Zeitgeist, we are not using the example firearm mechanics presented in the core rules. These firearms are slightly prone to occasional misfiring, and few people use them as a primary weapon.

For the sake of weapon proficiencies, everyone is proficient with grenades. Any character proficient with a hand crossbow is proficient with a pistol. Likewise a light crossbow is equivalent to a carbine and shotgun, and a heavy crossbow is equivalent to a musket. Effects such as feats that work with crossbows should function the same with firearms, with the exception of Crossbow Expert.

Similarly, if you're using a starter kit for a character's equipment, you can swap firearms for their comparable crossbows.

(Note that every class except druids is proficient at least with light crossbows, so everyone but druids are able to use carbines and shotguns.)

Muzzle Loading a Firearm

Reloading involves drawing and tearing open a paper cartridge, which contains firedust and a bullet. The gunner pours firedust down the barrel, then packs in the bullet with a ramrod. The gunner aims and pulls a trigger, which releases the firing hammer. The hammer strikes a firegem set at the back of the barrel, which acts as a percussion cap, producing a spark inside the barrel. The firedust ignites, and the expansion of gases propels the bullet at lethal speed.

A typical firegem percussion cap must be replaced every few dozen shots or else there is a risk the gem will crack and misfire, but the cost is negligible.

Once a firearm is fired, a character must spend an action or bonus action to reload it. Thus you can only ever fire a single shot in a turn, regardless of how many attacks you can normally take with a single action. You might then holster your gun and use other attacks in melee, or perhaps if you don't mind looking threatening you could carry multiple pistols.

The intention is that a firearm is a great weapon to open up an engagement with, such as by shooting and then moving into melee, but in the heat of battle you might not always have time to reload it.

Muzzle-Loading. After each shot, you need to use an action or bonus action to reload the weapon.

Sometimes irregular packing of a barrel causes the weapon not to function properly. Whenever you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll with a muzzle-loading firearm, the gun misfires—nothing happens, and the gun remains loaded. Clearing the barrel requires an action, and makes the gun safe to use. You can continue using the misfired gun without clearing the barrel, but attacks with the weapon have disadvantage, and if you roll a second natural 1, the weapon has a mishap and explodes. The mishap destroys the weapon and deals its base damage die to you (for example, a musket mishap deals 2d8 damage). Magical firearms with this trait never misfire or have mishaps.

Rifled. Rifling extends the range at which a firearm can accurately hit a target. You can spend an action to aim down the weapon's sight and choose a creature you can see. Until you stop aiming, quadruple the weapon's short and long ranges for the purpose of attacking that target. Each turn thereafter, you can spend an action or bonus action to continue aiming at the same target or

Etiquette for an Armed Populace

In most countries, it is considered acceptable to walk around with one or two one-handed weapons worn at your hip, with the most common being a sword and pistol. Larger or more numerous weapons might get you some odd looks, but aside from a polite request not to bring them into a café, you'd experience little resistance.

In high society, though, and especially in Risur and Danor, carrying a weapon is seen as gauche. Short swords and daggers might be concealed in canes, and formal attire can be fitted to hide a pistol in an armpit or within a dress's folds, but the only way an overt weapon would be acceptable would be if it is a conversation piece: something so unique or ostentatious that people's curiosity overcomes their sense of propriety.

In Ber or Drakr, ceremonial weapons are more acceptable, though the preference is to have an intimidating or interesting armed bodyguard. In Crisillyir, opinions are changing—traditional views are similar to the etiquette in Risur and Danor, with an added admiration for people who can defend themselves without needing any weapon; but among Ottoplismists, copious weaponry is seen as a sign of good character, especially if the weapons are ornately decorated. And in Elfaivar, demonstrations of martial prowess are a common part of formal gatherings.

switch to another target you can see. If you move or take damage, your aim is ruined and you have to start over again.

Scatter. If you are wielding a shotgun, you have advantage on an attack roll, and both rolls hit the target, the weapon deals an extra 1d10 damage. If you have disadvantage and one attack roll hits but the other misses, the target takes 1d4 damage. This graze damage is not increased by anything else (not ability modifiers, feats, smite spells, sneak attack, etc.), though resistances and vulnerabilities still apply.

Shock. When you attack a creature wearing metal armor with a lightning fusil, you have advantage on the attack roll.

Trigger Charge. An arcane fusil requires no ammunition, but you cannot simply shoot it by pulling the trigger; the planarite must first gather the necessary energy. To charge the fusil, you spend a bonus action and pull back a firing hammer. At the start of your next turn, the fusil is charged, and it can be used for a single attack.

The shot of an arcane fusil is either a pellet of flame that engulfs a target it hits, or a shaft of crackling lightning that coruscates over a target it hits.

Once you have fired an arcane fusil, you cannot charge it again on the same turn; it can only be fired every other turn.

If you charge a fusil but do not fire it on your next turn, the weapon suffers a misfire. Similar to a muzzle-loading weapon, you can clear the barrel by spending an action, but until you do the weapon has disadvantage on attacks. If you suffer a second misfire without clearing the barrel, the fusil explodes and deals its base damage die to you.

Firearm Enhancements

Item	Cost	Weight
Alchemical Launcher	1,000 gp	5 lb.
Ammunition Cartridge	1,000 gp	1 lb.
Reinforced Barrel	500 gp	1 lb.
Sniper Scope	1,000 gp	2 lb.
Suppressor	500 gp	1 lb.



Gunsmiths can enhance firearms. Such custom work is in high demand, however, and finding a gunsmith capable of crafting these is as difficult as locating an uncommon or rare magic item. The price can be similarly exorbitant.

Alchemical launchers, sniper scopes, and suppressors can be retrofitted onto existing weapons. Ammunition cartridges and reinforced barrels can only be added when a weapon is crafted, not retrofitted.

Alchemical Launcher. As an action, you can load one grenade or similar item such as alchemist fire or holy water into this underslung launcher. You can use the item as if it were in your hand. If the item normally requires a ranged attack, it uses your gun's attack bonus and range.

Ammunition Cartridge. For a pistol, a revolver cylinder lets you fire six shots before you need to reload. For a carbine, musket, or shotgun, a stripper clip instead holds five rounds. Replacing a cartridge requires an action or bonus action.

Reinforced Barrel. You've modified your barrel to fire heavier rounds. If your Narrator uses the alternate rules of attacks hitting half or three-quarters cover, if you hit cover you deal half the weapon's damage to your target, unless the attack fails to damage the cover.

You can also attack a creature with total cover; you take a –5 penalty to your attack roll (and if you can't see it, you also have disadvantage on the attack roll); if you hit, you deal half damage.

These rounds usually only work through less than a foot of wood or dirt, a few inches of stone, or a half inch of metal.

Cover-piercing ammunition costs twice as much as normal ammunition.

Sniper Scope. This enhancement is only effective on rifled weapons. You can aim down this finely-tuned telescopic sight without needing to spend an action. However, you are considered blind except against creatures in a direct line from you to your target. The blindness lasts until your next turn.

Suppressor. Your shots are relatively quiet. If you are hidden when you attack, you remain hidden from creatures more than 50 feet from you. A creature struck does, however, know the direction the shot came from.

Apotropaics

The influence of the plane Amrou has enhanced the effectiveness of mundane items in fending off the supernatural. What once were mere superstitions now can have meaningful effect, such as using a line of salt to block the advance of a ghost, or ringing a bell to drive back a demon.

Nonmagical items that possess the ability to avert evil influences are collectively called **apotropaics**, and they are particularly common in Crisillyir, where such threats are most famous.

Below are common apotropaics, some of which are duplicated from the normal equipment list in the core rulebook.

Item	Cost	Weight
Holy Symbol	—	—
Holy Water (flask)	25 gp	1 lb.
Jade (pendant or ammunition)	5 gp	—
Jade-Accented Weapon	100 gp	—
Jade, Powdered (bag)	100 gp	5 lb.
Oil (pint flask)	1 sp	1 lb.
Portable Chiming Clock	100 gp	20 lb.
Portable Tolling Bell	20 gp	40 lb.
Salt (bag)	1 sp	5 lb.

Holy Symbol. A holy symbol is a representation of a god or pantheon. A brandished holy symbol can briefly hold back fiends and undead.

Holy Water (flask). As an action, you can splash the contents of this flask onto a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. In either case, make a ranged attack against a target creature, treating the holy water as an improvised weapon. If the target is a fiend or undead, it takes 2d6 radiant damage.

Jade (pendant). A small pendant of green stone. Jade repels and can injure aberrations. If jade touches an aberration, it deals 2d6 radiant damage, and then the object shatters.

Jade-Accented Weapon. A weapon accented with jade (such as on its blade or a striking head) deals an extra 2d6 radiant damage to an aberration, but after one strike the jade is expended. The cost listed is in addition to the weapon's normal price.

Jade, Powdered (bag). Collected dust from a workshop that polishes and sets jade. As an action, you can pour out the powder to draw a line across three adjacent squares.

Alternately, you can spend an action to throw a handful at a creature within 5 feet of you. Make a ranged attack against a target creature or object, treating the dust as an improvised weapon. On a hit, if the target is an aberration it takes 2d6 radiant damage.

The bag has sufficient dust for ten uses—ten thrown handfuls, 150-ft. worth of lines, or some combination.

Oil (pint flask). Oil usually comes in a clay flask that holds 1 pint. As an action, you can splash a pint of oil onto a creature within 5 feet of you or throw the flask up to 20 feet (it shatters on impact). Make a ranged attack against a target creature or object, treating the oil as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target is covered in oil.

If the target takes any fire damage before the oil dries (after 1 minute), the target takes an additional 5 fire damage from the burning oil. You can also pour a flask of oil on the ground to cover a 5-foot-square area, or to draw a thin ring 10 feet in diameter, provided that the surface is level. If lit, the oil burns for 2 rounds and deals 5 fire damage to any creature that enters the area or ends its turn in the area. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Burning oil lines and rings can block the movement of celestials. A celestial that is covered in burning oil is entangled.

Portable Chiming Clock. A dense and durable clock in a wooden frame designed to be held with relative ease. Built as an adventurer's tool to keep fey away, its chimes are as loud as a grandfather clock's. You can flick a switch as a bonus action so that it begins to chime, which lasts until the end of your next turn. During that time, fey within 30 feet are repelled. Afterward, it must be wound before it can be used again, which requires an action. (Chimes that aren't part of actual clocks do not repel fey, but might annoy them.)

Portable Tolling Bell. Four feet tall, with wheels to help move it, this adventurer's tool resembles a wooden saw horse with an iron bell hung from the middle. As an action, you can pull a lever to toll the bell, which repels fiends within 30 feet. This lasts until the end of your next turn.

Salt (bag). Normally used with food. As an action, you can pour out the powder to draw a line across three adjacent squares. Salt repels fiends and undead.

Alternately, you can spend an action to throw a handful at a creature within 5 feet of you. Make a ranged attack against a target creature or object, treating the salt as an improvised weapon. On a hit, if the target is undead or a fiend it takes 2d6 radiant damage.

The bag has sufficient dust for ten uses—ten thrown handfuls, 150 ft. worth of lines, or some combination.

Counterfeit Apotropaics

In most cases, for apotropaics to work, authenticity matters. If a naïve child pours a line of sugar on the ground, a ghost can float past it, even if the ghost thinks the sugar is salt. This likely makes it realize it misidentified the white powder, though perhaps the ghost will think it simply overcame the substance's repellant power.

Similarly, casting *minor illusion* to create the sound of a tolling bell wouldn't drive away a fiend, because it is the bell itself that has the power. Scholars suspect this is somehow tied to the magical theory of collective belief, but so far no studies have managed to find places in the world where a lack of knowledge about apotropaics renders them powerless.

It is possible to bluff with a fake apotropaic, but such a gambit is risky. If a person with a handful of brass ingots threatened a wounded demon that if it came any closer, the "gold" would kill it, the demon might keep its distance. But if push came to shove, that brass won't harm the demon at all.

Apotropaic Mechanics

Various items are anathema to different types of creatures, and can repel and in some cases even harm those creatures. However, whenever a creature is attacked, it can ignore any repelling effect until the end of the encounter in order to approach and attack the creature or group that antagonized it.

Apotropaics function in coexistent planes, bleeding from Waking to Dreaming and to the Bleak Gate, and from any world into the Ethereal Plane, which can keep ethereal creatures like ghosts from bypassing them.

Harm. A harmful item has an effect similar to holy water on undead and fiends, dealing 2d6 radiant damage on impact. Each

such strike uses up roughly a handful of the substance, or causes larger objects to crack after one use.

Using excessive amounts of the material might cause ongoing damage (such as by burying a fiend in a mound of gold), but not more than 2d6 per round.

Repel. Creatures cannot willingly touch materials that repel them, nor even use tools to manipulate such items. They can, however, create circumstances to move the repellant item. For instance, a ghost might telekinetically shatter a window so a breeze from outside disperses salt.

If a material repels a creature, a line of that material prevents a creature from crossing. For the purpose of blocking flying creatures, the effect of a repulsive line extends as far vertically as the line is long, and if the material is in a ring, it functions as a dome of the ring's radius.

A character can spend an action to brandish a repellant item, which prevents the repelled creature from approaching within five feet and from making melee attacks against it for one minute. When you use this action, you can make an opposed Charisma check against the creature, and if it fails it must move out of your path if you come within 10 feet of it.

A creature can attempt to overcome this repellent effect, such as by trying to cross a barrier or attack a creature brandishing the item. If it succeeds a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, it can ignore the repulsion from that particular item—and anything similar within 30 feet—for one hour. If they fail, their turn ends and they cannot try again in that area for a day.

However, if a creature is attacked in any way by a creature protected by a repellant item, it can freely ignore the repellant effect as if it had succeeded its saving throw.

Aberrations

Aberrations are harmed and repelled by jade.

Celestials

Celestials are repelled by burning oil.

Fey

Fey are repelled by the sound of chiming clocks for as long as the chimes ring. This was always the case, even before Amrou appeared in the night sky, but the plane's influence has strengthened the effect.

The ticking of a small pocketwatch will bother but not actually repel anyone. A grandfather clock chime affects a 30 foot radius, and something the size of a clocktower toll affects hundreds of feet. Experts on the Dreaming suspect that this is because that plane has an unsteady flow of time, and the presence of a clock forces time into a specific pace.

Whirring gears often repel fey in Risur, though many fey in other parts of the world have no problem with gears, nor any sort of non-timepiece technology, suggesting that the reaction is based either on what the fey believe, or what the people in those lands *think* the fey believe.

In addition to these more concrete defenses, fey still respond to the same favors they always did. Leaving out offerings of food or milk can earn small boons, or simply attract cats.



Fiends

Fiends are repelled by salt and by brandished holy symbols. They also are repelled by ringing bells the same way fey are repelled by chiming clocks, with larger bells affecting a wider area.

Holy water deals damage to fiends due to its own magical properties, not because of Amrou.

Gold harms fiends, but only in amounts weighing a pound or more (such as a small ingot worth at least 50 gp). If a fiend is harmed by gold, it cannot teleport for one round. However, after striking a fiend, a gold object is turned to lead.

Undead

Undead are repelled by salt, and can be repelled by brandished holy symbols the same as fiends.

Holy water deals damage to undead due to its own magical properties, not because of Amrou.

Travel

Outside cities, most people still get by on foot, on horses, or by wagon. During the winter, farm workers might take local rail to the nearest city, stay in a flophouse for a few days while working in a factory, and then take a return train to their families.

In larger cities, factory laborers and business workers crowd commuter rail services, including impressive streetcars in Cherage and the vibrantly artistic subrails of Flint. Steam-powered ferries have all but replaced traditional barges for intra-city water travel, though the gondolas of Alais Primos are still popular for those seeking to receive a canal's blessing during a leisurely transit.

Seafaring

Away from the great cities of the world, sailors still tend rigging and rely on the wind. But steam-powered ships are common, and the necessity for access to firegem fuel in different ports helps encourage nations to maintain at least neutral relations, since the cost

Ship-Spirits

People have always personified great ships, assigning them personalities and revering them for famous deeds. A few years ago, a strange feline undine who claimed to be from the planet Mavisha met with the navies of the world and sold them the secrets of a strange device called a *Mavishan cube*. Somehow, these magic inventions take the idea of a ship and give it physical life, often in humanoid form.

Only a handful of ships in each nation's navy have made use of these little-understood cubes, but in popular understanding these ship-spirits give the captain and crew the ability to speak with their vessel, and she in turn can help them with repairs and steering. Part mascot, part major-domo for the captain, ship-spirits unsettle some, but sailors seem to cherish them, and they have captured the popular imagination in novel, song, and theater.

More information can be found in Chapter Seven.

of disrupting maritime trade around the Avery Sea is higher than that of diplomacy. In the halls of power, military strategists ponder whether Elfaivar will be tempted to disrupt this comity since they seem committed to maintaining a traditional wind-powered navy.

When it comes to military capability at sea, the Risuri navy, armed with enchanted cannons and guided by skyseers who can control the winds, are unrivaled. In addition to a sprawling fleet of frigates that it uses to protect trade routes, Risur defends its major ports with five powerful ironclad warships that possess magically reinforced hulls and all manner of arcanoscientific armaments, as well as magical capacitors that a ship war wizard can channel directly into spells for unpredictable defensive and utility purposes.

Risur also maintains the prestigious Gale Fleet, seven vessels that eschew all industrial technology, yet which have special favor of the fey titan She Who Writhes. These include a fey-pact schooner *Roscommon*, and the extreme clipper *Impossible*, said to be the fastest ship ever built.

Danor's navy can match Risur's technologically, but is far smaller due to Concordat restrictions, and its shipwrights are struggling to catch up on matters magical. However, Danor is known to have constructed several military submarines, which were not explicitly mentioned in the Concordat.

Drakr and Crisillyir's navies are functional, but have done little to distinguish themselves. Ber maintains strong relations with Risur and in many ways its navy is a smaller replica of their neighbor's, though Beran tactics put a stronger emphasis on ramming and boarding actions. This turned out quite badly for them during the Elfaivaran Reclamation, as the warriors of Elfaivar's navy were much more skilled in close combat.

As mentioned above, Elfaivar mostly eschews steam power. Instead of firegems, it seems patriotic enthusiasm fuels their robust efforts to rapidly construct a wind-powered navy to match the returned gulmohar's population surge. Most of their ships are small, using designs laid down by shipwrights whose knowledge is centuries out of date. The ships are beautiful, however, and clearly were built with pride.

Flight

Amateur aeronauts are making gradual innovations in gliders, and a few well-resourced inventors with access to sufficient air-aspected planarite have managed to build individual flying vehicles—fragile, yet breathtaking to watch soar through the sky.

Risur is the only nation with any formal skyfleet, though even that is small. All but one of these ships are small and lightly armed. They serve more as a showcase of Risuri prestige. When King Baldrey flew the skyfleet to the capitals of different nations, many saw it as a quiet threat that Risur looked down on them.

The gem in the crown of the Risur's skyfleet is the RNS *Coaltongue*, retrofitted from a seafaring steamship and kept aloft through great expense. It played a pivotal role in the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis.

Other nations have produced small numbers of flying vessels, and after one Risuri skyship went missing patrolling the Anthras Mountains, the public has grown giddy with rumors that a dastardly crew of aeronauts hijacked the vessel in the middle of foggy weather, and intend to become sky pirates.

Railroads

When traveling out of cities, railroads usually have a stop every few miles until they reach wider rural landscapes. Danor built a web of passenger rail lines among its cities and large towns, and Drakr followed suit, though because the Malice Lands were nigh impossible to traverse before the Great Eclipse, only a few lines now connect the two nations.

Crisillyir deigned to allow the Avery Coast Railroad to pass through its lands. Ever since the Great Eclipse, Ottoplismists have begun aggressively adding new off-shoots to that railroad. The capital Alais Primos has a grand rail station with the architecture of a cathedral, right down to the altar of Verus wherein priests perform weekly train blessings.

Risur, as is often the case, struggles to keep its native fey appeased. On the busiest rail line, which runs between Flint and Bole, druids place colorful ribbons and other offerings on tree trunks along the route. The national capital, Slate, allowed a train station to be built on the outskirts, but bans commuter rail within the city limits. Due to the need to not arouse the ire of various fey strongholds, it takes at least three days to take a train from Flint to Shale, potentially more if the fey titan the Father of Thunder is active in the northern Weftlands.

Ber has two large clusters of railroads on the east and west coasts, with very few stops in the lands between. Currently no rail line connects Ber with Risur, although lizardfolk industrialists are looking to change that.

Teleportation

In the distant past, spellcasters who had unlocked the secret of teleportation had nearly free reign to travel in a blink to wherever they desired. The rites of rulership that Risur's and Crisillyir's national sovereigns draw power from could block entry of those who aroused the ire of a king or hiearch, but most wizards cared little for national affairs.

During the 4th and 5th century AOV, however, the ongoing wars between Risur and Danor saw patriotic mages using teleportation offensively.



The Avery Coast Railroad

The most famous length of track in Lanjyr is the Avery Coast railroad, which runs from Beaumont on Danor's western side, through the capital Cherage, to the Malice city Orithea, and on to Drakr's capital Trekhom. From there it crosses the Penance Peaks, stopping in the magical city-state of Nalaam, and then down into Crisillyir, with rail enclaves in Sid Minos and Vendricce.

Originally a project of an ascendant Danor to demonstrate its domination of northern Lanjyr, the vast passenger line was intended to continue on to Danor's colony in Elfaivar, Rationalis. The return of the gulmohar and the Elfaivaran Reclamation led to the railroad being dismantled east of Vendricee. The Concordat threatened to wrest ownership of the railroad from Danor, but the nation negotiated aggressively for it, seeing it as a key way to keep something positive about their country present in the minds of other nations.

In every town along the route, Danor maintains small rail enclaves with housing and dining for long-haul guests. Though most of the employees of these enclaves are locals, each station is run by a Danoran, usually a tiefling.

Traveling 3,000 miles from Beaumont to Vendricce takes six days, sometimes reaching speeds as high as sixty miles per hour. To minimize the risk of rail damage, derailment, and banditry, the train only runs during daylight hours. Each evening the train stops at a major city as a waystation, and a total of twelve locomotives are in service at any time, running a regular circuit. While other trains might run faster over short distances, during the day the Avery Coast line has right of way on its tracks, and other trains will sit parked on a parallel track to let it pass. Thanks to this well-run system, it can travel the length of northern Lanjyr faster than almost any steamship.

Always on Time

Depots between major stops store replacement locomotives and train cars in case of damage, but daily maintenance has kept such failures low. For the twenty-five years of its operation the railroad has only had a handful of major delays. Travelers can count on a train coming to their city, headed in either direction, every day, earning Avery Coast Railroad its most famous slogan: "Always on Time."

The other popular slogan, "Taming the Malice," was perhaps the railroad's greater achievement. The Malice Lands lie between Danor and Drakr, in the territory where before the Great Eclipse magic worked only erratically. Creatures would mutate readily into monsters, and inconstant magical energies conjured bizarre weather. The presence of so much iron in such a regular construction seems to have a stabilizing effect on the wild magic, and the railroad's crack militia would handle any threat that had a heartbeat.

Since the Great Eclipse, the Malice Lands have become much more stable. Conductors and tour guides on the Avery Coast Railroad are prone to exaggerating how much credit they should take for this change.



A solution was presented by an entrepreneurial cadre of wizards of the city-state of Nalaam, who produced and sold several dozen *teleportation beacons*. These beacons take the form of a circle of inscribed runes (like a normal teleportation circle) whose runes trace their way up and around a stone obelisk. The beacon blankets an area several miles across with a ward against teleportation. Any long-distance planar travel (generally anything traveling a mile or more) that would arrive within the warded area is redirected to instead land within the teleportation circle.

Most major cities today have a teleportation beacon, usually either at the edge of the city or in a fortress of some sort, though Beran beacons all direct visitors to public squares. Those capable of casting such spells are rare, so they charge a high premium for their services and often require some formal introduction by a government official.

Otherworldly Travel

After the stars vanished and returned, the public grew understandably interested in the heavens. Telescopes have peered at the planets above, mages sought visions, and scholars tried to make sense of thousands of years of scattered lore.

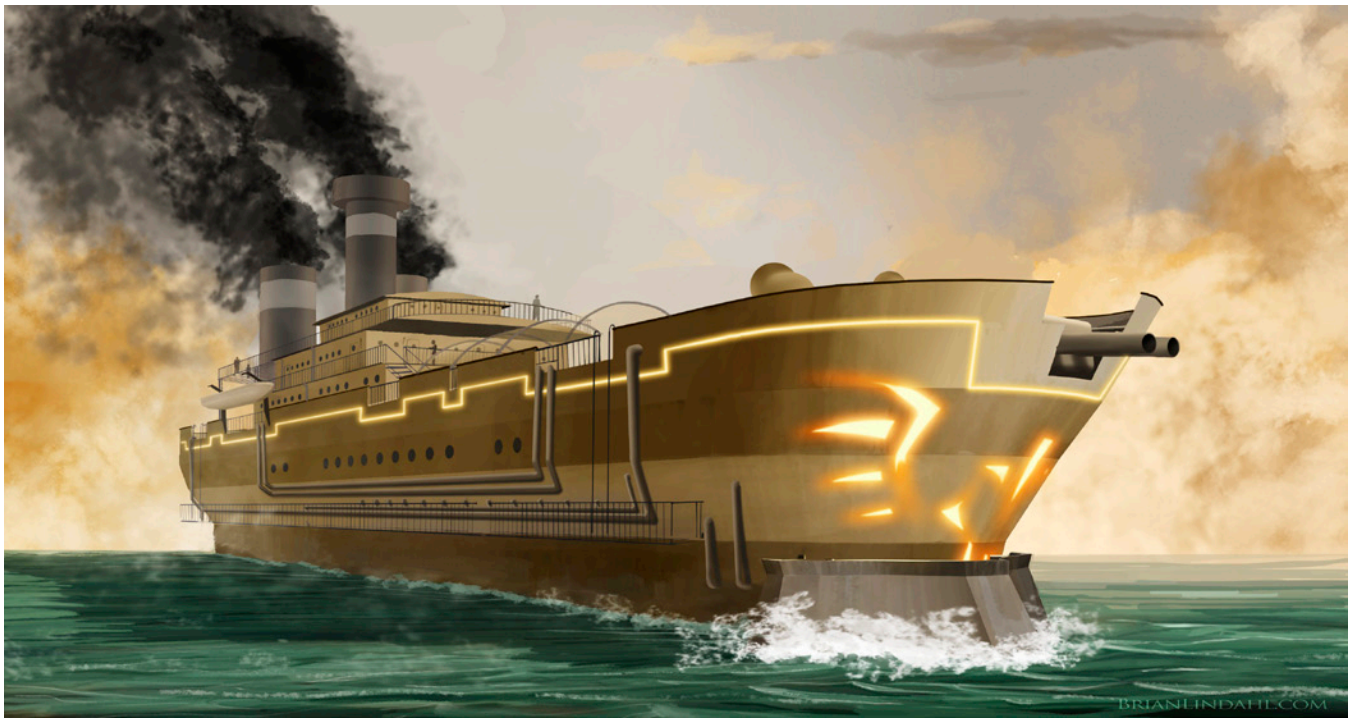
Most travel between worlds is dependent on temporary pathways or celestial conjunctions, and only through the most powerful and secret magic can someone travel at a time of their own choosing. Many nations have identified familiar trails to the **Dreaming**, and some perilous traps that draw people into the **Bleak Gate**. Ber has its navy guard a sunken portal to **Ostea, the Beating Heart** off the coast of its capital, and Risur's fey titan the Ash Wolf keeps watch on a ruin with a portal to **Jiese, the Fire of Industry**. A ruin on a floating island in southern Ber likewise leads to **Caeloon, the Paper Wind**.

Risur and Drakr are both researching ways to send vehicles through the air and into the void between worlds, but have little to show for their efforts, at least publicly.

Passenger Travel

A ride across a city usually takes an hour or less. Local travel is within roughly thirty miles, enough to cover in an afternoon. In a day, a train or coastal steamship will usually travel two or three hundred miles.

For international trips, steamships can manage closer to four hundred miles in a day. Dirigibles are still mostly experimental, and can carry much less cargo. They can reach nearly sixty miles per hour, and cross most mountain ranges with ease. Though exorbitantly expensive, flights connect Flint to Cherage, or Flint to Seobriga, on a daily basis.



Item	Price
Carriage Ride, Citywide	1 sp
Commuter Rail, Citywide	1 cp
Train Ride, Coach, Local	1 gp
Train Ride, Coach, Per Day	2 gp
Train Ride, Cabin, Local	10 gp
Train Ride, Cabin, Per Day	20 gp
Boat Ride, City Ferry	5 cp
Boat Ride, Steerage, Local	5 sp
Boat Ride, Steerage, International	5 gp
Boat Ride, Cabin, Local	6 gp
Boat Ride, Cabin, International	60 gp
Dirigible, Local	50 gp
Dirigible, International	500 gp
Teleportation to a Known Circle (includes up to 10 people)	400 gp

Of course, in many campaigns, boats, trains, and airships are conveyances to get to the adventure, and so the prices of booking passage or buying a vessel outright might fade into the background.

Vehicles

Item	Price
Cutter, Traditional	3,000 gp
Cutter, Steam	3,000 gp
Schooner	10,000 gp
Steam Freighter	10,000 gp
Steam Gunboat	30,000 gp
Frigate	150,000 gp
Ship of the Line	900,000 gp
Submersible	40,000 gp
Glider, Personal	500 gp
Dirigible	40,000 gp
Skyship	200,000 gp

Cutter, Traditional. This simple sailing design runs 30 feet long, with a 40-foot-high mast.

Cutter, Steam. This 30-foot-long steamship has a small cabin in the back and carries enough fuel to travel about 500 miles.

Schooner. Built with two decks and 90 feet long, this ship's two masts rise 70 feet high. Five medium carronades on each broadside serve more as deterrence than threat.

Steam Freighter. A standard cargo transport, this 90-foot-long steamship belches smoke and steam from 30-foot-high stacks. With a small crew and no weapons, they can travel the length of Lanjyr without refueling, as long as no pirates or sea monsters accost them.

Steam Gunboat. Clad in iron and 85 feet long, this ship's low profile resembles a metal raft with a cylindrical turret on top, but beneath the surface is a whole lower deck. The vessel is built for harbor and coastal defense, not sea voyages.

Frigate. Built with three decks, 150 feet long, this ship's three masts rise over 100 feet above the main deck. Thirteen cannons line either side of the ship's gun deck. Five light cannons on the main deck aid close-range fusillades. Two light cannons on the main deck fire forward to harry foes while in pursuit. Likewise, two light cannons face aft.

Ship of the Line. The mightiest warships come in some variety, but have enough cannons—and sometimes magical armaments—to devastate numerous smaller ships. Their hulls are strong enough to shrug off most cannon strikes, and they carry enough marines to capture a large town. Due to their great expense, they remain in service for decades, and so many ships of the line have a mix of sails and steam engines.

Submersible. Cramped and fragile in battle, Danoran submersibles measure 70 feet long yet have crews of fewer than 20 sailors. They usually stay on the surface, but can dive—roughly thirty feet deep—to avoid detection and attack.

Naval Weapons

Danor has armed its ships with cannons for two centuries. Fifty years ago Risur developed some of the first arctech weapons by enchanting batteries of cannons, though the extra expense proved so great it was usually more effective just to launch extra ships with more normal cannons.

That changed when Danor began to armor their warships with iron plating. Drakr responded by developing ponderous gunboats with very heavy cannons mounted on turrets. Risur instead chose arctech. The previous flagship of Risur, the RNS *Coaltongue*, could fire a lance of arcane force that could puncture any vessel's hull, but the weapon was challenging to aim.

During the Great Eclipse, Danor equipped its flagship *La Lux du Raison* with a mighty arcane fusil called the "Lantern Cannon." Though only able to fire once every few minutes, its magical beam could vaporize a twenty-foot-wide fortress wall in a single blast. While perhaps the most impressive weapon of war ever fielded, the lantern cannon relied on planar energy from a world called Mojang which is no longer present in the night sky.

Warships today are in transition, with new designs phasing out gundecks with dozens of cannons in favor of Drakran style heavy turrets, usually complemented with one or two enchanted weapons with various fantastic capabilities. Risur is said to be equipping its new flagship, the aerial battleship RAS *Burning Sky*, with new fiery lantern cannons, though it is doubtful they can match Danor's infamous "light of reason.

Kinetography

The static images of *asomatous canvas projectors* dazzle in many cities, but the Danoran art scene in Beaumont is home of the burgeoning artform of kinetography (literally, the writing of motion). By linking multiple projectors in sequence, auteurs have begun to record and replay stories up to an hour long, like theater where the actors only have to perform their role once, and where the best performance can always be shared with the audience.

While the port of Beaumont has been preyed upon by pirates for centuries, today a new plunder tempts them. Shipmages of pirate crews have begun to bring their own recording cubes into these kinema theaters to discreetly copy the performances, then make copies upon copies—each slightly more degraded than the last—to sell around the Yerasol Archipelago and various ports along the Avery Sea. While the playhouses of Beaumont rail against the lost profits from this piracy, it has had the effect to popularize Danoran art and culture around the continent.

Be careful, though, if you try this tactic in the theaters of Risur. The Stage Actors Guild has old ties with the fey of the Dreaming, and an urban legend tells of the *Trove*, a pirate ship whose shipmage tried to record a production of *Wind Blows the Heart's Flame to Bloom* in Flint. The person who returned to the ship, though, was a fey changeling, who killed the crew one by one and replaced them with *permanent illusions*. The *Trove* managed to sail all the way to Beaumont, where it remains beached, its copied crew continuing their hollow tasks eternally.

"

Glider, Personal. Weighing about 100 pounds, these gliders have wings that can collapse for ease of storage, but span about 20 feet when fully extended. *Fly* or *levitation* spells are typically used to get the glider to a starting height, though cliffs and tall hills do in a pinch. Launching usually requires a speedy start, traveling at least 60 feet in one round. The glider has speed 80, AC 10, and 20 hit points. It counts as Large, but can only carry the driver and one passenger, and only limited cargo. It uses normal vehicle rules (*Level Up Adventurer's Guide*, page 343), with the following changes.

Whenever the pilot tries to use Maneuver or Ahead Full, they must make a piloting check (Dexterity DC 10, using proficiency in Vehicles (air)). If they fail, they instead Drive the glider. If they fail by 5 or more, they Brake the glider instead.

Each round the glider safely descends 10 feet at initiative count 20. If no one is piloting it, or if the pilot used Stop in the past round, the glider instead falls 100 feet at initiative count 20. To regain control of the glider, the pilot must use a bonus action and succeed a piloting check (DC 10).

The pilot can always use movement on their turn to descend, but they can only gain altitude if they have momentum. After gaining altitude, the glider loses momentum and the pilot has disadvantage on any check they make in the next round to pilot.

Dirigible. This craft features a 140-foot-long tapered envelope that holds a lighter-than-air gas, which lifts a 20-foot-long crew cabin. Propulsion comes from propellers spun by a steam engine. The vehicle can carry minimal cargo.

Skyship. These vessels have a profile similar to a schooner, but rely on planarite levitationals to let them soar into the clouds. Currently all of Risur's skyships are powered by sail, and cannot safely support the weight of a steam engine and propellers. For the same reason, they carry no cannons, but the crew usually consist of elite warriors and mages who can be almost as threatening as a cannon barrage.

Magic for Sale

Most of the magic items in Chapter Six are too rare for most to ever expect to see, and either are relics enchanted by magic-users long ago, or masterful creations of elite inventors today. However, some items are common enough that it wouldn't surprise anyone to see them in a large town or city.

Among those are the *asomatous canvas projector*, *automatic arithmetic analyzer*, *countermagical handcuffs*, and *skullduggery ring*. You might also be interested in purchasing an often-contraband *personal revision hourglass*, a charming *hat of hats*, the journalist's favorite *alacritous camera*, or the daunting *great Nock gun*.

Life and Death

Each culture understands death a different way, even if skyseers and scholars claim to know the scientific truth of souls and the afterlife. Devas, though rare, have all undergone dozens of their own reincarnations. Spirit mediums can contact the dead, even if they cannot restore their life.

But the magic to bring back those who have passed on is possessed by very few. Rare are those deemed worthy to receive such blessings, and even then the Clergy acts as a cartel to maintain a near monopoly on second chances.

The Limit of Three Miles

Common magical lore says that a spirit might linger in the realm called the Bleak Gate and haunt where it perished, but the soul cannot wander more than three miles from the place it died. If it does, it loses its sense of self or vanishes to some distant realm for its eternal reward. Spirit mediums who claim to talk to the dead beyond this range are liars, though desperate people are often willing to believe these lies for the comfort of thinking they can speak to their loved ones one last time.

Under normal circumstances, *raise dead* does not work on a creature whose body has traveled more than three miles from where it was killed. *Reincarnate* has a similar restriction.

Resurrection can work regardless of where the creature died, but only the Prime Cardinal of the Clergy and perhaps a handful of living saints are known to be able to perform such a miracle.

Corporeal undead can sometimes carry a spirit wherever it travels (though usually it becomes corrupted by dark magic). And esoteric enchantments might bind a soul to an object. In rare circumstances a spirit medium present when someone is slain by psychic magic might be able to hold the spirit within themselves, though over time the two souls may begin to merge, or the foreign spirit might try to wrest control.

Finally witchoil, a type of death planarite that is illegal around the world, traps and torments the souls of those who die nearby it, which is a way to transport them, though freeing the spirit requires casting *remove curse* on the oil, and such spirits often go mad.

The Clergy Cartel

The Clergy of Crisillyir is the only group that actively trains spellcasters who are capable of casting *raise dead*, so if you're fortunate enough to die near one of the nation's larger cities, a resurrection is a simple matter of paying several years' wages and owing a life debt to the church. The few clerics in other nations powerful enough to cast the spell operate with great secrecy, lest they find their own souls being flagellated by holy assassins.

The city of **Prejo Vizzuto** trains Clergy priests who become powerful enough to raise the dead, and many pilgrims travel there hoping their loved ones will be returned to them. It is said that by entering the Bleak Gate and descending to the old prison beneath the holy city, brave companions can call forth their friends' souls regardless of distance, though they will face a great ordeal. If they can make it out of the Bleak Gate, the city's hierarch will grant a resurrection.

It is also possible to reach out through the Family criminal organization, which for a higher fee and some sort of illegal favor can arrange for a cleric to travel to the location of the recently deceased.

Other Places to Recuperate from Death

The Clergy is wary of operating in Elfaivar, but in that religiously-diverse and oft-xenophobic nation there is no formal hierarchy to locate the scattered clerics capable of raising the dead. It is unclear how common such magic is.

Druids are a major cultural institution in Risur. Rituals of reincarnation are often performed as a public celebration.

The Imperium, after splintering off from Danor, draped itself in symbols of the pre-Malice Clergy. Rumors say that agents have been slowly kidnapping Clergy priests who are brainwashed to be loyal to Empress Duffet-Jierre, and to ensure her most trusted generals will always be revived if they fall in battle.

In the Malice State of Arrovia, local legend tells that a grieving doctor managed to devise a machine to raise the dead using science, not magic.

Common folk of Drakr disdain trying to extend one's life, but among the wealthy Drakran clans there is a tradition of fining a murderer's family to pay for Clergy priests to revive the person they killed, which has the effect of making inter-clan assassinations pointless.

Meanwhile in Ber, even having the wealth to afford a *raise dead* spell is frowned upon, though various bardic colleges are proposing that the citizenry should pool their resources to reward heroes who die serving the nation.

Finally, bardic vagabonds claim that legendary performer Rock Rackus will sometimes hear songs performed to mourn dead lovers or inspirations, or that he may be summoned by particularly defiant vulgarities shouted to the moon, or that if a person dies doing something awesome and is being publicly eulogized, Rock will be so compelled to upstage the recently deceased that he will show up and resurrect them, sign an autograph, and vanish into the night.




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CHAPTER FOUR
COLLECTANEA OF THE AVERY SEA

History informs Lanjyr's brewing conflicts today, and you there's adventure to be found in major cities and the lands and seas between.

How We Got Here

Risur's skyseers believed the future was written in the stars. Drakran eschatologists predicted the world would end in ice. Danor's egalitarian leaders looked to an unending future of progress. Crisillyiri priests warned the pious to care for this one lifetime, to live it well so one's soul can rest eternally. Elfaivar long clung to its tragic past, but now grapples with all the unexpected possibilities provided by the gulmohar's return. And Ber is so excited to be part of the world *now* that they keep stumbling for not looking ahead.

Old History

The world's future is yours to set, but it is on a course set by three main ages: Ancient, Nations, and Post-Malice.

Ancient Age

Before recorded history, an Ancient orc civilization subdued great monsters and made the world ready for humanoids, but then fell from power. Their ruins dot the continent of Lanjyr.

Age of Nations

An untold amount of time later, half of the southern continent united as Risur. Soon thereafter the Demonocracy conquered all lands north of the Avery Sea. After several centuries of demonic tyranny, a great unifier of men, Triegenes, defeated the Demonocracy and ascended to godhood, inspiring the creation of the Clergy. The Demonocracy's draconic minions fled to Ber and created petty kingdoms of their own.

The Clergy's expansion eventually clashed with the magically mighty Elfaivaran Empire, culminating in a global disaster called the Great Malice.

Post-Malice Age

The Great Malice created a vast zone of dead and wild magic, collapsed Elfaivar, and shattered the Clergy. The nation of Danor arose in the dead magic zone, pursuing science and reason in the absence of supernatural power. Dwarven clans wrested power from the remains of the Clergy and rose as the leaders of Drakr, while the survivors of the Clergy consolidated in Crisillyir. They were first to claim colonies in the fallen Elfaivar, but Risur, Danor, and Drakr eventually followed.

In the year 295 AOV, some strange shift in the planes caused magical flight to falter, and prevented large creatures from taking to wing. Within five years the vulnerable dragon tyrants of Ber were all overthrown, and the public thought dragons had been exterminated. The axis of power in the region shifted to Risur and Danor, who engaged in four great wars to control the Yerasol Archipelago. With each successive conflict, Danor debuted new technology, and so sparked a revolution of industry across the world. Even the tribes of Ber unified into a new nation and set their sights on modernity and civility.

The Great Eclipse

The world already seemed to be sliding toward chaos in the first years of the sixth century. A possible alliance between Risur and Danor fell apart when a colossus of dark steel and screaming oil tore free from a mountain in the city of Flint during the peace summit. Gnolls attempted a coup in Ber, and dwarven doomsday cultists set off bombs in several cities, hoping to herald the end of the world. Skyseers saw no more future in the heavens.

Then the stars fell from the sky, the sun vanished, and the very laws of magic changed.

In the new dark world, psychic phenomena called egregores drew crowds of people into hiveminds, forming massive tentacled bodies of thoughtflesh driven to fulfill the shared purpose of the minds trapped within. Drakr's doomsday cultists killed tens of thousands of their countrymen and nearly destroyed the city of Mirsk. Risur's fey titans awoke and conjured immense natural disasters. Alien beings never before seen terrorized Danor and Ber.



And in Crisillyir, which had seemed fairly stable beforehand, nearly every hierarch of the Clergy committed suicide on the same night, after which the people put their own gods on trial, executing eight and triggering the deaths of thousands of their worshipers.

After months of doomsdays, Danor's sovereign Han Jierre directed his nation to build enchanted lighthouses whose light kept some warm while the rest of the world slowly froze. But their true purpose was to harness a worldwide egregoric field to make all the nations docile and subservient. Most people did not even know to resist.

The Strange Hour

Risur's king Baldrey Korrigan discovered this plot, and his allies destroyed these lanterns and thwarted Han Jierre's scorched earth plans that would have killed millions. Then all eyes turned west toward Axis Island, in the Yerasol Archipelago.

Few who were physically there speak of what occurred, other than that they saw two airships in battle around a steel colossus—the same one that had emerged from a mountain in Flint shortly before the eclipse began. Every person in the world felt their minds called upon for a pivotal clash of wills. King Baldrey and his allies were certainly one side, but if people knew then the leader of the other side, they cannot remember today. What is clear is that at the end of that strange hour, the ineffable psychic bond ended, and the sun and stars returned.

New History

The new age began in 503 AOV with a lingering sense of unity after the shared trial, though many in positions of authority still clung to power, even in the wake of so much disruption and loss.

Han Jierre returned to Danor, confessed to the lighthouse scheme, and died, executed by his old war minister, Eloise Duffet. She tried to start a military dictatorship, but a public revolt drove her into exile. Danor resolved to create a new government, but Jierre's confession led other nations to demand Danor be held accountable for the damages and deaths of the Great Eclipse.

The Orithean Concordat

A gathering of world leaders, economists, and negotiators met in the city of Orithea in the newly-safe Malice Lands. Risur's King Baldrey, Drakr's Chancellor Heid, Ber's Bruse Corta Nariz, and Crisillyir's interim Prime Cardinal Malthusius eventually settled on an agreement, named the Orithean Concordat. More than anything else, it set the parameters of modern global affairs.

Each other great nation levied a carefully calculated debt upon Danor, totaling about five years' worth of Danor's entire economy, set to be paid off over four decades. Danor was effectively made an indentured servant of the other nations, and Danoran industry was forced to export its most advanced engineering and technological creations until all nations stood on fairly equal footing. Until that time, Danor and its people were forbidden from developing new weaponry, vehicles, or arcanotechnological items that other nations lacked the capacity to build themselves.

Finally, despite those onerous restrictions, Danor was required to field a small fleet and garrison to guard Axis Island, in tandem with Risuri forces. Meeting that obligation would prevent it from exerting influence around the Avery Sea as it long had.

Danor, once the driver of invention and progress, was hobbled. And, due to the wording of the Concordat, Risur could freely study and improve arctech. As long as other nations didn't match those innovations, Danor would not be able to keep parity in its centuries-long arms race. Risur became the *de facto* superpower of the continent.

Elfaivar Reborn

While global attention was focused on Danor, on the other end of Lanjyr a miracle had occurred. Millions of women who had perished five centuries earlier in the Great Malice were restored to life. Though these women, who came to be called gulmohar, did not want to continue the holy war that had caused their deaths, the simple fact was that they outnumbered the existing Elfaivaran people, and there was neither enough food nor enough homes for all of them.

This quickly led to conflicts with the colonies that occupied land the gulmohar still thought of as part of their empire. The slaver city-state Shaha to the east took advantage of the confusion and abducted thousands of Elfaivarans, and many gulmohar didn't distinguish between outsiders, simply seeing all as enemies.

Then in 507 AOV, the three factions—those who called for militant counter-colonization to reclaim lost land, those who sought to use sabotage and subterfuge to weaken potential enemies, and those who focused on internal stability and international diplomacy—unified into the Greater Elfaivaran Ran. To head off war with the resurgent country, the other great nations made concessions, including abandoning parts of their colonized territories.

Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis

A simmering calm lasted until 519 AOV, when one Elfaivaran faction, led by Adin Radhasi, invaded Crisillyir and conquered the southeast tip, sparking an international incident called the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis. Every nation stuck its nose into the conflict, trying to win influence, play favorites, or protect their interests.

Risur's King Baldrey tried to negotiate peace, and Clergy radicals tried to assassinate him. Fearing this would draw Risur fully into the conflict on Elfaivar's side, Crisillyir launched a full attack



on Adin, driving her back into Elfaivar but with intense collateral damage and civilian casualties. When Adin's forces retreated and sought refuge in the nearby Risuri colony Kellandia, a Crisillyiri army entered the territory in pursuit. Kellandia's military crushed them and marched them back to Crisillyir as prisoners of war.

The messy conflict ended with Crisillyir ceding much of its colonial land in Elfaivar in exchange for all six nations agreeing that these borders were to be final and that the other nations would side against any country that tried to conquer more territory. This stabilized things but seems to guarantee some future international war spurred by whoever makes the first misstep.

Other Conflicts

In Risur, the new monarch Queen Iain Waryeye sees world sentiment turning against her country, right as she hopes to create a global order through a Concert of Nations.

Revanchists in Danor have organized a boycott of the Concordat payments, and the exiled war minister Eloise Duffet has proclaimed herself Empress of a secessionist state.

The Kuchnost crime syndicate in Drakr is slowly dismantling the government through bribery, terror, and stoking public discontent, and it is extending those operations to other nations.

Crisllyir is fracturing in a shadow war between two denominations who wish to take the Clergy in different directions after the god trials of the Great Eclipse.

Elfaivar's ruling council of queens cannot prevent Adin's faction from continuing to raid Crisillyir's remaining colonial territory, and the slaver state Shaha's military threat rises steadily.

In Ber, efforts to explore the Dreaming awoke sleeping fey dragons who may be allying with a cult of technologically advanced gnolls who still worship their long-dead dragon tyrant.

Ber

Name: Queendom of Ber

Capital: Seobriga

Other Major Cities: Citado Cavallo, Karch, Reo Pedresco, Shantre, Ursaliña

Teleportation Beacons: Seobriga, Karch; other cities have circles built for the needs of the old dragon tyrants—typically ten miles away in some terrain that would impede creatures who can't fly

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Head of State: Bruse Corta Nariz de Guerra

Official Language: Common, Draconic, Giant, Goblin

Common Heritages: Orc 33%, gnoll 17%, goblin 10%, minotaur 10%, kobold 8%, goliath 6%, dragonborn 5%, lizardfolk 4%, other 7%

Introduction

Ber's history is tied to dragons.

Once a patchwork of many competing but peaceful tribes, its destiny was upended when dragons that had served the fallen Demonocracy fled south and found scattered tribes vulnerable for conquest. Newborn regimes conquered each other like a ring of serpents devouring their tails, and every nation dreaded the ambition of a dragon tyrant who turned their sights overseas.

When King Boyle of Risur slew the last dragon-tyrant in 300 AOV, the power vacuum led to over a century of piracy and warfare that secured Ber's reputation as land fit for the monstrous. But then in 460 came the miracle of unity: the rise of a new regime, a band of unifiers of each people, with the orc **Vairday Bruse** at their head.

Drawing on Danoran meritocracy, Risuri governance, and Crisillyiri law, Bruse founded an egalitarian nation with a non-dynastic monarchy. The regime of Bruse Le Roye embraced foreign ideas and traditions, with their unity founded on a shared righteous anger for tyrants and slavers. In the decades since, many forces have tried to divide the young nation, but these shared assaults have only solidified its national identity.

Grand History

The term Ber has for a millennium referred to the region south of Risur's Anthras mountains, and when "the little king" Vairday Bruse united his people, it seemed the most agreeable name for a new nation.

Ancient Times

Despite their physical and cultural differences, the people of Ber had a loose shared folk religion called Guerro. Every tribe had its own gods, conquered from other tribes not strong enough to stand alone. As the tribes battled, so did the gods.

Dominion of Dragons

The fall of the Demonocracy drove many dragons to settle in Ber, where they enslaved tribes, built realms for themselves, and ordered built mighty city-states, only to have those lands and cities overrun by other dragons' armies.

Beran subjects dug into mines and mountains, unearthing enormous bounties of ores and gems for their overlords' hoards. The dragons declared vast swathes of grassland and forest reserved for their own hunts, and there they cultivated megafauna: elephants

with pike-length tusks, cattle the length of a king's dining table, deer as tall as houses, bears and coastal alligators terrible enough to break many an unwary dragon's neck. Most dangerous of all were those beasts the dragons personally cultivated as pets, the saurians known as dinosaurs, often infused with elemental energy through blood-bonds with their masters.

The terrors of centuries past have turned to novelty and grand stories, and today any Beran school child today can name their favorite tyrant. **Cheshimox the Patient Carver** hid away with an iceberg and a cult of lizardfolk. **Widoreva the Azure Queen** ruled Ber's largest city until her dying day. **Gradiax the Steel Lord** founded a metal-worshipping gnoll culture that vexes Ber to this very day.

Several dragon tyrants successfully united Ber under their dominion, until their expansionism brought down the ire of Risur, Elfaivar, or the Clergy. It became a mark of a great hero to slay a dragon, and eventually almost a hobby of the rich and powerful.

Dragon Slayers

A bizarre planar event in 295 AOV sapped air magic across the world, rendering any creature larger than a condor incapable of flight. It had always been a popular past-time of would-be heroes to slay dragons, but suddenly the entire species was vulnerable, and thousands of hunters descended on Ber.

In 300 AOV, King Boyle of Risur led the final round of dragon-slaying, dethroning what few scaled tyrants remained in the country. The last to fall was **Inacht the Hex-Eater**. The people he enslaved finally took their vengeance upon him and dispelled his mighty sorcerous wards so Boyle could cut him down.

Many underlings of the slain dragons tried to cling to power, and missionaries from Crisillyir attempted to claim the land for the Clergy, but millions yearned for freedom and resisted. The liberated land spent over a century gripped by a series of wars with ever-changing borders as those committed to the old ways gradually killed each other off. The rest of the world wrote off Ber, seeing it as a land of brigands, pirates, and raiders, its "beastfolk" lacking in any civilizing impulse, their true animalistic drives coming to the front without slavery to hold them in check. They did not recognize the slow progress being made in various corners to build a new country.

Road to Revolution

By 460 AOV, five great uniters had consolidated the loyalties of their peoples, each aided by the self-taught sage **Vairday Bruse**. They connected their territories, named Vairday their ruler, and founded the Kingdom of Ber, with Seobriga as the capital. The world held its collective breath, expecting this unified nation of "savages" to keep on conquering. Instead, they opened diplomatic relations.

In quick order, Vairday Bruse harnessed the wisdom of the great nations of Lanjyr. From Risur, he vowed to follow their practice of fathering no powerful dynasties, instead promising to choose a successor unrelated to him. He requested that a Danoran delegation assist him in writing a national constitution, and that delegation was so charmed that they dubbed him *Le Roye*, or little king.

Crisillyiri bureaucrats visited and aided Bruse Le Roye with reforming the legal system. He opened Ber to Danoran and, later, Risuri industrialization, allowing manufactories to spring up, and he symbolically worked in some of these new factories as a sign that it was a noble pursuit for his soldiers, now that they had won their nation.

Ber at a Glance

These are the major figures, groups, and locations in Ber most foreigners have heard about.

- **Bruse Corta Nariz de Guerra.** A keen and beloved leader, daughter of one of the nation's founders.
- **Brakken of Heffanita.** A famous minotaur negotiator who helped bring all parties to agreement on the Orithean Concordat (see page 92).
- **The Panoply.** A philosophy that looked for commonalities between cultures and sought to promote the best ideas while also celebrating diversity as its own merit.
- **Executores dola Liberta.** Predominately female cadre of traveling judges with a writ to punish any who abuse positions of authority or deny basic liberties to others. Famous for doling out punishment through beating concordant with the severity of the offense.
- **Cult of the Steel Lord.** Technologically advanced gnolls who worship a dead dragon, in long-standing rebellion against Ber.
- **Seobriga.** The capital city, sprawling and vibrant, with regular and encouraged civic protests.
- **Citado Cavallo.** City most closely integrated with Risur, and a defensible naval bastion.
- **Ursaliña.** A city once famous for its trained beast fighting tournaments, now with the dubious fame of having been the landing point of an extraplanar invasion by strange psychic beings.
- **Karch.** City of the steelmarked gnolls. Closely aligned with Risuri technologist Benedict Pemberton, and famously friendly to foreign industrialists.



Understanding Civilization

Vairday Bruse had stated that Ber's next great victory was to be accepted by the other great nations, and so he wanted people to embrace "civility." Ber's new leaders began gravitating towards Danoran fashion and etiquette, but the wider population felt that they were being dismissed for their allegedly "primitive" customs. Ber's nascent intelligentsia helped heal the potential rift with a philosophy that has come to be known as the **Panoply**.

The professors who developed the Panoply collated thousands of different customs from around the world, each seen as "civil" in its own land. Rather than claim Beran culture was inferior and needed to change, they drew parallels between their own customs and



similar behaviors in the nations Berans were trying to look toward.

For example, many Beran tribes were stereotyped for their ritual scarification, and yet many Danoran martial scientists respect a handsome duelling scar. And while Crisillyiri priests might consider the visceral rituals of the guerro faiths to be violent, in Drakr people often celebrate when philosophical debates turn to brawls. Moreover, if people from Ber's many diverse tribes could see the common merit in their fellow citizens, rejecting *any* culture for being "foreign" became un-Beran.

To Panoply adherents, variety is valuable in and of itself, and it has become fashionable for every Beran to spend their school years to form a close fondness for the culture of one foreign place or other, often forming clubs with others who have the same interest.

In the short term, the Panoply promoted unity in the revolution, encouraging the rough-skinned to mix with the smooth-tongued, and all to mix with the foreign. In the long term, this philosophy helped establish Ber as a fiercely cosmopolitan state.

Passing the First Test

In 495 AOV, Vairday Bruse died. Defying thousands of years of tribal and draconic tradition, his power peacefully transferred to his ally, **Shantus**, unifier of the minotaurs. The new monarch took the title of Bruse after his friend, and despite unrest during the Shantus regime, Ber continued to industrialize. Railroads criss-crossed the harsh prairie, and the navy manned ironclads as soon as it could acquire them.

The Heroes of the Revolution

Outside of the capital Seobriga, a stretch of highway known as Monument Road is lined with hundreds of statues, each representing a different ally of Vairday Bruse at the founding of Ber. The five nearest to the city each have a shaded park surrounding them, and depict the leaders who unified the five major peoples of the nation.

- **Cavallo de Guerra.** Uniter of the orcs, famed admiral.
- **Shantus.** Uniter of the minotaurs, clever tactician and negotiator.
- **Aitch.** Uniter of the lizardfolk, master alchemist and artillerist.
- **Llanachita.** Uniter of the goliaths, druid who fielded warbeasts.
- **Geeba.** "Uniter" of the goblins, cavalry general.

A sixth park has an empty stand for a statue, which is dedicated to **El Extraño**, who united the kobolds.

The Great Eclipse

The trials of the Great Eclipse that nearly destroyed other nations were what most solidified Ber's national unity.

The mountain city of Ursaliña was quietly invaded by a strange psychovoric species from beyond the stars known as the Gidim. They bound the population's minds into an egregore so they could be made subservient, but their extraplanar plot was thwarted, and the city emerged with an almost supernatural sense of empathy and common purpose.

Later, near the end of the Eclipse, Bruse Shantus was caught up in an egregore and attempted to kill any he deemed primitive, mostly

Ber: Landscape and Cuisine

The lands of Ber are dominated by great tropical savannas. Immense trees grow scattered amid vast swaths of hardy, spiny, and nutritionally-rich grasses that provide sustenance for the land's enormous herbivores. Their predators are equally gargantuan. Ber's wet season is shorter and less devastating than Elfaivar's legendary monsoons, with a dry season that can easily last most of the year.

Unlike most of the nation's pluralistic culture, Beran cuisine tends to be conservative. The dragon-tyrants decadently imported vast amounts of foreign delicacies, and most Berans choose to spite their example. Common Beran ingredients are beans, lamb, boar, rice, tomatoes, and onions, augmented with generous lashings of peppers and other spices. A common dessert is berries or chocolate poured into a hollowed out fried bun, called a tesoro. Different cities promote their iconic dish: Seobrigan paella, Citado Cavallon ceviche, Reo Pedrescan motuleños, and Ursaliñan chilaquiles. Gnollish Karch has many varieties of elegant blood puddings.



goblins and gnolls. This genocide was averted by an unlikely hero, a railroad magnate named Damata Griento (see page 98), who was aided by the famed executore **Glaucia Evora**, as well as a legendary Elfaivaran warrior Sor Daeron (see page 101).

They defeated Shantus and freed his mind. Ashamed of his mental weakness, Shantus resigned. He passed his crown and his title of Bruse to Corta Nariz de Guerra (see page 97).

The Present

Bruse Corta Nariz has instituted a bureaucratic mechanism to justly distribute old dragon hoards. Previously, the hoards had been locked away in a national trust—the **Ministry of Dragon Affairs**. Cities, villages, and families across Ber are finally receiving the rewards of hard labor that their ancestors performed for their draconic masters.

While many argue they're not receiving what they think is a fair share, most of these funds are being directed toward building the nation's education, medicine, and housing. However, as the railroads deliver this precious gold around the country, the trains are tempting targets for banditos.

The National Character

The old traditions of armed raids as a rite of adulthood are almost extinct, replaced by more "civilized" options, often through sports, music, art, industrial work, entrepreneurial success, or educational achievement.

The most popular team sport today is *cicada*, played on a large field where batters take turns defending a pillar of stacked totems against balls pitched by the other team. After successfully deflecting or reflecting the ball, the batter has a chance to navigate a loop of obstacles to score a point for their team. It is meant to represent the old Guerra tradition of stealing the icons of gods from opposing villages.



An instinctive suspicion of overlords has led to national rules which place harsh limits on the profits individuals can earn, and how much wealth companies can hold, especially subsidiaries of foreign bodies. Early Beran industrialists were lauded as icons of the nation's culture, with the prize of their labor and leadership being a sterling reputation, rather than *mere* money. The desire of wealth was seen as an embarrassingly draconic character flaw.

Berans generally make for unpredictable manufactory workers. In an industry that hates any disruption to the work processes, Berans vary between wanting freedom to set their own shifts and trying to take on the greatest burden of work, to earn glory.

Stumbling Upon the Dreaming

The costs of industrial progress, be they polluted rivers or strip-mined landscapes, are opposed by a new and contentious movement named the **tropezaros** (for "one who stumbles"). Part guerrilla, part druid, part fey-speaker, part academic: these unconventional Berans have a deep desire to make use of whatever they "stumble upon" in nature.

Risuri long held something of a monopoly on getting fey aid with spurring crops and winning favorable weather. Tropezaros learned those same techniques and sought to use them with the fey of Ber's Dreaming, which was little explored. At first they were praised, but public opinion on tropezaros soured considerably once they accidentally awoke dragons.

In 507 AOV, the famous tropezaro painter **Grefanio Storre** enlisted the Drakran explorer **Kiegar Arukova** to navigate a potential pathway to the Dreaming under an ancient tree outside Reo Pedresco. They delved the tree's network of cave and root systems, finally emerging in the verdant woodland of the Beran Dreaming.

They followed a trail to the lair of a slumbering fey dragon: winged and reptilian, but with scales of bark, wings of leaf, and a maw of thorns. Instead of gold and jewels, its hoard consisted of everyday objects from the Waking world, animated by fey spirits. Grefanio called out to the dragon in wonder, asking its name. The wyrm, blinking from its sleep, answered "I am **Calenche**," then blithely incinerated the painter.

Kiegar Arukova retreated to the Waking, but Calenche followed her all the way back. With a fey obligation for the "gift" of this new world, Calenche rewarded the dwarf with part of her hoard, then set upon the nearby Reo Pedresco, seemingly interested less in the people than in their possessions. Noteworthy was that as she flew away, a veritable swarm of animated objects flocked with her. She returned back to her lair in the Dreaming with many new treasures.

Dragons Returned

For the last fifteen years, Calenche has made regular forays into the Waking, as do a handful of other fey dragons. Using hidden pathways, they appear in unlikely places like northern goliath grain silos or under mats of discarded pamphlets after a protest in Seobriga. Most seem uninterested in tyranny, and in fact one village named **Tifaso** recruited a tropezaro to treat with an antennaed fey dragon that had been eating their livestock and leaving talking swords as payment. The tropezaro managed to barter for the dragon to serve as the town's guardian in exchange for small payments.

This alone was enough to arouse the fury of decent freedom-loving Berans. Bruse Corta Nariz retasked the Ministry of Dragon affairs to deal with these beings, and sent a pair of agents to Tifaso. The dragon scorched them with a lashing tongue of lightning and cursed those who tried to help them as they lay dying, claiming that she was merely doing what they'd asked of her: protecting the town.

The Ministry's next effort sent overwhelming force, and they managed to capture the dragon, who said its name was **Lecucha**. They also arrested the tropezaro responsible, and Bruse Corta Nariz decreed that all friendly contact with the Dreaming was forbidden unless approved by the Ministry. Within months tropezaros had defied her order. They claimed they felt an obligation to learn about the threat the dragons posed, and possibly win them as allies.

Lecucha occupies a massive cell outside Seobriga, though she spends most of her time in an orc-sized dryad-like form. Panoplists, tropezaros, and other curious Berans demand to witness and speak with this deeply controversial figure. She passes her time variously threatening or insulting her guards and using her seemingly-unquenchable spellcraft to test the strength of her magical bindings. Her treasure hoard has tried to rescue her on several occasions, and the Ministry has with some discomfort placed those objects in cells too, unsure if they're real living things.

The Government and Its Leaders

Ber's chief executive is known as the Bruse, with each one appointing his or her chosen successor. The nation's many governors, lords, and high chiefs have autonomy in their regions, but a Constitution mandates in which situations the Bruse can override them. The nation's legislative congress was fairly weak until the recent release of funds held by the Ministry of Dragon affairs gave it the chance to start devising national-improvement programs.

Bruse Corta Nariz de Guerra



Pippin-apple-cheeked, wiry, with a somewhat gaunt neck and thick eyebrows, **Bruse Corta Nariz de Guerra** does not look like the mother-many-times-over that she is. Modern magical medicine saved her son **Altioro** from an outbreak of the dragon worm disease, and modern education let her study politics and governance at a world-class university in Seobriga. Her consort perished in the Steel Rebellion (see page 104), and she has forsworn taking another during her term as Bruse.

Since assuming office, Corta Nariz has proven herself to be an exceptionally capable administrator, and unlike her predecessor Shantus she chose clever advisors and listened to them. She commands respect from the Beran military, although their poor performance in engagements during the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis has overshadowed her work to end feuds and rivalry between different units.

While Ber's old tradition of adulthood-through-battle-rites is seen as gauche, its people still expect their ruler to be a warrior, and Corta Nariz has obliged. Amidst the Elfaivaran engagements, she gave a number of speeches from the bridge of the flagship *Reina de Oro* to inspire her men, and she has toiled to become a crack shot with a rifle.

Voluntary Reform

Bruse Corta Nariz has expressed a hope that her successor will be chosen by a more democratic means. As a preliminary step, she has created a new governing body, the **Governors' Congress**.



Comprised of city and regional leaders from across Ber, with a few at large members, this entity currently serves in an advisory capacity, briefing their Bruse on local reactions to her policies. The first-among-equals leader of the Congress is the minotaur **Brakken of Heffanita**, a former ambassador and peacemaker who arguably created the modern world order by negotiating the Orithean Concordat.

Brakken is somewhat contentious because he possesses psychic abilities that would let him control people's minds, but numerous executores have tested him to ensure he does not abuse those powers, and indeed he has helped guide abjurers to protect several government buildings with wards against mind control.

Executores dola Liberta

The **Executores dola Liberta** (Enforcers of Freedom) are tasked with wandering the country and finding rich or powerful people who abuse their station by forcing others into slavery or servile conditions.

They drag such wrongdoers into public locations, establish courts of law, then pummel those found guilty with royally-empowered fists and staves while denouncing their crimes. They inflict similar punishments on those who try to quash protests, silence vocal complaints, forbid religious practices, or hoard wealth. Membership in the executores is strictly monitored, and those few who hypocritically abuse their own authority suffer excruciating public torture and then execution.



The executores are mostly independent, and local authorities are expected to cooperate with them. The most famous executore today is **Viveen Jenefron**, the descendant of goliaths enslaved by Risur several centuries ago. She rose to prominence in that country's Royal Homeland Constabulary, studied religious archaeology, and led a crusade in the southern Anthras Mountains against savage arcanists attempting to dominate surrounding tribes through fear magic. She met her wife in that crusade and returned to the homeland of her ancestors, where she joined the executores and quickly rose in the ranks.

Viveen currently lives in Ursaliña, where she is studying the city's *genius loci* to ensure it is not a threat to the citizens. If she finds it is controlling people, she has already devised a method to thrash the city's spirit as punishment.

Army

As it is separated from its only land neighbor by the Anthras Mountains, Ber has a small standing army, mostly trained to deal with wild megafauna and some raids by the gnolls of Tierra de las Bestias Moteado. However, each city and state maintains a militia, and soldiers can receive a stipend if they agree to spend six months visiting other parts of the country and training with the local militia, to share techniques and encourage national unity.

Navy

The port in Citado Cavallo is the spiritual home of the Beran navy, though recent expansions have moved the bulk of the fleet to the western city of Shantre, including the nation's first destroyer, the exceptionally evasive *Jabalina*. Akin to the state militias, every coastal state maintains its own coast guard, which Bruse Corta Nariz has endeavored to unify and end rivalries between.

During the height of the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis, the Bruse mustered her navy to protect Crisillyir, setting aside old enmities towards the Clergy. The inexperienced and overconfident fleet, led by steel-armored ships of the line, lost nearly every engagement against magically-imbued Elfaivaran "fire ships." It remains a national embarrassment.

Goals of the Bruse

Today, Corta Nariz is recruiting prospective scouts and dragonslayers in the city Ursaliña's arena, intending to sally out and end the threat of two fey dragons in southwestern Ber once and for all.

However, another matter weighs heavily on her mind. During the Great Eclipse, Danoran sailors spotted a dragon over Axis Island, and later it was apparently slain in Flint. But a group calling itself the Clear Waters recently published in every major world paper a report—produced by kobold spymaster **El Extraño**—that claims the dragon was in fact the former dragon tyrant Inacht the Hex-Eater. According to the report, King Boyle did not slay the dragon in 300 AOV, but instead gave it shelter in exchange for it serving his nation.

The report indicates Risur actually sheltered *at least two* dragons, though the second's identity was not revealed. Bruse Corta Nariz is considering how to force Risur to make amends for this breach of trust, and her military advisors argue it is the duty of Ber to hunt down and kill the remaining dragon.

Beran Peoples

While the different species of Ber all are united by a willingness to fight for liberty, and they mingle readily in cities and even small towns, many still live in traditional villages, with distinct cultures.

Orcs



The archetypal Beran navy man is an orc: a proud inheritor of a sailing tradition spanning centuries, both ashamed and proud of that tradition's historic dabbling with piracy. The young orc warlord **Altioro de Guerra**, son of the Bruse, commands the Sea Chiefs of Marrajado de Oro (the Riven Sea of Gold) near Citado Cavallo. He has proposed Ber offer its fleet to help protect the Yerasol Archipelago from pirates and monsters, as a way to restore their prestige, and the Bruse has agreed to send a few ships on a provisional basis.



One of the heroes of the Great Eclipse was the orc **Damata Griento**, a railroad magnate who turned to swashbuckling vigilanteism to fight for the nation's ideals even as most of its citizens had their wills sapped by enchanted Danoran lighthouses. He has the rare status of richest Beran, since he has expanded his family business to build railroads in Crisillyir and the Malice Lands. While he proudly follows the tradition of not hoarding the wealth of his business *within Ber*, he owns several estates around the Avery Sea.

The Noble Savage Beating

Not all bloodmarked gnolls stay in Tierra de las Bestias Moteado, and several have become known as paragons of law and civilization. The famed executore **Glaucia Evora** endured a Cult of the Steel Lord attack on her village in 486 AOV, where she killed her own son rather than let him be enslaved by the steelmarked gnolls. Glaucia helped defeat the mind-controlled Bruse Shantus during the Great Eclipse, and oversaw a famous courtroom in Seobriga until her death a few years ago of old age.

Hazard at Sea

Off the coast of Seobriga, a patch of sea is beset by strange twists of space and occasionally sudden whirlpools. This strange phenomenon is the result of a submerged ruin of a long-collapsed orcish culture. The navy says the strange sunken step pyramid once linked directly to the planet Mavisha, but since the eclipse it points to Ostea, and strange bloody sea monsters sometimes assail the ships stationed here.

Sea Chief Thrag Vidalia is actively running naval training exercises around this ruin, hoping the hazard will spur Beran sailors to become masters of modern sea combat.

Dragonborn

Dragonborn are sometimes called half-dragons, and are descended from any of the numerous dragon tyrants throughout Ber's history. Some dragons took humanoid form to produce children they could trust to be loyal minions, while others magically transmuted people they enslaved to more resemble them. The tyrants rarely cared for their creations, especially those more than one or two generations removed, so all but a few dragonborn were enslaved just like the rest of the people of Ber.

Dragonborn gathered into a handful of enclaves around the country, but have little in the way of shared culture, instead just integrating with local tribes. Still, many dragonborn are pushed to the fringes of society. In the gnoll-controlled Tierra de las Bestias Moteado, a group of banditos called the **Pequeños Tiranos** has been calling for dragonborn around the country to rally to them, to create a new splinter nation where only those with dragon blood are welcome. The banditos have no real chance of accomplishing this, but are dangerous enough to threaten remote villages.

Gnolls

Two main branches of gnolls exist in Ber today—the **bloodmarked** who mostly rejected Vairday Bruse's revolution but bore it no ill will, and the **steelmarked** who remain loyal to an absent dragon tyrant and happily play the role of rival to the rest of Ber. While the steelmarked have grown more influential and their fortunes rose through alliance with a foreign industrialist, the bloodmarked are among the poorest peoples in Lanjyr.

Of Blood

Most gnolls remain secluded in the tribes of the autonomous Tierra de las Bestias Moteado region along Ber's southern coast. They grudgingly allow others to settle if they make a clear demonstration of rejecting the Beran government and its efforts to embrace foreign ideas. These non-gnolls are encouraged to accept bloodmarked traditions instead.

The countless clans of the region boast the highest concentration of sorcerous bloodlines in the whole world. Other Berans often believe gnolls bred with magical creatures, but it seems gnolls adapt to magical phenomena, and their mere proximity to the strange magics wielded by dragon overlords suffused them with power. Since the Great Eclipse, they were among the first to realize, master, and disseminate knowledge of sanguine divinations (see Ostea, Chapter Five). These gnolls were also pioneers in the strange magics of the bloodweavers, dazzling even the most jaded of Ber's magical scholars.

Bloodmarked communities make casual use of the magical knacks of those born with the gift, and while they do not use industrial techniques, they produce a great quantity of magical trinkets sold around Lanjyr. Recently the bloodmarked gnolls have adopted some of the scholastic techniques of outsiders, sending teachers around the region to provide basic arcane education to all children, in hopes of unlocking their talents.

And Steel

The steelmarked gnolls are the denizens of Isla dolas Focas, loyal to the dragon tyrant **Gradiax the Steel Lord**, despite it being over two centuries since the dragon was slain by King Boyle of Risur.

The Cult of the Steel Lord are experts of advanced metallurgy, and believe that all but dragons are unworthy to touch metal. Their culture fosters a detached introspection that most Berans find unnerving, and they claim Gradiax did not die, but was reborn in a grand metallic body.

The steelmarked gnolls embraced industry before the Beran revolution even began, but always presented themselves to the outside world as superstitious and backwards. They only revealed their true prowess in recent years, thanks in part to the leadership of a Risuri industrialist named Benedict Pemberton, whom the steelmarked have titled the Voice of Gradiax. Some even claim he is their steel lord reborn. (See page 104.)

Aside from Gradiax, the other major focus of this culture is gloves. A steelmarked's gloves are a method of self-expression, the conduit through which they experience the world and perform the sacred task of working metal. Gloves of the Isla are individually-decorated, and typically made of thick seal-hide to allow for the working of heated metal.

Goblins

While a few goblins allied with Vairday Bruse, their unifier Geeba died before the tribes could form any shared identity. Displaced by the expansion of Ber's cities and villages, most lived in places the dead dragon tyrants had left too hostile for most people: remote trap-laden lairs, megafauna breeding grounds, and elementally charged hot springs, all of them often riddled with disease.



Just before the Great Eclipse, the ant-taming Fuego tribe took a foreign doctor hostage for ransom, and the man astounded his captors by curing the goblins of a dangerous parasitic disease called dragon-worm. The tribe's shaman **Willigu** then travelled around Ber telling his kin of this miracle and the benefits of civilization. This tour led to many tribes hesitantly reaching out to nearby Beran settlements, though they have no unified leadership of their own.

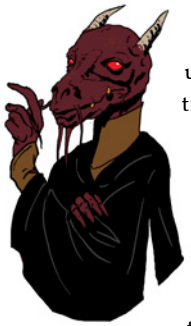
Since then, many goblin tribes have found a role as highly respected ranchers, excelling at pacifying and taming megafauna. Rail companies pay goblin ranchers generous sums to dissuade megafauna from attacking their trains and destroying their lines, and Beran universities eagerly recruit veteran ranchers to refine the science of animal husbandry.

Goliaths

Goliaths look like mighty towering humans, with adults ranging from seven to nine feet tall. Their original territory was in the Anthras Mountains, and they share a mix of Risuri and Beran traditions, venerating nature and the fey while sharing gods and tribal structures with orcs and minotaurs. Goliath communities came to communicate with drums and massive horns whose notes could carry to the next valley, and on major holidays they coordinate slow, joyous symphonies that span miles, each village contributing two or three instruments.

Kobolds

Kobolds, as the joke goes, don't exist. Partially, this is a reference to the lack of prominent kobold architecture or kobold settlements, but the pinnacle of this conceit is the figure known as **El Extraño** (The Strange One). El Extraño united the kobold people as part of Vairday Bruse's revolution, and then became the spymaster of Ber: the master of secrets, assassinations, bribes, and blackmail.



No one is certain whether the spymaster actually exists, and if so whether the current bearer of the title is the same kobold who allied with Vairday Bruse. The uncertainty means that any kobold could be a servant of the state on a critical mission, or perhaps even El Extraño himself.

Many kobolds play up the trope, and encourage people to pretend not to see kobolds, unless that kobold asks for aid, in which case you should help immediately, lest you anger El Extraño. Numerous kobolds claim that the idea they're all spies is an ugly stereotype and hinders their success in Beran society.

In truth, kobolds are the backbone of Ber's small crafts industry. Many kobold artisans create intricate baubles and trinkets with the styling of their family, shipping them overseas, where they are a fixture of any high-class market.

Lizardfolk

As the dragon-tyrants gobbled up Beran tribes, few of them went after the amphibious lizardfolk, who they believed had no treasures to plunder. In truth, lizardfolk culture has a tradition of communalism that shared assets and carefully planned each settlement's resources a year at a time, which led to them gradually amassing untapped wealth in their remote, desolate swamplands.



After Vairday's revolution, the lizardfolk tribes wagered their ancestral riches, hired foreign experts, and built their own industrial operations, trains and railroads especially. These investments would quickly yield large dividends, catalysing the transformation of the lizardfolk culture, and their dominance of Beran rail.

Liss Rail Construction out of Reo Pedresco was the first Beran-owned and Beran-operated rail company, and it quickly developed a wealth of experience laying track across the manifold dangerous terrains of Ber. Not every lizardfolk works in industry, but most lizardfolk families consider it a point of pride to own a part of the local industry their people helped found.

Cultural Stereotypes

While the folk of Ber generally see each other as equals, there are still tropes in their culture that get thrown around as insults.

- **Goblins** are confused by technology more advanced than ropes, and their food is disgusting. They are famous for growing spiked pickles, often served with fermented beans and blindness-inducing peppers.
- **Goliaths** are spies for Risur, and they pay too much attention to their clothes, because they're so large they can only afford one set.
- **Lizardfolk** are thieves and all look alike. (This may originate from an old tribal tradition: at one time, each lizardfolk tribe had one designated merchant, almost like a quartermaster, who handled everyone's money and was responsible for buying and selling on behalf of potentially dozens of families. Some tribes still do this.)
- **Minotaurs** take credit for what other people do, and will talk your ear off, but are surprisingly attentive lovers. If you want to insult a minotaur, reference Risur's virile fey titan named Father of Thunder, who—according to poorly-sourced speculation by Risuri academics—is the originator of the minotaur species.
- **Orcs** are drunkards who sing badly and are always trying to be clever and failing. This was particularly bruising after Bruse de Guerra's debacle in sending her navy to a decisive loss in the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis (see page 92).
- **Gnolls**, who actually do face some active discrimination, are seen as superstitious, unhygienic, and unmotivated, which is why they still miss their dragon tyrant.
- **Kobolds** don't really exist.

The industrialist scion **Iurtan Liss** has set her sights upon the challenge of creating a railroad that will cross the Anthras Mountains, connecting Risur and Ber. This bold endeavour will involve hiring tropezaros to appease the fickle and cruel Granny Allswell, fey titan of Risur's mountains.

Minotaurs

The roots of the Panoply were minotaur bards. During the rule of the dragon tyrants, these wandering singers and storytellers were regarded as neutral, and helped build a tolerance between disparate Beran settlements. These bards founded halls of bardic knowledge which evolved into universities.



Minotaur culture is grounded in patience and an appreciation for things that take a long time. They are overrepresented among Ber's scholars and diplomats, and many admire the former Bruse **Shantus**, whose military strategy in the revolution was intricate and inexorable. Shantus has been seen little since he abdicated.

Seobriga

The city of Seobriga is the center of Ber's triumph over the old draconic overlords, not in merely defeating them, but in rising above the poisons of hubris and brutality they instilled. "Beastfolk" from across the nation gather to learn, to begin new lives, to seek justice, and to merrily argue their beliefs from dawn till dusk.

History

Seobriga began as the humble wintertime settlement of a nomadic tribe. The ash-scaled dragon **Chidaran** occupied the site, built it up, and made it his new capital, as did the ruby-scaled dragon that killed him, as did the garnet-scaled dragon that killed *her*. It was eventually declared neutral territory, leading to multiple dragons taking up residence, and its borders and splendor expanding more than any other Beran city. Seobriga's last draconic ruler, the blue dragon **Widoreva**, left behind a city full of decadent draconic palaces, which the poor and oppressed promptly moved into.

Geography

Built on the Arm of Vairday peninsula, Seobriga is an unusually wide city, built to sprawl so that its many dragon residents felt less territorial. Much as a humanoid city historically needed to be small enough to walk across in an hour or two, the great winged wyrms felt comfortable traveling fifty miles in an afternoon.

Today, railroads tie together these disparate city sectors, and have become a focus of civic pride. Locomotives are often painted in shows of love. The city's governor even contracted with an enigmatic Nalaamese mage known as the dwarven "Luckademic" to bless the tracks and promote good fortune. Tourists and passengers can expect to find dropped coins, bump into old friends, and accidentally order delicious new foods while they are near the Seobriga tracks.

The main highway leading from Seobriga's northwestern border is Monument Road, filled with hundreds of statues representing Vairday Bruse's allies during the revolution.

The city's greatest bounty might be the gardens built during the reign of the tyrants. For up to fifty miles around the city, shade-grown berries share soil with massive sequoias, and old magic bleeds into the landscape, benefiting farmers with *plant-growth*-enriched crops. Five-foot-tall goats and even beefier bison graze here.

Seobriga catches the edge of some of Elfaivar's monsoons, providing ample if unreliable water for agriculture. However, freshwater springs and streams are rare, often making very weak wine the drink of choice. The vineyards of the Arm are known for their dry and subtle flavors.

Trouble on the Inner Frontier

The sprawl of Seobriga is dotted with wilderness, often overgrown areas miles wide that had once been controlled by some dragon, then later abandoned by their enslaved subjects after the tyrant was slain. Since falling out of favor, tropezaros in the city have defiantly moved into these interior wilds to hide while they try to motivate the nation to protect its nature.

Most infamous of the city's scattered tropezaros is a former army marshal who grew bitter that his superiors ignored his clear-eyed view of how to grow his nation's strength. Inspired by the example of the "fey terrorist" Gale's harassment of Flint two decades earlier, **Erick Noches** has brought easily impressionable young Berans under his banner by offering them fellowship through tropezaro teachings. They hike, study nature, play sports in the woods, and learn not to trust city dwellers.



Some of these young tropezaros he sets to industrial sabotage, while others support the movement with simple banditry. For a few with magical knacks he has found them a mentor, **Sor Daeron**, an ancient Elfaivaran with an arm of living salt who survived centuries being hunted by colonizers in his homeland's jungles. Together, Noches and Sor hope to use magic of the great Elfaivaran enclaves to draw parts of Seobriga into the Dreaming, to force citizens to remember how to survive in the wilderness.



Architecture

The city bears many marks of old dragon rule, ranging from buildings that incorporate the bones of slain dragons as a symbol of triumph, to old squat palaces glorified by tall and dramatic spires, made of granite flown in from far-away quarries to serve as dragon-perches.

Spire-building knowledge has proven useful for the dozens of manufactories on the city's western shore, where a combination of favorable winds and enormous chimneys release the soot and smoke of industry high into the air, occluding the stars yet safer to the citizens below than the infamous choking smog of Flint. Some of these spires even serve as dirigible docks for the exorbitantly expensive weekly flights that connect Flint and Seobriga.

The largest open space in the city is Vista Rapellando, a grand plaza adorned with gold and fine jewels. Similar smaller plazas had their treasures confiscated for the nation's coffers, but Vairday Bruse wanted Rapellando to impress foreign visitors. Today it is the site of the city's teleportation beacon.

Art

Many Seobrigan edifices are bleak and imposing, so a small but determined group of volunteer muraleers work to bring them alive. Rappelling off buildings, these artists paint vibrant murals upon what were previously barren walls, singing merrily as they swing and swing their paint brushes.

A number of influential Seobrigans have, for a variety of reasons, refused to allow for their walls to be painted, and the vigilante **La Cara Pintada** defies their wishes by daubing their walls with beautifully satirical murals under the cover of night. La Cara is said to be an operative of El Extraño who relaxes by painting graffiti, and thus, many foreign spies are eager to track him down.

Show Your Colors

Seobrigan tourists are often almost overcome by the striking sight of regular Panoply protests in the great plazas.

Self-styled intellectuals stand at the edges of the plaza and speak to protestors as they arrive, determining their grievances, then handing out color-coded flags; poverty for black, violence for red, corruption for yellow, magic and monsters for green, and so on.

For many years, an unpopular color was white, indicating a protest of apathetic public officials who should be doing more to promote the revolution. It became known that Panoplists were deliberately encouraging this color as a test; anyone intelligent enough to question having hundreds of protests waving white flags, a color of surrender, was invited to rarified Panoply gatherings. Recently, however, protestors have once again begun waving the white flags, now as an "ironic" gesture.



The Panoply luminary currently overseeing these protests is the aged bloodmarked gnoll **Melquíades de Torres y Ayala**, one of the few gnollish graduates of the Seobrigan Revolutionary University. A sorcerer skilled with divination and communication magic, Melquíades pushed the Panoply to not talk simply with the leading cultures of each nation, but to learn about those who were fringe or downtrodden. His magic helped early Panoply writers correspond with remote human groups, and today he is a vocal advocate for building Risuri ceraunic wave towers all across Ber, to make the Seobrigan protests a national tradition.

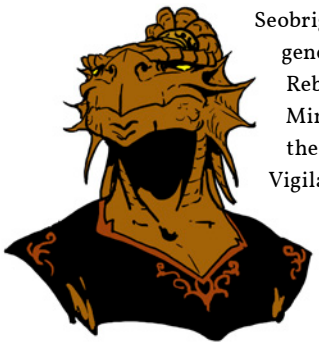
Courtroom of Glaucia Evora

In 501 AOV, the gnoll executore Glaucia Evora took up residence in the ruins around the skeleton of dragon-tyrant Widoreva, and began holding court on matters of justice. Glaucia passed peacefully in 519 AOV, but her courtroom remains a center of justice.

Once a Seobrigan manor of moderate splendor, it was partially destroyed when the last dragon-tyrant of Seobriga was shot out of the sky and crashed through the roof. The people of Seobriga chose to leave the dragon's bones where they lay as a memorial, even shoring up the remaining walls so as to prevent collapse.

Glaucia Evora's occupation lent the bones a new purpose. She sat with Widoreva's skeletal snout as her desk, disdainfully covering the skull with layers of dripping candle wax. Accused criminals stood in a cage made of ten-foot-long ribs, while witnesses spoke in a pen made from clawed draconic hands. The final inheritance from Glaucia Evora is a brimstone circle around the witness pen. It flares and scorches anyone who lies within, functioning as a somewhat vindictive *zone of truth*.

Politics



Seobriga's governor is retired dragonborn general **Kenna Vigilante**. During the Steel Rebellion she served as Bruse Shantus's Minister of Dragon Affairs, and organized the invasion of Isla dolas Focas. Governor Vigilante remains a staunch advocate for military service, and she has the luxury of a close friendship with many prominent figures from Risur, its military, and its intelligence service the RHC.



Indeed, Risur's chief economic liaison to Seobriga, **Nixxle Hushhush**, is a goblin, originally from Ber, who served in the Royal Homeland Constabulary before retiring to coordinate legitimate trade between the two nations. Known for chomping spiked pickles like others would chew cigars, Nixxle has his finger on the pulse of Seobriga's criminal activity. He sometimes recruits free-spirited do-gooders to interfere in smuggling or piracy, and though he tries to look like a good-faith ally of all freedom-loving Berans, he's been caught using these hired adventurers to target rivals to Risuri business.

Though the city is prosperous, it has recently seen violent outbursts directed at gnolls. People blame this on the rhetoric of the city governor, who is trying to stop smuggled arctech from the Cult of the Steel Lord and tends to spread her disdain to all gnolls.

Ursaliña

Once a place for dragon tyrants to pit their champions against each other in bloody gladiatorial fights, Ursaliña continues that tradition in part through trained bear fights. During the Great Eclipse it was conquered by Gidim psychovores, but today the City of Bears is a city in recovery. A genius loci born from the Gidim's psychic meddling now imbues the citizenry with a subtle yet sublime empathy for one another.

The population is majority orc, with sizeable numbers of minotaurs and goliaths.

Geography

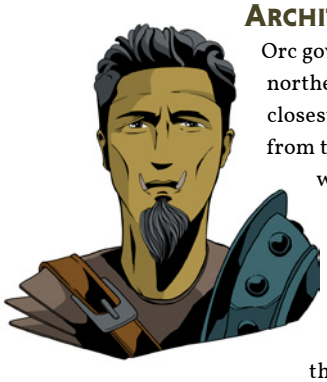
Ursaliña lies along the rocky northwestern coast of Ber, where the sea meets the Anthras Mountains. The hills of Ursaliña fall sharply near the coast, where ornately-carved staircases link the harbor to the different levels of the city. Similar areas of steep hills and valleys dot the landscape around the city, and for centuries, servants of the dragon tyrants bred and domesticated megafauna in these natural paddocks. Countless caverns provided lairs for the famed local cave bears, allowing the predators to hide and survive despite fervent attempts to exterminate them.

The city itself rises and falls in steep terraces on four main hills, each crowned by a major civic building. Poorer neighbourhoods weave through the low "troughs" between hills, and imposing bridges connect the terraces in labyrinthine combinations. Fanciful fountains thread mountain streams along terraces and bridges, and fierce gusts of wind in the troughs kick up mist that cools the cramped streets and alleys.

Dwarves in Ber

A tiny community of Beran dwarves have congregated in Ursaliña. For centuries their subterranean culture, the Ulmacs, fought a little-seen war from beneath the lairs and mines of the old dragon tyrants. When Bruse Vairday created the new Beran nation, most Ulmacs remained underground, unwilling to trust the peoples who had once served their great enemies. But a few thousand have created a safehold under the mesas of Ursaliña, fascinated by modern industry and seeing far more prosperity trading with the surface than staying hidden.

Architecture



Orc governor **Dieter Cadagyr** rules from the northern hill. Wealthy Ursaliñans live here: closest to fresh mountain water, farthest from the docks' fishy stench. Its streets teem with fountains and statues of statuesque orcish women. The steel-gray granite cube of the Executores Lodge serves as a stark reminder to the wealthy to not abuse their power.

The southern hill is crowned by the three-story Jaula or "Cage" arena. Since the unification of Ber, its edifice has been reserved for animal bouts, concerts, and the occasional scholarly symposium. This district also is home to many prosperous restaurants that serve dishes thick with beans and cheeses, the best of which have high balconies with grand vistas.

Ursaliña's lamppost-lit market sits atop the western plateau. In this plaza, a dizzying array of foodstuffs can be found, from fresh fish hauled in from the ocean, to all manner of game meats, to even stranger fare such as the megafauna from goblin ranches. Two obelisks of black diorite, polished to a mirror finish, flank the east and west sides of the wide paved plaza; by tracing the sun's path along floor mosaics, they serve as timekeeping devices for merchants. The obelisks are Ancient relics, predating the founding of the city.

The city docks reside within the western quarter, evenly split between civilian and military moorings. Just off the southwest docks and warehouses lies an expanse of lush green grass, the Resto, a popular destination for the noon meal. Many open celebrations are held at the public house in this district, Casa dola Biches, and parades typically muster here then march through the city, weaving along the bridges between hilltop districts.

The city's grandest entertainment venue sits atop the eastern hill. The Red Peacock Café is a fine restaurant that anchors an ever growing complex of art galleries, theaters, and fashion boutiques. Local working class citizens dress nicely and come here on special occasions to experience upscale life. Most of the staff are beautiful orc women in the finest fashions, or tiny goblins and kobolds who slink around, practically unseen, in drab hoods.

Military Secrets

Ursaliña's shipyards have slowly been losing their best workers, recruited to a clandestine military project somewhere in the mountains near the city. Workers voluntarily accept a *geas* to prevent them from revealing information about whatever they're building. All the public knows is that the enigmatic **Zarkava Ssa'litt**, once the vizier of Bruse Shantus, seems to run the operation, and that a few workers have been given pensions after only two years because they began to suffer from shivers and bouts of mania.



Scholars of the Genius Loci

Not far from the Red Peacock is the shell of the Triunfo Vida bardic college. Founded centuries ago by minotaurs, lavish pageants and shows were hosted every night within its bright blue stucco walls and fluted columns. It was shuttered during the chaos of the Great Eclipse, and people reported strange lights and voices coming from within its walls.

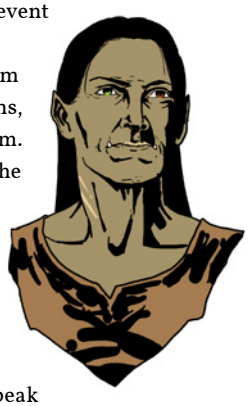
Among Ursaliñans, it is an open secret that the Triunfo Vida was the forward operating base of an alien invasion by Gidim psychovores. These creatures of thoughtflesh bound the population to their will by weaving them into a subtle egregore. Those who resisted or proved to have particularly delicious thoughts were brought to the school, and few were seen again.

A New Triumphant Life



The college no longer offers lessons on dance and acrobatics, and has instead become the meeting spot of the Nuevo Triunfo Vida, a society dedicated to exploring the possibilities—magical, cultural, social, economic, and more—of egregores. Today, they often work alongside **Professor Xambria Meredith** of Risur's Pardwight University, and the Drakran philosophers of Hestra Xenoism, excavating beneath the college to find remnants of the Gidim invasion.

A former instructor at the old college, Maestro **Eusebio Telderon**, still lives on campus, though he has not been seen in public for twenty years. In letters to the local newspaper, he claims he's experimenting with transferring knowledge directly to students. A few dozen have agreed to learn from him, and people report hearing music thrum from his classroom on nights he teaches. The Executores Lodge warns people not to join, but will not prevent those who wish to risk their minds.



Melissa Amarie, a writer and reporter from Seobriga, has been active in Ursaliña for months, trying to find the definitive truth about the Gidim. Professor Meredith has blocked her access to the excavation, and Melissa has petitioned the local executores to overrule the foreigner, with the argument that people cannot be free if information is not free too.

A City of Two Minds

People sometimes report hearing the city itself speak to their minds, warning them of unstable bridges to avoid, guiding them to ill shut-ins who need aid, and even reminding them to vote. When someone is in need of a sympathetic ear, a stranger may appear saying the city sent them. Sometimes in gatherings of large crowds, bits of inanimate matter like fallen leaves or pebbles will organize themselves into the shape of the city's icon: a two-headed bear.

But the city's genius loci is not always friendly. During unrest, public discontent manifests as thoughtform spooks—wispy figures



like translucent bears—that terrorize those who have earned the public's ire. And when the city tore down a beloved seaside inn to make room for a munition factory, that evening the chief architect's home came alive and threw itself off a cliff, killing everyone inside.

Efforts to mollify the noetic entity only seemed to incite it, and the executores have begun discussing how to kill the being. But Brakken of Heffanita from the council of governors believes the only true solution is to teach the people of the city to understand their will and refrain from desiring harm to others.

Politics

Despite his youthful reputation for being a quick-tempered dilettante, Governor Cadagyr is deeply concerned for the plight of his people and, as an outspoken tropezaro, a fervent advocate of banning animal blood-sports. Ursaliña's famed Bear Games are too much of a tradition for him to end completely, but he has introduced new non-bloody competitions of ursine athleticism and aesthetics, hoping someday they'll eclipse the violence.

A young man during the Gidim invasion, Dieter was captured and experimented on along with fifteen other citizens. He has set up a hospital to treat and try to restore those other victims, whose bodies were warped by the Gidim to emit destructive electricity.

However, the city's local military commander **Lofio Umafras** has recently become enamored with the Drakan philosophy Hestra Xenoism. He has argued that, after decades of the governor's failure to help these "shock troopers," the military ought to take them. Dieter has refused, convinced Umafras just wants to dissect the people and use the knowledge to create new weapons.

Karch

The Free City of Karch is a beacon of modernity and industrial power, fueled by a metal-worshipping gnoll workforce and a welcoming attitude to wealthy industrialists. An enterprising Risuri industrialist rules Karch, commanding the loyalty of its people, who treat him like their old dragon tyrant. Planarite mined from a portal atop a nearby floating island fuels electrical power plants that light up the entire city, only one of a thousand technological splendors that inspire awe and dread from the Beran mainland.

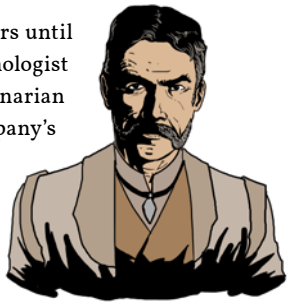
History

The dragon tyrant **Gradiax the Steel Lord** gave the gnolls of Isla dolas Focus secrets of advanced metallurgy. It took them centuries to rise from Stone Age tribes to form a full, modern society, but by the time Gradiax was slain, the steelmarked gnolls were already building early cannons and were masters at infusing constructs with energy drawn from the island's great volcano.

When Gradiax left them, his loyal Cult of the Steel Lord remained focused on securing their island. While the rest of Ber fell to anarchy, they remained isolated and refined their engineering and technological expertise. When Ber unified, they had no interest in joining.

The world assumed the gnolls of Isla dolas Focas were primitives. Few believed the rumors that they were secretly the finest industrialists of the day.

This ignorance was shattered during the Steel Revolt of 501 AOV, when the steelmarked gnolls abducted Risuri gnome **Tinker Oddcog**, a brilliant but unstable technologist who was implicated in the colossus attack in Flint (page 165). Bolstered by Tinker's impossibly advanced inventions, the gnolls launched a brief and unsuccessful invasion of Ber and attempted to assassinate Bruse Shantus. The reason for this sudden shift in behavior is unknown, but Ber retaliated with a full marine invasion that sacked Karch. The Cult signed a swift armistice agreement, and Ber withdrew.



The island remained off-limits to visitors until 510 AOV, when another famed Risuri technologist visited. **Benedict Pemberton**—a septuagenarian human previously known best for his company's expertise with constructs—murdered the gnoll's ruling chieftain, subordinated the locals, and somehow impressed them enough to be declared the "Voice of Gradiax." Pemberton quickly assured the Beran government that he had no intention of making war, but rather sought to offer Karch as a gift to all inventors and industrialists who wanted a place free from government restraint and laborer recalcitrance.

Karch, Pemberton promised, has minimal taxes and no tariffs, a workforce that celebrates studious craft and sees rest and leisure as a sign of weakness, and a leader eager to help like-minded innovators build the world of tomorrow. In the past twelve years, foreign investors have flowed into the city, factories have sprung up, and at the low cost of only a few industrial accidents, Karch has come to be seen as a playground of the rich and forward-looking.

Geography

Karch is positioned along an expanse of gentle beaches. Sea turtles frequently lay their eggs on the beachfront sections not yet occupied by docks or construct-supplemented manufactories, protected by an ancient gnoll taboo on testudine meat. Steelmarked gnolls have historically preferred a diet of seal flesh, sea fowl, wild berries, and certain varieties of nutritious and delicious centipedes. Corn is also a staple, and the dozen different ways the locals prepared it have been supplemented by the recent innovation of air-popped corn and sickly sweet refined corn syrup.

Karch was once circled by a forest of gnarled and spiny trees, long since cut down to feed forge-fires or pressed into service as lamp-posts. The city's most distinctive geographical feature is the nearby volcano, Yerev's Maw. The caves and crannies of its exterior housed gnolls for centuries, but in recent decades Pemberton ordered a grand excavation to build an enormous foundry. The Maw rumbles periodically, spewing forth great, lightning-wracked clouds of soot and ebony smoke, covering the Isla.

Architecture

Karch is, for the most part, a planned and unwalled city. Its heart just uphill from the coast is dominated by blocky warrens built from immense pumice stones, which were personally shifted long ago by Gradiax and over time blackened by volcanic ash. Great channels had been dug to redirect possible lava flows into the sea, and in normal times they served as irrigation channels, creating a verdant linear farmland.

Upon his arrival, Benedict Pemberton proposed an aggressive urban planning program. The existing city center would remain mostly intact to maintain what he saw as its historical charm, but it would be ringed by an orderly grid of paved roads, which would be gradually filled in with steel-framed buildings dozens of stories tall for offices, shops, and homes, all illuminated by electric lights. Several small quarters of the city were set aside to have manors constructed in foreign styles, meant to welcome business leaders from other lands, but to keep them isolated enough that the city would always feel dominated by gnolls, not outsiders.

Civic rail moves workers to farms and factories, while the streets are designed specifically for Pemberton Industries roadcars—personal vehicles that seat four, with a rumbling wayfarer engine that lets the driver speed along nearly as fast as a locomotive.

The steelmarked builders departed from Pemberton's blueprint in some places, however. The city was meant to feature a number of large gardens, plazas, open-air restaurants, and public gathering areas. But the gnolls prefer less of a communal spirit, and instead built an enormous number of nooks, crannies, and small one-person benches. What greenery there is they laid down in long narrow lines, less useful for big events, and better for solitary musing during a long walk. Overall the city has a lonely character.

Tours of Seal and Steel

The Isla dola Focas attracts a great number of wealthy tourists, who line up to hike around the caldera of Yerev's Maw, take dirigible excursions to the Skyland, and tour the city's many construct-supplemented forges and foundries.

One gnoll named **Lhys** specializes in expeditions that explore traditional life of the gnolls before the arrival of Gradiax. She has an unmatched knowledge of the cave paintings and carved stonework of ancient gnolls, folk songs and prayer rituals seldom seen by outsiders. Lhys endures constant slander from her fellow steelmarked, whom she claims do not want their people to understand what life looked like before the dragon tyrant enslaved the Isla.

Rather than looking backward, the development known as "Pemberland" promises to bring the future to visitors. Slated to finish construction in 525, Pemberland will be an enormous showcase of the wonders of Pemberton Industries and its partners. Attractions will include tours of a real-life BEAR manufactory (see page 225), an exhibit on alien planes led by Pemberton Industries' interplanar exploration division, and a collection of *asomatous canvas projectors* and miniature animated objects displaying and declaring the glory of Karch back when it was ruled by Gradiax the Steel Lord.

When new investors come to the island, one of their first experiences is a tour of the park's few open exhibits alongside Benedict Pemberton's daughter.

The Second Wind

A permanent storm system once hovered between island and mainland, producing incessant rain and erratic winds, yet never any lightning or thunder. After the Great Eclipse the sky cleared to reveal an island hovering a thousand feet in the air, crowned by a great stone ziggurat. Though formally called La Mota dola Tormenta, Benedict Pemberton cheekily calls this sky island Skyland.



His daughter **Terri Pemberton** was the first visitor. She discovered megaliths, primitive carvings of flying beasts, and a maze of traps leading to a planar portal. Even better, valuable planarite hung near-invisible in the air, but could be harvested by hand. Rarer planarite—a tendril-shaped crystal called fulgurinium—thrums with blue light and is used in Karch's power plants as a source of electricity.

Today, Pemberton Industries treats the island as one of its most valuable assets, controlling access via dirigible flights. Terri oversees operations at a base called "Outpost Alfa," and has recruited a group of explorers called Planar Gate-α Squad. After several forays through the ziggurat's traps, they discovered a portal to **Caeloon, the Paper Wind**.

On that lush world, flying stone gardens wander the winds and lightning trickles from the sky like water rivulets. PG-α has made contact with its central civilization, an ascetic republic led by monks whose buildings are all crafted of paper. Terri visited once, enthralled by the unknown land and hoping to open negotiations for trade. All it seems the monks offered was instruction in the art of creating flying, papercraft creatures. However, they did have some weapons that they'd recovered from a group of raiders.

They called the raiders the "Undestined," and described beings that resembled tieflings, who shot lightning as an archer might fire an arrow. Terri gladly took the raiders' castoffs off the monks' hands, and has already reverse engineered a new type of electrokinetic arctech weapon.

Politics

Though Benedict Pemberton looks about seventy, he has the verve and mutton chops of a far younger man. Pemberton plays up his homely country roots, speaking slowly in a deep voice and often leaning back and tucking his thumbs into his belt loops, even when speaking to his gnoll "worshipers."



Foremost among those worshipers is **Ermafo**, steelmarked armory savant and Pemberton's personal assistant and bodyguard when he leaves the island. She is intensely enthusiastic to meet outsiders and tell them of how great her people and their leader is, and how she hopes foreigners will grow beyond their ignorance and recognize that metal is a blessing far superior to flesh, one that few will ever be worthy of. Pemberton often has to admonish her with a grin to not pester strangers.

The apple of Pemberton's eye is his half-elf daughter Terri. Tutored by Lanjyr's finest academics, the shy and studious beauty truly stands out with her prosthetic steel arm, an eye of red crystalline planarite, and a pair of astounding articulated mithral wings operated by a cutting edge wayfarer engine implanted in her back. The gnolls of Karch refer to her as "princess," and many yearn to serve her and become worthy of replacing their bodies with metal too.

The heir of the Pemberton empire appears to be motivated less by a desire for power, wealth, or fame than by a drive to learn and be free. As unfriendly as Bruse Corta Nariz already is with Karch, she became positively apoplectic at the news that Terri had visited the mainland and made contact with the fey dragon Calenche.

Other Places of Interest

- **Abismo Condendado** is a perpetual glacier a few miles away from the route of the Cantabrilla Railroad. Once the lair of the dragon tyrant Cheshimox, tropezaros petitioned for it to become a national park, protecting the bizarre ecosystem in the supernaturally frigid swampland.
- **Citado Cavallo** is the family seat of Bruse Corta Nariz de Guerra, and a major orc stronghold. The walled city climbs a hill overlooking Marrajado del Oro (the riven sea of gold).



The Sea Chiefs traditionally dock their fleet here, though the Bruse is trying to deploy them closer to the Avery Sea, where their might can protect the whole nation.

- **Manhill** is a Risuri town on the north shore of the Marrajado del Oro, formerly a defensive fort. Today it's a tourist destination for many Berans and Risuri, and excavations are under way to possibly build a tunnel under the sea to Citado Cavallo, connecting the two nations.
- **Pezarillo** was a minor fishing village until the sunken portal to Ostea was discovered off its coast. Now it's growing into a valuable naval staging ground. The famed felid undine vagabond Lady Kotele of the Dun God has taken up residence here, hoping she can find a route to her homeworld.
- **Renza** is a small city on the eastern end of the Cantabrilla Railroad, which made it possible to cross the country in two days. Its high walls make it a key defense against the gnolls to the south.
- **Reo Pedresco** is the second-largest city in Ber, with the most diverse array of peoples, located on the western shore. Its river delta feeds the most verdant farmlands of the nation.
- **Shantre's** labyrinthine canals are venues for leisurely minotaur operas. Its shipyards produce nearly half the nation's warships.



Crisillyir

Name: Sacred Kingdom of Crisillyir
Capital: Alais Primos
Other Major Cities: Cadute, Sid Minos, Vendricce
Teleportation Beacons: All major cities, plus Prejo Vizzuto and numerous remote shrines, including either end of the Penance Peaks
Government: Ecclesiastical elective monarchy
Head of State: Prime Cardinal Fiore Tullius
Official Language: Common
Common Heritages: Human 82%, gnome 6%, dwarf 4%, other 8%

Introduction

Five centuries after Triegenes founded the Clergy, its original capital in modern-day Danor was devastated, and Crisillyir became the new seat of power of the religion. Despite the devastating collapse, the faith built its new homeland into a nation of unmatched prosperity. Trade and colonization filled the coffers, elaborate blessed aqueducts fed meltwater from the Penance Peaks throughout the land, three great cities became beacons of enlightenment and theothaumaturgic research, and a culture of self-improvement and perfection created some of the grandest works of art and architecture in the world.

Yet always has Crisillyir's light cast a shadow. Official dogma had long flirted with Demonocratic traditions, such as spirit-binding and necromantic reanimation, and fiends were prisoners only until they became more useful as weapons. Priests kindled hatred of Elfaivar to silence any voices that questioned their power, and even after the Great Malice, the Clergy continued to praise its people when they vilified and tormented the shattered empire's survivors. Fat merchant lords purchased indulgences to absolve themselves of the evils of assassination and theft, while Clergy hierarchs blessed a criminal syndicate to justify their control of the underworld.

Now, amidst the fallout of the Great Eclipse's terrible god trials, a fierce theological schism feeds that long-looming darkness. In the light of day, the kingdom's leader, **Prime Cardinal Fiore Tullius**, tries to build alliances with other nations while maintaining traditional Clergy dogma. But in the darkness of night, two radicalizing factions engage in a holy civil war for the destiny of the nation.

Grand History

The history of Crisillyir began with **Triegenes**, and the nation is the inheritor of his legacy.

The Fisher King

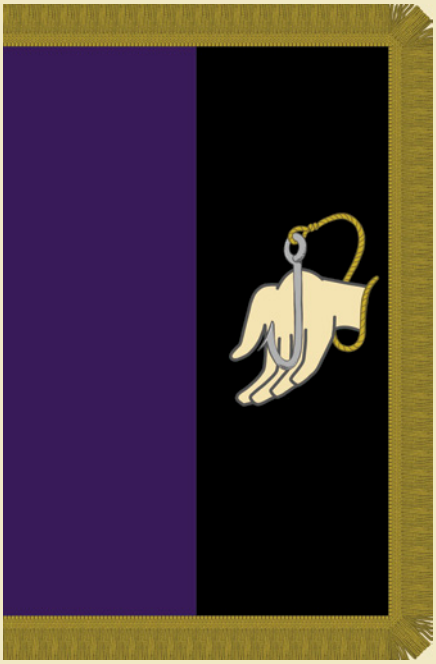
The story of the Clergy began at sea: a human fisherman named Triegenes discovered the secret of divinity while battling a storm. He returned to his home in Danor and preached of the divine spark within all mortals, and how by constantly challenging oneself, a person can become like a god. He inspired followers to fight beside him, to defeat the elemental titans of Danor, and to found a new nation based on a divine hierarchy where rank and reward would be based solely on merit.

With his kingdom established, Triegenes undertook the greatest challenge left in the mortal world. He led an army east to vanquish the Demonocracy, a tyrannical and literally fiendish regime that controlled all the land between Danor and Elfaivar. First, he cast

Crisillyir at a Glance

These are the major figures, groups, and locations in Crisillyir most foreigners have heard about.

- **Prime Cardinal Fiore Tullius.** Head of the Clergy religion and ruler of the nation of Crisillyir. Takes no side in the Meliskan-Ottoplismist debate.
- **Arch Secula Tiesa Machulas.** Commander of the military. Head of the Ottoplismist faction.
- **Arch Legate Aulus Atticus.** Godhand, former military commander, now highest authority in theological law. Head of the Meliskan faction.
- **Godhand.** A sanctified warrior whose body has been transmuted into a physical embodiment of Clericist faith.
- **The Family.** An international criminal organization that originated in Crisillyir, known for using respectable front businesses to transact smuggling and protection rackets. Before the Eclipse the Clergy supported them discreetly, but that practice has supposedly ended.
- **The Host of Odiem.** A small angelic legion that eschews politics, instead focusing on retrieving fiends and cursed items to seal away in a vault of heresies.
- **Alais Primos.** The capital city, known for grand cathedrals and blessed canals, surrounded by a ring of mountains. Rebuilding after a devastating volcanic eruption twenty years ago.
- **Sid Minos.** Dreary island city, renowned for its navy and as seat of the Ottoplismist faction.
- **Vendricce.** Perhaps the most conquered city in the world, currently recovering from an Elfaivaran occupation. Destination for artists and international trade. Seat of the Meliskan faction.
- **Prejo Vizzuto.** Small city founded as a penal colony, where penitent murderers would go to pray for the resurrection of their victims. Priests of the Clergy who become powerful enough to raise the dead are required to come here for trials to ensure they will not abuse that sacred blessing, while many mourners make pilgrimages here hoping to regain their lost loved ones.



down the demons' Drakran warlord allies in their towers, then panicked the fiends' draconic steeds into abandoning the battle and fleeing to other lands. In his final battle, Triegenes sacrificed himself to obliterate the demonic armies and their leaders, and transcended from mortal to god.

Pax Danorana

Triegenes's followers founded the Clergy, an ecclesiastical empire styled after his divine hierarchy, and set themselves to the task of imprisoning every demon and profane being the Demonocracy had ever unleashed. Permanently banishing a fiend was impossible, and killing one would merely cause it to later remanifest elsewhere in the world, but the Clergy became ingenious in its methods of binding and tormenting these beings of evil.

As Kelland's defeat of the titans granted Risur an age of unity and growth, so too did the Clergy's successful crusade against demonkind grant the continent a new age of peace and security. Centuries passed, and the Clergy became a mature and prestigious empire, with Triegenes's teachings an unshakeable cornerstone: that every person has greatness within them, and it is through challenges that they awaken their potential.

Pantheon and Dogma

The Clergy welcomed into its pantheon the gods of every land they liberated, as well as those of travelers from afar, requiring only that they agree with Triegenes' core message. The myriad gods and their priesthoods developed the concept of a celestial bureaucracy, with every deity serving a role and balancing their authorities. Most priests chose a single god to champion, though they learned the tenets and lore of many others.

What remained constant over generations of this rise and fall were the humble fisherman's virtues: honesty, temperance, charity, diligence, mercy, humility, curiosity, and bravery; and the vices that he resisted: hubris, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, ignorance, and melancholy.

The faith's battle against demonkind led to a deep understanding of the planes, as well as a coldly utilitarian view of the necromancy the demons had made regular use of. Where the demons would torment prisoners by binding their souls or use the reanimated corpses of their foes as conscript troops, the Clergy would bind the souls of sinners to show the pious what horror awaited those who turned to evil, and sometimes reanimate bestial skeletons for battle or parades.

Such spectacles were only some of many ways the Clergy used its power to impress, and despite their emphasis on humans above other species, they became and remain today the most widespread Lanjyran faith.

The Two Victories

For long centuries, the Clergy had uneasy relations with Elfaivar, with intermittent small wars and trading of territory. Finally in the year 50 BOV, with the Clergy having lost Vendricce and nearby lands, the prime cardinal of the day whipped his people into a fervor and began a holy war that would come to be called the First Victory. The Clergy drove back the unprepared Elfaivarans and even encroached across the Strait of Sjögren.

Crisillyr: Landscape and Cuisine

Crisillyir's climate is sharply divided; the Penance Peaks ensure frequent rainfall for the temperate verdant southwest, while those same peaks block clouds and ensure that the northeast remains a great swath of sweltering desert. Some areas have unnatural weather patterns, such as Sid Minos's near-daily drizzle, suspected to be the consequence of evil spirits seeping into the sea from a nearby island that once held a vault of heresies.

Most of the nation lives in pleasant pastoral lands, criss-crossed by blessed aqueducts, connected by ceraunic wire telegraph and a growing network of railroads. Every village has a shrine to some god of the Clergy, and every town has a church.

Wise Triegenes created an annual diet for maintaining the perfect human form, and it greatly influences Crisillyiri cuisine. During the first fast, only vegetables such as olives, lemons, figs, and tomatoes are eaten. During the second fast, rich foods such as chocolate, truffles, syrup, cheese, and strong spices are avoided. At other times in the year, popular Crisillyiri meals involve wine, pizza, and seafood, often flavored with rich saffron. The national dish is stromboli, said to be the dish preferred by Triegenes's army.

Fifty years later, two generations had passed among the humans of the Clergy, but memories were still raw in Elfaivar. The elves started a second war, seeking (as the Clergy had) to reclaim lost land, and then (as the Clergy had) fighting on to seize new territory.

This second war was far more vicious, driving both nations to desperation and sin.

Elfaivaran rajputs slaughtered prisoners of war en masse, burned fields to starve the Clericist armies, and dragged whole villages into the Dreaming. Clergy prelates retaliated by invoking old Demonocracy tactics, necromantically defiling the bodies of slain elves to create an army that did not need to eat. Vendricce and Sid Minos fell to siege. Clerics released demons and sent them into the heart of Elfaivar as assassins. Horrors compounded horrors.

The Great Malice

The final battle of the war began at the walls of Alais Primos. After many months of siege and inconclusive assaults, one day the armies of Elfaivar saw striding above them the towering and divine form of Srasama, Elfaivaran goddess of womanhood. Her three sets of arms held six flaming swords, which shattered a magical shield over the city. Her elated people followed her into the breach.

But the Clergy's forces assailed Srasama with endless spears, arrows, and specters, and the warriors of Elfaivar screamed in despair as their great goddess fell. Her death unleashed a pillar of fire that could be seen from as far as distant Seobriga, and a power that swept across the whole world. Nearly every Elfaivaran woman perished, a calamity that effectively destroyed the Elfaivaran Empire.

But a separate backlash erupted centered on the Clergy's capital in the distant city of Methia in Danor. Many Clericists of all ranks contorted in pain as their bodies grew "demonic" horns and tails, and a vast swath of hundreds of miles became an area of no magic, while beyond became a region of wild magic that warped the landscape.

That devastation and the transmutation of people into tieflings would come to be called the Great Malice, because most saw it as a dying curse laid by Srasama. However, the Clergy celebrates this

Elfaivaran Slave Trade

The aftermath of the Great Malice was also when the Elfaivaran slave trade began. Clergy hierarchs and the merchant princes who were growing rich in the chaos after the Second Victory tried to take the few Elfaivaran women who survived as trophy brides. In that time, it was seen as a fine status symbol to have contributed to the genocide of the Elfaivaran people. Over the centuries, these rich villains forced enslaved male Elfaivarans to rape the enslaved Elfaivaran women to produce entire family lines which they could sell across the continent.

Only in the past few decades have any Crisillyiri begun to grapple with the trauma and cruelty their nation was responsible for. Slavery is still technically legal in Crisillyir, though Meliskans are trying to end the practice as a show of good faith to deescalate conflicts with Elfaivar.

The Lovely Legion

The Clergy gave its most cruel insult in the colony Angelus, where a rebellion in the year 2 AOV was put down by an army of necromantically reanimated Elfaivaran women, whose corpses had been dug up from the fields around Alais Primos. Though the Clergy has generally agreed to forget this breach of its own morals, in the colony there are still paintings lionizing the legion of the dead, and it is rumored that the legion may still lie in wait in some secret barracks in Angelus's capital city Redenzion.

war as their Second Victory, because it set the nation on course for its golden age. So great was the upheaval in the world that scholars soon began to record time relative to it.

Exodus and Rebirth

After the Great Malice, the Clergy reconstituted itself with its new capital in the Crisillyiri city of Alais Primos. The discovery of devas, imbued with divine power, was taken as a sign of righteousness.

The Elfaivaran Empire had been worse than decimated, and Crisillyir invaded and established colonies. Through these, the wealth and wisdom of the elven nation flowed back to Crisillyir, and colonial forces began systemic efforts to crush any Elfaivarans who did not accept their defeat.

Though the Clergy was nowhere near as powerful as before the Great Malice, it remained the most powerful institution in Lanjyr after the Second Victory. It was unable to hold onto lands west of the Penance Peaks, but Drakr and many border states still looked to it for guidance and trade. Their international dominion only began to falter after the year 300, when Danor began contesting Risur for control of the Yerasol Archipelago. Crisillyir refused to allow new industrial innovations into its lands, which they saw as the creation of "devils" in Danor. Though the seat of the Clergy remained a wellspring of art and culture, the axis of global influence shifted westward away from Crisillyir, toward Risur.

The Great Eclipse and Aftermath

After months of a sky with no sun or stars, the capital city Alais Primos was bathed in light when the holy volcano Enzyo Mons erupted. The lava took the body of a 300-foot-tall dragon which would come to be called *Esurientes, Draco in Ruinam*, and it obliterated the Cathedral of Triegenes at the volcano's edge.

The event is remembered as the perhaps the *third* worst catastrophe Crisillyir experienced during the Great Eclipse.



The Clergy's Collapse

Long before the dragon, when the stars first fell from the sky, the faithful turned to their hierarchs for guidance, only to discover that hundreds of high-ranking Clericists had already taken their own lives. They left behind confessions of corruption and venality. The Clergy's leadership all-but vanished in a single night, and with them many secrets of the faith.

Then came a moment of hope: angels appeared, saying they had been summoned by a thousand years of prayers. The angels' gazes were keen in discerning demonic taint, but they proved blind at discerning the evil within mortal men. An angel stood at the side of **Legate Savina Tullius** as she called for the god trials, and her message was transmitted across the whole nation by early ceraunic cables.

> "Open your eyes, citizens! The gods protect us no longer. Bear witness to their failures: the stolen sun, the wilted vines, the rising soot of the Abyss. Bring these false gods to face the people's judgement; bring their snake-tongued priests, their bishops and hierophants. Bring them to me, at the Plaza Hyperion. We shall try them for their crimes, and march the guilty to Enzyo Mons, to face the maw of the mountain!"
>
> —Legate Savina Tullius (502 AOV)

The God Trials

The elven orator Savina Tullius was Risuri-born, Beran-trained, and Clergy-sworn, until the stars fell from the sky and she renounced her faith. Rousing crowds in Alais Primos to a fury, she compelled from them guilty verdict after guilty verdict for eight

gods, recounting their ancient oaths to protect Crisillyir and decrying their absence in this hour of need.

The priests were taken to Enzyo Mons, where the Cathedral of Triegenes overlooked the volcano's caldera. For centuries priests had hurled cursed items and bound demons into the lava, consigning them to burn forever.

The godhand **Vitus Sigismund**, with great angels at his side, daubed the priests with blood according to some ancient ritual, then chanted a prayer over them. The bodies of these priests transformed into the bodies of their gods, which Sigismund hurled into the lava below. The eight gods burned and died, much as Srasama had centuries earlier, and as with her, all the followers of those gods perished with them.

The Eruption

Tullius and Sigismund were ultimately defeated. During the ninth trial, meant for a goddess named Meliska, King Baldrey Korrigan of Risur interceded, and persuaded Sigismund that he was simply delaying his ultimate goal: a trial for Triegenes himself. A deva named **Malthusius** stepped forward to advocate for the chief god of the Clergy, and gave a grand oration that turned the people of the city against the trials.

Accounts vary wildly—about half claiming that Sigismund declared himself a liar and heretic, others that he refused to accept an innocent verdict—but all saw the godhand hurl himself into the volcano. Somehow his death shattered the wards on the volcano, unleashing in one moment all the evils that had been sealed inside. That evil gave itself skin of lava and the form of a dragon, and scorched its way down the mountain, intent on incinerating the seat of the Clergy.

The combined efforts of thousands managed to defeat the dragon and save the city, but in the chaos two long-imprisoned demon lords escaped—**Namtar-Shamash** and **Ishara-Anaan**—along with hordes of their minions. Many other fiends around the country were also released during the Eclipse, though it's unclear if all were freed due to Sigismund's actions.

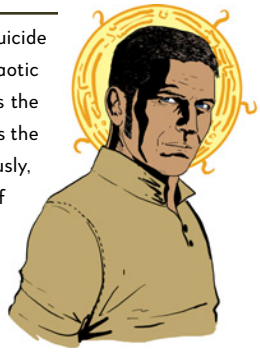
Alais Primos has been mostly rebuilt, but the god trials left a deep spiritual scar in the faith of the Clergy. The worst catastrophe that happened to Crisllyir during the Great Eclipse was the start of the schism.

Two Decades, Two Faiths

Fear and doubt in the wake of the god trials drove many to reconsider their beliefs. Traditionally, the integrity of the doctrine would be maintained by the Clergy hierarchs, but with so many having committed suicide, particularly the more conservative leaders, this did not occur. As time passed and the miracle of the return of the Elfaivaran gulmohar became known, Crisillyiri faith and society schismed into two major factions.

Meliskans

Meliskans are grounded in worship of Meliska: the goddess of eclipses, lovers, and reconciliation. They believe that the Great Eclipse and the ensuing god trials are proof that the eight deities executed—and perhaps even Triegenes—were guilty of deceiving and abandoning their followers, and absolutely deserve to be dead and buried following the trials' devastating verdicts. Their doctrine is based upon turning away from pantheism and Triegenes's teachings, instead prioritizing Meliska above other gods and following her tenets of love and mercy, particularly towards those needy folk who need succor most.

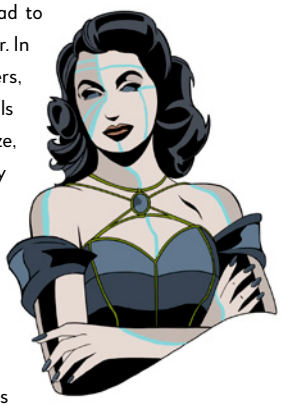


"The Great Eclipse, the return of the gulmohar, the suicide of the hierarchs; these are signs that we live in a chaotic age, wherein no one stands alone, and wherein it is the highest moral duty to help one another. Meliska was the ninth deity to be accused, and was innocent; thusly, she was shown mercy by being spared the horrors of Enzyo Mons. As she now shows mercy to others, so must we, all the more so towards the impoverished and the vulnerable."

—Arch Legate Aulus Atticus

Ottoplismists

Ottoplismists ardently maintain many traditional Clergy doctrines. They hold that the eight deities executed in the god trials were innocent. To respect their noble martyrdom, their powers and portfolios must be held above all in the former pantheon, save for holy Triegenes. The Ottoplismo movement worships the *memory* of the martyred eight, invoking their guidance in the harsh trials of the path to self-perfection. While Ottoplismist doctrine conclusively outlines how this is metaphysically possible, Meliskans mock the worship of dead gods as wholly delusional and no better than the Elfaivaran worship of Srasama.



"The path of self-improvement is available to all. It is the most important part of anyone's life, and it is the road to divinity. Godhood is now more important than ever. In an age of steam and steel, of demons and monsters, of eight martyred gods, we need righteous souls to follow in Triegenes's footsteps and apotheosize, to take on the mantles of those deities unjustly murdered; their deaths do not stop these gods from guiding our trials of self-perfection. This world is flawed by design, to create challenges and serve as a crucible for paragons; to carelessly quash another's challenges is to risk denying them their opportunities to grow."

—Arch Secula Tiesa Machulas

Factional Holdings

Ottoplismo members are commonly soldiers, inventors, hunters, and investigators, and their core of support is in the ore-rich west. Holding each other to standards of honor and bravery, their concern for the integrity and recovery of their nation is paramount. Their strongest influence is in the tainted city of Sid Minos, where Ottoplismist leaders command its many shipyards and war academies.

The Meliskans were founded in Crisillyir's agrarian east. Meliska was a little regarded goddess whose only real shrine was in the

eastern fishing port of **Mazara del Vallo**. But her teachings have become popular among farmers, merchants, diplomats, and aristocrats. Fearing the economic disruption of industrialization and social upheaval seen in other countries, they are eager for Meliska's principles of mercy and charity to be used to protect Crisillyir's most vulnerable and most impoverished. The seat of Meliskan power is the city of Vendricce.

Schism and Violence

Tensions between the two factions percolated for years. The Ottoplismists defied tradition and embraced firearms. The Meliskans denounced them for using the weapons of devils, but then quietly began arming themselves as well, for which they were widely mocked as hypocrites.

Some measure of peace was maintained thanks to the shared need to defend against the freed demons that spread through the country, but the demonic threat has also led to endless cries to not listen to the "abyssal lies" of one hierarch or another, whose "obvious heresy is doubtlessly a sign of being a demonic infiltrator in disguise!"

In many cases, Ottoplismists and Meliskans genuinely believe that their opponents are, indeed, being corrupted by demonic entities. People have reported seeing tiny evil spirits roaming night time streets, particularly in neighborhoods with outspoken members of both factions. Psychometric researchers from the Danoran *Académie de Bergeron* have theorized that, rather than demons, this rising rancor is actually manifesting as tiny entities they call "noetic thoughtform spooks."

Yet as factionalist as Crisillyir became, religious disputes alone were not enough to lead to violence, not until tensions were inflamed by a botched crisis.

The Gulmohar Invasion Crisis

In the initial years after the Great Eclipse, some Meliskans proposed letting Elfaivar's gulmohar immigrate to the colonies as a way of recognizing that the land had been theirs. Ottoplismists—and most Elfaivarans—scoffed, offended by the idea from different directions.

Adin Radhasi and the Imperial Sentinels

Encroachment by the Elfaivarans turned to raids, and by 510 AOV those raids sometimes escalated into terroristic murders, which prompted Crisillyir to abandon its colony Vigilia and recall its citizens.

Then in 519, the Elfaivaran leader **Adin Radhasi** attacked and occupied Vendricce. She launched her attack using recovered vessels from the Elfaivaran Empire called "fire ships": wood-hulled sailing vessels, about the size of a caravel, but layered with magical defenses and painted in vivid, beautiful red and gold.

Crisillyiri defenders in their proud new steam gunboats launched barrages of cannons at the nimble fire ships, only to see flames spiral in the air beside their targets, opening into extradimensional portals. Their cannon balls flew into the portals, and then another set of portals opened beside the Crisillyiri gunboats, from which flew those same cannon balls. Some of their shots managed to land true, but nearly every attack they launched was turned



back on them, doing more damage to their own ships than the near-invulnerable fire ships.

As Vendricce's residents sought a peaceful compromise, Adin and her army occupied the city, conscripting many citizens and putting the remainder under house arrest. Adin boldly sent notice to the Clergy hierarchs of her intention to use Vendricce as a staging point for reclaiming Elfaivar. The city's shipyards, armories, and strategic position would allow her to strike at all the colonies holding what she declared stolen land.

Crisillyiri Counterattack

Prime Cardinal Fiore Tullius sent Crisillyiri battalions to surround the city, but he had no experience with war. Crisillyir's forces were predominately secular military, under command of **Arch Secula Tiesa Machulas**, though the primary magical assets sent were clerics reporting to **Legate Aulus Atticus**. The two ideological rivals clashed on strategy, and eventually settled on an ineffectual siege, waiting for additional arms to arrive.

Drakr's Armiger faction supplied the Clergy army with modern siege equipment, but that took two months to arrive. By that time, Drakr's *Reformist* faction put their finger on the other side of the scale, shipping food and relief supplies to Vendricce—supplies which Adin's forces used for themselves. Danor claimed it was neutral and simply wanted to be allowed to sail its ships through the Strait of Sjögren, but distrustful Crisillyiri gunboats fired on a merchant ship they thought was violating an embargo. This led to Danor sending its own frigate to protect their merchant vessels.

A potential turning point came when **Bruse Corta Nariz** of Ber dispatched a large fleet in support of Crisillyir, and they tried to overwhelm and sink Adin's fire ships. But the proud Berans fared no better than Crisillyir's navy, and they were routed.

The siege dragged out over a year as the Prime Cardinal hesitated, afraid that overstepping might provoke Adin to raze the city and kill its residents. Crisillyiri forces slowly tightened the siege, but Adin was able to use Vendricce's infrastructure to arm her people and launch coastal raids against numerous colonies to the east.



King and Coaltongue

King Baldrey Korrigan of Risur sought and received permission from the prime cardinal to attempt to broker a peace. The king made an imposing entrance aboard his ironclad flagship *Coaltongue*, leaving a trail of smoke as it circled in the sky above the city and harbor, held aloft by powerful levitationals and dozens of mages.

After that implicit threat of force against both sides, the king lived up to his reputation for wisdom and intellect. He made clear he intended to hear everyone's grievances, and proposed a series of small exchanges of concessions to help people build trust in each other. Alas, the negotiations would not last long enough for his plan to come to fruition.

A small group of old guard godhands, led by **Brother Aurelio Cethe**, blamed the foreign king for causing the death of their friend Vitus Sigismund, architect of the god trials, and for the more nebulous crime of "choosing the wrong stars." Girded with a fortune of potions and charms, the godhands boarded the *Coaltongue,* challenged the Risuri king, and attempted to slay him in a fusillade of gunfire. They nearly succeeded, and in so doing provoked a destructive battle.

The Arch Secula, convinced Risur would side with Elfaivar in retaliation, ordered a swift attack on Vendricce, using every modern weapon they could bring to bear. Explosive artillery and light bomb-carrying dirigibles cleared the way for ground forces, but they found the city reinforced with Elfaivaran magic. Localized earthquakes, thorned treants, and blasts of arcane fire killed soldiers by the hundreds and civilians by the thousands.

After a week, the Clergy attackers forced the Elfaivarans out of the city, but poor naval coordination—and accusations of interference by the Danoran warship in the harbor—let Adin retreat with her fire ships, while the bulk of her forces safely withdrew across the isthmus. As they departed, Vendricce smoldered.

Pursuit and Humiliation

Cardinal Palmieri, Legate Tullius's second-in-command and an Ottoplismist**,** led a force in pursuit of Adin's ground forces. After weeks tracking the elves through the jungle, the cardinal found them seeking sanctuary from the Risuri colony of Kellandia. Thinking his actions were justified in defense of Crisillyir, he demanded the Risuri colonial defenders let his soldiers attack the elves. When the colonials refused, the cardinal attacked the Risuri directly. The battle was a stalemate and eventually, with no supply lines through Kellandia's jungle, the cardinal realized his error and surrendered.

After two attacks by Crisillyiri forces, King Baldrey demonstrated rare temper, demanding a formal surrender and concessions from Prime Cardinal Tullius, lest Risur actively retaliate. Under the barrels of Risuri guns, the Prime Cardinal publicly apologized and signed the Treaty of Sawyer. Crisillyir had reclaimed Vendricce, but was required to cede the colony of Tropaeum to Elfaivar, leaving only Angelus as their last colony. Adin and her forces paid token reparations, and to this day continue to chip away at the colony Angelus.

Aftermath

In Crisillyir, the need to lay blame for the nation's failure drove Meliskans and Ottoplismists to heighten their accusatory rhetoric. Rumors faulted Legate Atticus and the Arch Secula for sending false orders to each other's forces or suggested the entire assassination attempt on the king was a hoax. Meliskans were accused of cowardice, Ottoplismists of turning the world against Crisillyir in unjust war.

Within a year, bodies started showing up in canals.

Supernatural Threats

The Clergy had long known that simply destroying the body of a fiend would release its malevolence, which would corrupt some other being. It became standard practice for the Clergy to instead imprison defeated demons and devils—and any other unfamiliar creature which they could reasonably mistake for one.

The execution of deities in God Trials meant some wards failed immediately. Other wards simply decayed over the following decades as the priests who would have maintained them had perished, and chaos had destroyed the records of their locations.

Demons and Devils

Today, hellhounds gather packs of stray dogs in burnt out districts of Alais Primos. Librarians are seduced by smoldering succubi who ask only that certain books be destroyed, or that others be slipped onto the shelves. Waxy blobs the shape of children scamper through tunnels under Sid Minos, giggling as they use stolen picks to tunnel to oubliettes holding the severed body parts of a still-living demon prince. Giants with black halos and chitinous claws slaughter remote villagers and array their entrails in rituals to transform wild lions into corrupted predators invisible to the eyes of the pious. Bishops enslave people for golden riches, then cake their faces in makeup to hide the yellow veins pulsing out of their skin.

These beings feed on dark temptations and brutish emotions, and while they do not seem to possess the numbers or coordination to be an existential threat to Crisillyir, they always lurk as perils in the shadows. They torment the vulnerable and stoke paranoia among the strong.

And Fey

Long have rural gnome villages maintained ties with the fey of the Dreaming through *pittura* circles, portals marked by rings of vegetation—usually flowers like toadflax. But after the God Trials, Crisillyir's Dreaming underwent a strange transformation.

Instead of being a verdant reflection of the real world, it was remade into a vast labyrinthine gallery of art and paintings, with seemingly every notable work of art in the country being mirrored there. Nearly all the fey in the region were sucked into paintings and transformed into figures from the art—often angelic, but sometimes grotesque.

A gnome cleric named **Tittling Grainet** learned of the transformation and, with the aid of small but brave heroes among her people, entered these old *pittura* circles and freed hundreds of fey from their painting prisons. Though they could not reverse the faeries' transmogrification, they made a pledge to help each other—using Clergy magic to rescue more trapped fey, and fey magic to protect the wilderness from fiends.

Painted fey patrol in ever widening rings around gnome settlements, daubing prominent landforms with guache and acrylic and oil paint to repel demons and devils. Dozens of these small safeholds have arisen in the wilderness, and the largest are colloquially called "halos," as they are a ring of protection against evil.

Alas, in the eyes of the Clergy's official inquisitors and monster hunters, the halos are still tainted from a long association between the Dreaming and various realms of unholy temptation. A group of templars attacked and burned one gnome village and the surrounding *pittura* circle near the shores of Mare Schiavo, seeing no difference between the unearthly painted fey and any other demon. Tittling Grainet has been declared a heretic, and is on the run.

The Present

A shadow war rages in the night of Crisillyir, where fiery righteousness hardens into cold spite. Travelers praying at the wrong roadside shrines are found with slit throats and a mouth full of salt, ceraunic cable towers find their messages intercepted or sabotaged, buildings catch alight with necrotic fire, and zombie-saints and other undead monsters roam the streets on dark missions. Both sides accuse each other of being pawns for foreign and demonic influences.

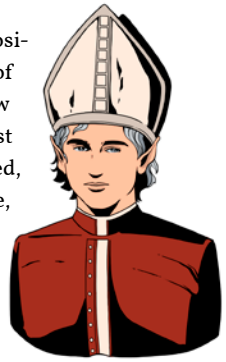
Human supremacism and xenophobia are rising. The Prime Cardinal attempts to promote peace by mediating disputes and giving speeches condemning the dishonor of disunity, but he can only slow the escalation, not reverse it.

The Government and Its Leaders

Crisillyir has a council of cardinals who elect their prime cardinal to be final arbiter of decisions, though many powers are delegated.

Prime Cardinal

After the Great Eclipse, the deva **Malthusius** who defended Triegenes in the god trials served as interim prime cardinal for a handful of years to stabilize the nation. But he had no desire to hold onto power, and was fine bearing people's scorn for the struggles he made them endure. He hoped whoever succeeded him would be able to begin with a fresh slate.



The half-elf **Fiore Tullius** achieved his position in 508 AOV thanks to the joint support of the Ottoplismists and Meliskans, a rare show of unity. He was an unorthodox choice: then just a boy of 13, physically weak and inexperienced, with no intellectual accomplishments. Worse, he was the son of Savina Tullius, the elven Legate who broke her oaths and led the god trials. His only talents of note were his sweet singing voice and his savant-like skill as a spirit medium. But he was pious and humble, and the two factions each thought they could control him.

The Wrong Man in the Right Place

Twenty-seven years old now, Prime Cardinal Fiore's hair has already turned silver, and he remains frail, but he fights every day to maintain his independence. He focuses on one of his few sovereign portfolios: foreign affairs, nurturing economic and military ties with Drakr, Ber, and Risur.

He knows "fatherly" Aulus and "motherly" Tiesa are both determined to not only control him, but to sway their "child" to their respective causes. So Fiore drives competition between the two of them, feigning a lack of conviction while actually deftly treading a middle ground. Yet he recognizes that encouraging disunity between the two is dangerous. Fiore's chief goal is de-escalation of the shadow war.

He has established a number of surreptitious diplomatic contacts with **Chancellor Heid** of Drakr, hoping to learn about the Kuchnost techniques both influencing and mimicked by Ottoplismists and Meliskans.

People whisper that the young Prime Cardinal spends his nights communing with the wisest and most penitent spirits of the Bleak Gate, who have learned much in Purgatory. Witnesses report that once a month the head of the Jenevah Grand Librarium enters the hierarch's chamber, carrying a lantern-staff that emits an otherworldly light. This imagery evokes an old legend about the **Mandatum Mortuum**, a likely mythical organization that serves the spirits of the dead, seeing their needs as just as important as those of the living, and actively working to bring the dead to power in this world.

Cardinal Advisors

The next two most powerful figures are the Arch Secula and the Arch Legate.

Arch Secula

The Arch Secula is head of the government's non-religious obligations, foremost among them the military. While divine spellcasters often aid the military, they ultimately report to the Arch Legate.

The Arch Secula also handles mundane matters of trade, infrastructure, and enforcing the law. Despite the name of the title, rarely is an Arch Secula anything but fervently devout.

Arch Secula Tiesa Machulas speaks for the Ottoplismist faction. A soldier caught in the blast of Srasama's death and reborn as a deva, she has served the Clergy in a number of positions over her five

centuries, most frequently as an inquisitor. Machulas led efforts that reformed the inquisitors from brutes compelling denouncements and confessions into modern investigators who relied upon eyewitnesses, physical evidence, and reliable divinations.

Warm and generous to her allies, she has sought to befriend Fiore and steer him toward duty and honor. She has also begun cultivating relationships with **Empress Eloise Duffet-Jierre**, as well as members of the Drakran Armiger faction. Some day she hopes to restore the empire Triegenes founded, spanning the entirety of northern Lanjyr.

Her most prized possession is the *Second Blade of Srasama*, which she personally recovered from the battlefield at Alais Primos. In all of Crisillyir there is likely no finer fighter.

Arch Legate

The Arch Legate is always someone capable of using divine magic. He oversees the nation's laws and ensures they adhere to the tenets of the Clergy. He also has responsibility over the nation's magical assets and liabilities. He tracks government-owned magic items (especially cursed items), and ensures the loyalty and purity of the nation's spellcasters and celestial allies. He also directs the fight against the demonic forces within the nation, and ensures the unholy beings that are still imprisoned remain that way.

Once a principled and beloved colonial general in charge of suppressing Elfaivaran uprisings and guerrilla attacks, this godhand has since become an advocate of pacifism. Key to his change in belief was the return of the gulmohar. Before the Great Eclipse, he had no sympathy for those elves fighting a war lost five centuries ago, but the return of their lost women meant their battle was not in vain, and thus worthy of respect.

A quiet man of noble blood who still maintains monastic vows of chastity and poverty, his most prized possession is the cello he lugged through five tours of duty and beyond.

Welcome to the Family

A long-underestimated force in Lanjyr is the criminal organization called the Family. They worship Triegenes, respect loyalty, and avoid harming innocents, but this does not stop them from viciously excising competing criminal elements and taking their place.

The Family was long protected by a veil of mystery, with few knowing that it was an officially sanctioned offshoot of the Clergy. It was tasked with both keeping a finger in the criminal underworld in case the church needed something illegal done in another country, and with maintaining a level of restraint and civility so that those who fell to crime would not also fall from grace.

During the Great Eclipse, however, suicide notes of numerous corrupt Clergy hierarchs revealed the truth to the world, and the new Prime Cardinal has formally ended all ties with the Family. Kuchnost operators in Drakr and the RHC in Risur smell weakness, each eager to tear open the Family and repurpose the remnants.

History, Values, and Traditions

The central pillars of the Family are faith and honor. A virtuous Family bravura keeps their word, respects their partner, honors their boss, mentors their underlings, and battles their foes. When mugged by Drakran brutes or ripped off by a venal Danoran merchant, a virtuous bravura finds their own justice, as turning to the local constabulary would show their weakness.

A bravura is Family for life, no matter what. Even if caught and jailed, they are still part of the Family, and will be protected and cared for as long as they keep their tongue still. Any honorable soul can become a bravura, although by tradition, all mid- to high-ranking bosses must be of Crisillyiri descent. Some chapters of the Family have been known to bend that rule as needed; the Seobriga clan has inducted a number of worthy orcs and goliaths.

While the Family's leadership is secret, their methods are predictable to those who know what to look for. They start small: Crisillyiri "merchants" establish deals with local shopkeepers and traders. Then the locals are invited into generous swindles: avoiding local taxes and tariffs, access to high-value contraband goods. The illegal activity expands, recruiting local talent to work alongside vetted, foreign thieves.

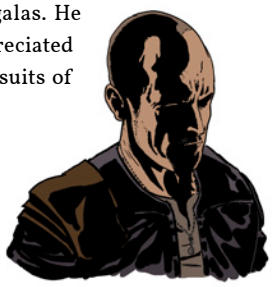
Eventually the local criminal syndicates take notice and begin to push back, but it is usually too late. The Family has established itself well enough to slice out the legs of the local mob by bribing their lieutenants, assassinating their bosses, and luring vigilantes and loose-cannon constables to inflict bloody "justice."

Once they take control, the community begins to feel benefits: fewer muggings and armed robberies, more nobles and industrialists suddenly sweaty-faced as they pay their new extorters. Friendly Crisillyiri immigrants make donations towards community products and build Clergy churches. Then, for the Family, business as usual begins: a comfortable corruption, promoting Crisillyiri art and politics, and ruling over the local criminal underworld with a devout parental gaze.

Aesthetics

Family members tend to be supremely *stylish*. Outfits range from pinstripe suits to light togas, from hooded trench coats to cocktail dresses, from svelte leathers to crinoline dresses. Family fashions can be ancient or modern as long as there is a set of style standards that can be adopted to reveal one as a person of refinement.

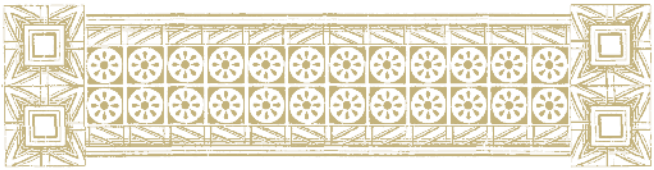
One of the few publicly "out" Family bosses, **Morgan Cippiano** of Flint, promotes the city's fashion scene, and often hosts local elected officials to parties at couture galas. He has an eye for classical styles that can be appreciated by all, and tends towards the tieless lounge suits of decadent Risuri nobles.



The Flint Family

Cippiano's seat of power is in Risur, but he is trying to persuade hierarchs of the Clergy that the Drakran syndicate called Kuchnost are working to turn the Meliskans and Ottoplismists to war. Since the Prime Cardinal severed ties with the Family, though, few religious leaders are willing to meet with him.

Worse, vicious propaganda has begun to smear Cippiano, accusing him of smuggling evil spirits from Flint's cursed mountain and selling them to either Meliskans or Ottoplismists, depending on the version. Papers in the homeland say he's more loyal to Risur than to Crisillyir, and those in Flint say the opposite.



There's a half-truth in that accusation. It has been over a generation since the Family became Flint's preeminent criminals, and the new generation feel no loyalty to their parents' roots. Younger bravuras are quite willing to sell illicit and perilous magic to both sides in the shadow war, since the money's good, and they don't care if strangers five hundred miles away in Crisillyir die because of it.

Criminal Rivals

Traditionally, the Family has been able to pacify law enforcement through bribery, but this is changing quickly. **Dame Cozzi** was the lead Family boss in the Drakran city of Mirsk, and at Cippiano's urging she took the fight to the Kuchnost, starting a gang war. With startling speed, the city's leaders began shaking up the ranks of the local police and judges, discovering "shocking corruption" that conveniently only ever involved people Cozzi had been bribing, and never any Kuchnost allies.

Before she could shift her strategy, Cozzi was betrayed by some of her own bravuras, who cut her hand off and left her to be found by local authorities. They sentenced her to hard mining labor, and by the time she managed to escape the Family in Mirsk had lost most of its influence. In desperation they are turning to levels of violence normally too gauche for the refined organization to conscience. This has only become more fodder for anti-Family news in Crisillyir.

Concurrently, Risur's RHC is assembling "Project Rangale," a worldwide law enforcement coalition against the Family, operated out of the city of Shale by **Chief Inspector Flood**. A septuagenarian skyseer with an unimpeachable reputation, his plan is to use divinations and byzantine loyalty tests to determine the integrity of foreign officers. His chief ally and sponsor is **Reeve-Duchess Clare Romana**, a gregarious aristocrat who was on the outs a few years ago, but claims to have gone straight.

Cippiano is trying to persuade his allies in Flint that this "anti-corruption" effort is going to cause more harm than good by only targeting known crooks instead of the unknown ones. He's looking for evidence to tie Project Rangale to the Kuchnost, and is actively cultivating new young talent.

Alais Primos

Crisillyir's capital remains scarred from the Great Eclipse, with both a demonic chasm to the north and a factional chasm in the city's heart, yet it remains beautiful, threaded with blessed canals and surrounded by a ring of lush, pastoral hills.

History

Alais Primos began life as a military stronghold: a foothold in the Demonocracy-ruled land, established during Triegenes's crusade. After repelling multiple counterattacks, the fisherman gathered the weakened bodies of his demonic foes and flung them into the nearby volcano Enzyo Mons, trapping them (it was hoped) forever.

Solar Cathedral

A thousand years ago, Triegenes was aided in his battle against the Demonocracy by an angel named **Linia**. After his ascension to godhood, his followers asked her what they should do without the man who had unified them. She was reported to have made a sweeping gesture up at the stars and answered, "You are set on your course. Do not let me deflect you."

Linia was never seen again, but she played a role in a strange footnote of Clergy history: the *Cattedrale delle Orrery*, also known as the Solar Cathedral or the cathedral of atheists.

A century after the Great Malice, a small faction of atheists led by **Orolo Erasmus**, who denied that gods were anything more than stories people used to guide their actions. Orolo claimed that to truly fulfill the core tenet of Triegenes, people needed to improve themselves with reason, not faith. The Prime Cardinal of the day had them tried for heresy, but their advocate presented as evidence in their defense a small orrery that charted the movements of the planets.

The advocate argued that Linia's words suggested that the order of the universe itself was divine, and thus any who revered reason were still pious. The Prime Cardinal, perhaps feeling charitable that day (or perhaps simply seeing a way to keep skeptics from rebelling against the Clergy), agreed that if they would build a church to their god, they could worship Reason.

The atheists raised funds and erected a cathedral on one of the islands near Alais Primos. Its roof is retractable glass, and over its rostrum a colossal orrery has spun for over three hundred years, accurately mapping the heavens above until the Great Eclipse. Today the orrery remains, tracing the paths of planets that have vanished, just as Linia did, fascinating visitors for what could have been and inspiring studies into planar orbital mechanics.

Geography

Alais Primos sprawls in a verdant valley along Crisillyir's coastline, framed by a semicircle of cultivated hills and low mountains to the north and west, where farmers gather crops blessed by *plant growth*. A great, holy-warded aqueduct brings snowmelt from the Penance Peaks, while magics wrapped around ancient pillars protect pilgrims on the nearby roads. Massive and magical walls once surrounded it, holding back the elven armies, and while the city has long since expanded beyond their boundaries, their magic still defends the heart of the city.

The city's domain extends beyond the coast. Some of the most grandiose cathedrals in the world are built on gorgeous, immaculately-tended garden islands a few miles away from the city, and on holy days flotillas carry worshipers out to pray.

Architecture

Alais Primos is dominated by massive temples, sepulchers, necromantic academies, and libraries, some so large that they straddle canals. These canals are fed by three separate aqueducts and exit into three separate harbors, carefully sluiced and gated so as to ensure the canal waters remain perfectly tranquil.

Hundreds of small chapels dot the city, and citizens are expected to visit and confess any crimes or sins at least once a week. Many of these chapels possess enchantments of *zone of truth*, called "mendacity-banishing benedictions."

Holy Guns

For centuries, firearms and other items of technology deemed tainted by the apostate tieflings of Danor were illegal, and subject to confiscation and fines. Recent "theological revelations" have reversed this rule. Holy forges dedicated to Verus (and a handful to Meliska) churn out firearms, divinely-reinforced cannons, consumer goods, and more.

With the tacit agreement of high-ranking city leaders, these forges are legendarily "sloppy." Entire production runs of pistols and rifles are regularly "botched" or "lost," that is to say, sold by foreign workers or greedy overseers on the black market or to factional fighters.

The Business of Healing

As the center of magic in Crisillyir, Alais Primos is increasingly being drawn into an embarrassingly profitable relationship with reviled Danor.



Since the fall of the Demonocracy, Clergy priests have been the greatest exporter of blessings and magical curatives in the world. **Count Tarso Saccente** currently oversees Hospitalia Valencia, a national consortium with a treasury of billions of gold pieces. The Hospitalia funds training in magic for priests in even the most remote corners of Crisillyir. It is a business that can make use of talent regardless of local natural resources, and produces goods—like healing potions, scrolls, and more precious items—that transport easily and turn steady profit, while simultaneously supporting the prominence of the Clergy religion.

Since the Great Eclipse, however, the life-preserving influence of the planet Ostea has harshly cut into this business, as the scourge of disease is far weaker than it has ever been, and nations are able to rely on their own small output of magical restoratives and modern medicines.

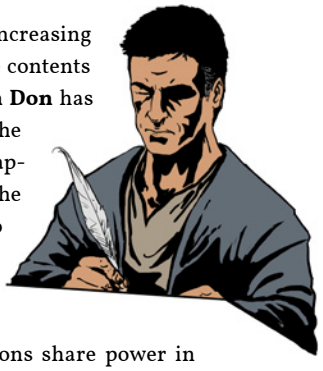
The exception is Danor. While Danor also benefits from Ostea's vitality, their land was for centuries a place of little magic, so they lack expertise with divine healing. Officially, trade with Danor is banned, but the Meliskan faction has persuaded Count Tarso to see this trade both as a lucrative venture and as a mission of mercy.

Jenevah Grand Librarium

The Jenevah Grand Librarium stands in its own plaza, ancient and implacable, eight stories tall with numerous sub-levels and vaults. The nation's greatest center of theological learning and knowledge, it also holds darker secrets of fiendish lore and necromantic esoterica.

Its main doors are watched by a pair of towering basalt statues of scholars, which each contain an incorporeal, undead eidolon. When honored employees of the library near death, many volunteer to have the eidolons bind their souls to the building as **bibliogeists**, serving as guides and caretakers for all eternity.

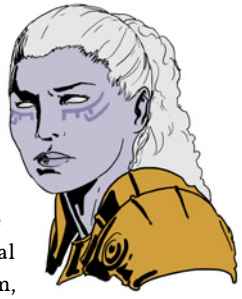
Centuries of necromantic shade-binding and holy blessings had created a local-scale *genius loci*, known as the Anima, with bones of basalt and flesh of parchment. The library now has a will, one which, blessedly, has the benign goal of increasing its store of knowledge and protecting the contents of its vaults. The librarian inquisitor **Ken Don** has dedicated himself to understanding the nature and goals of the Anima, and is approaching experts of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate to undertake an expedition into those realms' version of the building.



Politics

Both of Crisillyir's denominational factions share power in Alais Primos. This sharing is far from peaceful, as every night, the shadow war rages. The central factional battleground is the canals. Centuries of purification enchantments cause the canal water to quickly expel any impurities, which means a body dumped at night will vanish into the sea, and a carefully timed explosive can be released upstream and explode further down the canal. A Meliskan church began recruiting children to pray in vigil along canals each night for those who might die in the canals. After a drifting Otto bomb killed several, they condemned the Meliskans for using human shields, but *did* reduce their use of that particular tactic.

Delegated Power



Formally, the Prime Cardinal rules Alais Primos, although common practice passes the role to a mayoral proxy known as the *Delegato*. The current *Delegato* is **Milriani Syllee**, a rare gnome deva who only ever reincarnated once, then spent the past 400 years as priestess of an oasis goddess from the desert northeast. She earned a military medal serving in the now-defunct colony of Tropaeum, and then spent the next three centuries overseeing a tiny gnome community far from the capital.

She left that region for the capital in protest of the "*pittura* circles" that fey have erected in the wilds of Crisillyir (see page 186). Prime Cardinal Fiore personally invited her to become his Delegato, and the Ottoplismists and the Meliskans received the nomination with a shrug due to her lack of local influence and general unobjectionableness.

Canny as only an ancient gnome can be, Milriani has been very effective in mediating factional disputes within her city and moderating the growth of industrial forge-temples. Most of the human population has come to dislike her, and oddly that shared discontent has provided some of the only unity between the two denominations.

Divine Reunion

Only a handful of deva communities ever existed, as most of them scattered across the world with each new reincarnation, and so there has never been a true unified deva identity. That may be changing.

One in three devas who have died since the Great Eclipse have not reincarnated. Some devas feel a relief that they will achieve a final rest. Others are overwhelmed with an existential horror they had long forgotten, and desperately seek ways to extend their

lives. Many are drawn to the philosophy of Heid Eschatol as they ponder what would give meaning to the end of such a long, cyclical existence.

One such eschatologist, **Lady Emselle d'Grise**, seeks to gather her fellow devas to Alais Primos, the site of Srasama's death. Through ceraunic cables, newpapers, and traveling agents she is trying to reach every deva in Lanjyr, especially those who seem to be absorbing the memories of multiple other people. A few hundred citizens of the city have joined the Cult of Reunion, believing that some day the last deva will die, Srasama will be reborn, and those who served the deva will earn her favor. Delegato Syllee is considering criminalizing the cult unless they preemptively declare Srasama part of the Clergy pantheon, a move that would no doubt enrage Elfaivar.

Sid Minos

As the center of Ottoplismist power, Sid Minos has embraced modern industry and militarism, building vast if somewhat chaotic shipyards. It offers sanctuary and fraternity to intermittently visiting Beran flotillas.

Yet as secure as it is from assault, the city is rife with spies and saboteurs. Meliskans work to turn officers. Foreign agents steal arms and secrets, and they ply alliances or peddle paranoia to split loyalties within the military hierarchy.

Geography

Sid Minos sits atop the island of Verità, and was once the last redoubt of a civilization that predated the Demonocracy. After the final battle against the fiends, all that remained were a destroyed people and an enormous enigmatic labyrinth beneath the island's surface that vomited forth undead every night. The Demonocracy treated these monsters as a free foot soldiers. Later, the Clergy established a bastion of sacred necromancers to suppress the undead, sometimes binding them to service out of sight of the public.

While over fifty miles wide, Verità is sparsely populated, and aside from Sid Minos only a few small settlements grow amid its rocky terrain. Among the thousands of nooks and miniature valleys of the coastline are hidden entrances to the labyrinth (and exits for its undead horrors). Each week, hundreds of Crisillyiri soldiers march in a circuit around its steep and treacherous shores, stopping at a different fort each night as they patrol for breaches in the old wards, ringing holy bells that disrupt evil.

Architecture

Unlike most Crisillyiri cities, Sid Minos has few concessions towards aesthetics. The entire walled metropolis is like a great fortress, with a maze of narrow and twisting streets and alleys to diffuse invading armies.

While the city's appearance is bleak, it is usually rich with mouth-watering smells. The city's long tradition of encouraging restaurants to boost the soldiers' morale has led to an epicurean reputation. It is near unthinkable to conduct violence or politics at any restaurant of even the slightest renown.

Since the Great Eclipse, Ottoplismists have undertaken to build cathedrals to the eight martyred gods. The first completed, devoted to Marlanter, draws greater crowds than many temples of living Clergy gods.

Battle School

Each of the forty-four schools of the College of Divine Trials models itself after one of a number of historic exemplars: veteran soldiers, heroic civilians, esteemed sages, even a handful of literal angels. They impart the skills, tactics, and beliefs of these exemplars unto the college's students. Schools rise and fall depending on their popularity and relevance to modern combat.

The greatest is currently the School of Tem, a crusader who used a crossbow and developed training techniques that adapted well to muskets. Also popular is the School of Tomas Masaryk, a great and noble monastery of unarmed combat and demon hunting, which has produced many godhands over the years. The smallest is the School of Isa Cassata, a small hall of dragonslaying, beloved by Ber.

The College is an international institution, and dispatches cadres of students to conflicts across the world as field training. The Malice Lands were the target of hundreds of expeditions to quell monsters and bring peace, though the new governments there are eager to look strong by saying they need no help. Upperclassmen still all must brave at least one expedition to the labyrinth under the city.

The leader of the College is **Comandante Argento Facaro**, a venerable dwarf war cleric whose logistical expertise helped Crisillyir's navy recover despite poor tactics during the Gulmohar Invasion Crisis. Vain to the point that he dyes his hair and conceals his infirmity with enchanted plate armor, Facaro strives to be seen as virile and not out of touch due to his age, which is why he is perhaps the oldest Ottoplismist in the nation. Performatively fervent in his ardent devotion to this new religious movement, Facaro has encouraged hidebound professors to innovate and modernize.



Despite all these efforts to live in the present, Facaro's pet project is the School of the Holy Dragonrider, which was shuttered shortly after a young Facaro joined the college two centuries ago, due to dragons being hunted to extinction. Now it is reborn with a devotion to airship development, and Facaro hopes flight magic, flying machines, or even captured fey dragons from Ber might return the faith militant to the skies.

The Forbidden Isle

The most infamous landmark in Sid Minos is the forbidden Isle of Odiem. A rocky spur half a mile off the coast, marked by a lonely and ruined lighthouse, it is a damned and cursed place. On stormy nights, the drowned dead rise from the waters and devour any who linger on Odiem past sunset. For centuries ships that sailed too close were caught in a current of blood that dashed them against shoals. Worryingly, the current vanished after the Great Eclipse, hinting that perhaps some great evil was defeated, or rather that some evil being that was the blood's source has escaped.

Beneath the lighthouse is an uncovered secret of the Clergy: the Crypta Hereticarum, an underground vault wherein hierarchs once buried its most vile cursed beasts and objects. Five centuries ago it was abandoned and forgotten, but over time adventurers and madmen slowly plundered it, or died trying and joined the drowned dead.



During the Great Eclipse, a host of angels purged the Crypta, and they reside there today. They welcome few visitors, but claim that during the Eclipse they heard a cacophony of prayers rising up from this place, and only later realized that some magic had blocked the pleas from reaching the heavens. The angels arrived in force, then later found it perilous to return to their realm of origin, and so they have restored the vault's original function. From Odiem, angels depart on missions to capture fiends and recover corrupted artifacts, bringing them back to the vault to be sealed away forever.



The elven oracle **Ottavia Sacredote**, deaf to all but the words of angels, serves as their nigh-incorruptible mortal herald. She speaks half through sign language and half through a swarm of critic angels, heavily outspoken and judgmental celestials each small enough to stand on the head of a pin. Ottavia insists the angels take no side in the Clergy's denominational rift, but occasionally bold advocates brave the journey to the island to try to seek an alliance.

Politics

As a seat of military power, Sid Minos usually restricts government positions to those who earned rank. Travel checkpoints are ubiquitous. Visitors are expected to bear proper credentials and travel papers, though locals who display the proper rank can come and go easily, leading to a brisk trade in counterfeits and stolen uniforms.

The highest-ranked officer stationed on Sid Minos is also the city's leader, Quartermaster General **Illidio Frezza**, eagle-eyed master of the city's vast arsenal, whose left leg is a glorious prosthetic of gold and ivory. An Ottoplismist, Frezza advocates for direct action against the Greater Elfaivaran Ran, and believes it is best to conquer the entire elven subcontinent before the Ran gains more international allies.



A key focus of Sid Minos's industrial sector is understanding and replicating technology taken from Danor as part of the Orithean Concordat. Entire workshops are devoted to testing Danor's arctech weapon designs and other revolutionary gadgets. Despite their efforts, many production lines are plagued with accidents or useless outputs.

Vendricce

Center of Meliskan power, the trade capital of Vendricce is struggling to recover from a recent Elfaivaran occupation, and awash with conflicting good intentions.

History

Vendricce has always been the center of conflict between Crisillyir and Elfaivar. Demonocracy armies once marched southeast, only to be repulsed by Elfaivar's armies of enchanted monsters and enlightened warriors. Later the Clergy retook the city in the First

The Heretical Writings of William Miller

While Drakran philosophy is in ascendance today, for centuries the writings of a Clericist monk, **William Miller**, were a bedrock of Drakran philosophical discussions, and were read by free thinkers across Lanjyr.

In the run up to the Great Malice, Miller composed a treatise on hypocrisy, suggesting that it is better to admit you are uncertain of your beliefs than to act in contradiction with your stated values. The book, widely recognized as an attack on the Clergy, allegedly drove the monk to flee persecution.

Miller reappeared several years after the Great Malice with a new work of political philosophy that coincided with his effort to found a small nation, Pala, amid the chaos of the Malice Lands. In his multi-chapter book he examined possible social structures, comparing robustness and stability with various moral values. Early chapters allude to a conclusion that would detail a handful of ideal nations, but today there are no complete copies of the book.

In 18 AOV, the Clergy branded Miller a heretic, invaded Pala, and sacked its capital. He was brought to Alais Primos, where he was tortured in an effort to compel a confession. After he refused to recant, his captors made a pyre of his writings and burned him alive upon it.

For centuries, Crisillyir banned William Miller's writings. But in 505 AOV, Risur's king Baldrey Korrigan published *Dialogues by the Pyre*, a text that updated Millerism with the insights from five centuries of changes in the world and from the king's own hard-won experience ruling a nation.

Admired for his role in helping end the God Trials, Baldrey's legitimization of Millerism has removed the taint of heresy from those older texts, especially among the many Crisillyiri who refuse to take sides in the shadow war between Meliskans and Ottoplismists. They point to Millerism—a willingness to embrace uncertainty and to focus on morals over dogma—as a path toward reconciliation.

Rumors persist that the Jenevah Librarium in Alais Primos holds copies of Miller's final chapters in its vault, or that perhaps they were in the Vault of Heresies, only to have been destroyed by the Host of Odiem. See "Writings of King Baldrey" (page 166) for more information.

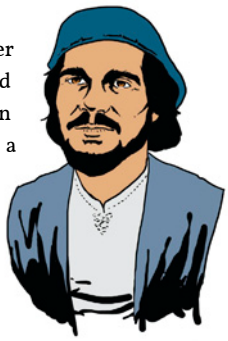
Victory, then lost it during the Second, then reclaimed it after the Great Malice. In the two centuries thereafter, it even fell twice to different Beran dragon tyrants.

Somehow the history of conquest has only enriched the city. Colonial wealth flowed into its harbor, making it Crisillyir's preeminent trade port, and the regular shake-ups of leadership gave the population intermittent opportunities to retake power from corrupt leaders. The great number of battles here are represented by countless statues, mosaics, and other monuments, and the city produced some of the nation's finest artists.

Geography

The city sits at the southernmost point of Crisillyir, separated from Elfaivar by either the Strait of Sjögren or St. Alva's Isthmus, depending on the tides. Its walls are surrounded by the enigmatic Tyger Forest, within whose verdant depths the Crisillyiri and Elfaivaran Dreamings meet in a pair of great portals, leading to all manner of bizarre terrains and painting-, yazata-, daeva-, and saṃsāra-fey crossing over into the Waking.

The Great Rebuild



Vendricce is in the process of urban renewal after the destruction of so many classical villas and cross-vaulted churches in the Gulmohar Invasion Crisis. The artist **Ivano Guertena**, descendant of a great painting master, argues that new buildings should return to the great-columned neoclassical styles of the post-Demonocracy golden age. His Risuri-trained contemporary, **Templeton Mantrail**, sees an opportunity to advance avant-garde styles based around natural forms, like the sinuous curves of flowers.



Meanwhile the city's mayor, **Sindaca Santina** (sindaca being the local term for mayor), is pushing ahead with plans informed by Meliskan teachings. The city's primary cathedral is being rebuilt, but since many Crisis refugees continue to live in poverty, hundreds of utilitarian "temporary" dormitories are slated to surround the grand church.

Whenever the traveling entertainers of the Wayfarer Cirquelistes stop by Vendricce, they find many of the ruins from the recent invasion to be perfect venues for demonstrating acrobatic and athletic tricks; the local Meliskans are wary of the performers, but tolerate them for now, while nagging them to donate a share of their earnings to local charities.

United in Compassion



The Vendriccean Family has a public spokeswoman in the form of **Neiva Mappia**, a twenty-something who respects her superiors' desires for secrecy but thinks they should operate openly, using their wealth and influence to help the city rebuild. Neiva was only a toddler during the god trials, but her childhood was defined by the absence of many in her family who had died.

Neiva argues that the temporary dwellings are emblematic of government mismanagement. She decries the Sindaca for presiding over a process that relies on bureaucratic debates to determine who is "most needy," leading to paralysis. Neiva believes they all need succour: the unwed mothers of half-Elfaivaran children, the crippled Crisillyiri soldiers, the homeless poor, and the entrepreneurs who organize laborers and produce more wealth for the community.

Clergy inquisitor **Brother Bertoletti** leads Vendricce's United, volunteers who distribute food, clothing, and money. He is one of the few to have won the aid of the angels of Odiem, though even his most impassioned pleas earned only a swarm of diminutive critic angels to provide purification and healing magics. Their alien mindsets and aggravatingly loud criticisms of the city's art and monuments are incompatible with the subtleties of the city's politics, but simple compassion is at the core of their being, making them valuable allies of the United.

Politics

A key focus of the city's rebuilding efforts is the railroad. Before the Great Eclipse, the Avery Coast Railroad terminated in Vendricce, stopping at the unfinished Terio Bridge. The sindaca pushed for the completion of the bridge, believing that communication and cultural exchange is crucial to peace, so easier access to Elfaivar is essential, even if it increases the risk of invasion.

This principle has been further tested by the arrival of a diplomatic delegation from the distant city-state of Shaha beyond Elfaivar. The delegation's leader, half-elf wizard **Beryl Speaker Haet-sal**, has tried to persuade the government to send Crisillyiri criminals to Shaha. Slavery is technically legal in Crisillyir, and Haet-sal hopes to expand its range by tempting the nation with the offer of taking away those of ill character. While Sid Minos and Alais Primos have expressed interest, Sindaca Santina has refused, both out of moral offense and in fear that doing business with Shaha—which is actively raiding and enslaving Elfaivar—would be a diplomatic disaster.

Other Places of Interest

- **Baia Cornelius** is the large bay just east of Mare Audacitas, which is dominated by the city Prejo Vizzuto. The river Incrocio flows from the Lydean Hills into this bay.
- **Cadute** is a small coastal city north of the Senesi Desert, famed for its deva inventor Levice of Buaidh, who found different ways to fly in each of her incarnations. South of the city lie arid rocky badlands called Deserto Ululante.
- The **Deserto Senesi** is a vast stretch of sand dunes spanning hundreds of miles. Throughout Clergy history, many open pit iron mines were dug and later turned into somewhat unclean oases once they were abandoned. Before the eclipse, churches of the goddess Velkali had purified these waters and supported a constellation of settlements, but they were some of the first targets of the escaped demons after the god trials.
- **Forza Flauros** is a ruined citadel in the Senesi Desert, once a prison where the Demonocracy kept those fiends who broke the evil nation's laws.
- The **Lydean Hills** lie at the southern edge of the Senesi Desert. Arid and short, they are home to many villages dominated by Meliskan churches.
- **Mare Audacitas** is the body of water just east of Vendricce, which connects with the Strait of Sjögren. The coast is littered with forts and strange defensive abjurations from the two Victories.
- **Mare Blakolsen** is the narrow sea that runs parallel to the Penance Peaks west of Alais Primos. The coastal towns are heavily fortified against centuries of hostilities from the border states on the other side of the sea, and the culture is a quilt of strange traditions.
- **Mare Schiavo** is the sea east of Sid Minos, around which grows most of the nation's agricultural bounty.
- **Mazara del Vallo** was a minor fishing port, but now is the main pilgrimage site for Meliskans.
- **Nalaam** is formally an independent city state, not part of Crisillyir, where arcane spellcasters control the government. Due to naturally strong elemental earth energy and a penchant for the archmage leaders to want to one-up their predecessors, the city is a wonder of enchanted extravagance. The Avery Coast railroad delivers thousands of gamblers, gladiators, and gadgeteers to seek their fortune in this city, where everything has a monetary value. Even criminals can simply pay their way out of prison, though the rates go up with repeated infractions.
- The **Penance Peaks** form the dog-legged western border of the nation (aside from some territory along the Mara Blakolsen). A millennium-old trail connecting scenic shrines and defensive forts runs the five hundred mile length of the range, which were recently commemorated by the late Tropezaro artist Grefanio Storre.
- **Redenzion** is the capital of the colony Angelus, on the eastern coast of the Mare Audacitas, about thirty miles east of the Strait of Sjögren.

Danor

Name: Republic of Danor
Capital: Cherage
Other Major Cities: Beaumont, Keskay, Methia
Teleportation Beacons: None
Government: Constitutional republic/informal multilateral syndicalist council
Head of State: President Remy Duvall
Official Language: Common
Common Heritages: Human 80%, tiefling 17%, other 3%

Introduction

The birthplace of secular reason and industry, Danor was, in every aspect, the envy of the world: its military fought Risur to defeat or standstill again and again, its engineers created machines that connected nations, and its philosophy of perpetual progress ushered in the modern age. A mere thirty years ago, the axis of the world was shifting to align with Danor.

Yet Danor emerged from the trials of the Great Eclipse most terribly scathed. The nation's sovereign confessed to a plot to take over the world, then died in a military coup. The public deposed the military, but the new civilian government imposed harsh limits on industrial technology, and a majority of the old army withdrew and created a splinter nation in Danor's heartland.

Citizens dreaming of continuing Danor's recent glory are caught in the gears of a bureaucracy built to appease the rest of the world. The other great nations saw the sovereign's confession and demanded reparations, leading to harsh sacrifices of land, wealth, knowledge, and prestige. Politicians try to curry foreign favor at the expense of Danor's people.

But the nation that sparked the industrial revolution is not one to sit idle and discontent. Geniuses and anarchists seek to reclaim their freedom and reject the new global order. The country seems on the brink of revolution, disaster, and coup at all times, but that is fine fuel for invention, and a fine playground for international espionage.



Grand History

Once the birthplace and capital of the Clergy, Danor was torn apart by the effects of the Great Malice five centuries ago. Pulses of wild magic, waves of antimagic, and the birth of unearthly malice beasts emptied cities and carved new borders. Srasama's curse transformed Clericists of all ranks into demonic creatures with horns and barbed tails. In revulsion over these new "tieflings," Clergy remnants performed a dramatic exodus and crossed eastward to establish a new capital in the holy land of Crisillyir.

After decades of chaos, a charismatic hierarch-turned-tiefling named **Jierre** united the fractious survivors under a new vision. If gods and magic could no longer reach Danor, then it would be the hands of mortals that would create power and safety. It was magic, he declared, and the superstitions and archaic beliefs that were its trappings, that had held back the people of Danor from their potential. No foreign nations would invade a land that devoured their spellcraft, so Danor would fear no invasion. It would decide its own fate, and as long as all its people were devoted to the ideal of progress, Danor would one day be the strongest nation in the world.

By many measures, it became that nation.

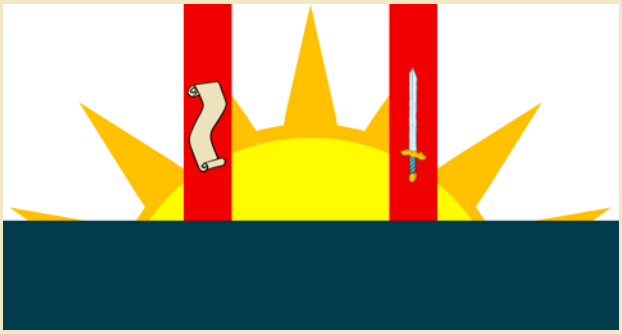
Looking to the Future

Jierre led a congress of peers, but his family became a dynasty that produced Danor's greatest statesmen, scholars, and inventors. For forty-eight terms, each a decade long, the ruling Sovereign elected from the congress was a Jierre scion. While the nation's promise of egalitarianism was more an aspiration than a fact, its culture nevertheless developed a tradition of secular reason, codified as the **Pragati** philosophy, and then adopted and espoused by the Jierre dynasty:

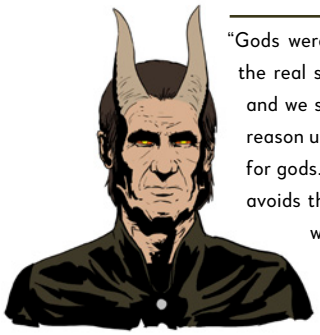
Danor at a Glance

These are the major figures, groups, and locations in Danor most foreigners have heard about.

- **House Jierre.** Dynasty of tieflings who led Danor for five centuries and fostered its embrace of science and reason. Their reputation was tarnished after the Great Eclipse, but many still are loyal and hope for a return of the family to power.
- **Orithean Concordat.** International treaty that assigned Danor blame for much of the damage in the Great Eclipse, levied a system of reparation payments, and imposed harsh limits on the nation's military.
- **President Remy Duvall.** Telepathic head of state, committed to obeying the publicly unpopular Concordat as a way to spread Danor's character to the rest of Lanjyr.
- **Empress Eloise Duffet.** Launched a military coup after the Great Eclipse, and killed the last Jierre sovereign. Was repelled by the civilian population and withdrew with loyalists to create a dictatorial splinter state she named the Imperium Sophi Danoris.
- **Courseurs.** Ideological movement of those frustrated by the Concordat and with unresponsive politicians, who seek instead to ignore government and find their own solutions. Possibly receives discreet backing by Duffet's Imperium, hoping to weaken Danor for conquest.
- **Cherage.** Beautiful seaside capital which hides its poor workers in walled enclaves far from shore.
- **Beaumont.** Former naval bastion and the source of the nation's wildest art and political movements.
- **Methia.** Ancient capital of the Clergy, previously ruined but being rapidly militarized by Duffet's Imperium. Lies in a wild magic zone.
- **Avery Coast Railroad.** The most prestigious international rail route running from Beaumont to Vendricce, which Danorans cling to as a legacy of their faded global influence.







"Gods were the creations of men unable to comprehend the real structure of the world. We have learned better, and we see that knowledge gained through science and reason unlock powers for all that were once thought only for gods. Each new generation learns more than the last, avoids the mistakes of their predecessors, but then too will be surpassed. Those who destroy knowledge or protect false beliefs, be they in gods, in disproven economic theories, or in anything else, are a threat to progress."

—Sovereign Han Jierre
Inaugural address to the Danoran congress, 480 AOV

The national philosophy of progress led to the birth of Danor's industrial revolution in 300 AOV. Cities divided into industrialists and manufactory workers: manors for the former, and patrolled enclaves for the latter. Though the conditions in these enclaves were strict, workers there could earn reliable wages. Their labor first brought Danor wealth, and then—with the mass production of steam engines and cannons—brought it naval superiority.

Global Aspirations

Danor spent two centuries fighting Risur for the Yerasol Archipelago's verdant agriculture, and also because the islands were the nearest place Danorans could easily study magic to innovate their industry into arcanotechnology.

In 500 AOV, the latest scion of the ruling dynasty, **Lya Jierre**, was engaged to marry the Risuri king Aodhan. This could have united the two countries, created a lasting peace, and positioned the Jierre family to influence events across Lanjyr. A formal peace summit was set for the following year.

But at that summit, the wedding and alliance would be decisively canceled when an immense mechanical colossus appeared in the Risuri city Flint, built on experimental Danoran arctech. King Aodhan sallied forth to protect his people, and empowered by Risur's rites of rulership he managed to banish it to the Dreaming. However, when the crisis had passed, Lya was missing. She was later reported to have died on a mission to Ber, and less than a year afterward, the stars fell from the sky.

The Great Eclipse

In the first days of the Great Eclipse, **Sovereign Han Jierre** (Lya's uncle) assumed emergency powers, declaring martial law and preparing an imminent invasion of Risur. Initially, most Danorans supported the government, which moved rapidly to capitalize on the return of magic, opening construct-aided manufactories to produce marvels such as arcane fusil artillery, walking steamsuits, and a few dirigibles. Some were suspicious at how well-prepared Han and his advisors were for the sudden availability of magic, but even today it is unclear what forewarning he had.

The Forward Symposium

The sovereign called a great symposium in Cherage, meant to coordinate a new world order. Representatives from Ber, Crisillyir, Drakr, Elfaivar, and the Malice Lands attended, drawn to a surprising new unity, and the sovereign told them the Eclipse was the fault of Risur, and that they must unite to invade Risur in order to set things right. All were in agreement, but they did not then understand the threat posed by the egregoric phenomenon.

The symposium attendees' unity manifested as a psychic hivemind, growing into a titanic beast of tentacled thoughtflesh whose body lifted the entire congressional hall like the shell of a colossal turtle. The Danoran military turned its own naval batteries upon the monster, cracking its shell so a group of Risuri warriors could enter and kill the hivemind before it consumed the entire city. Most of the world leaders survived, and the act of Risuri heroism halted the planned invasion.

The Lighthouse Plot

However, the nations that attended the symposium did accept Danoran aid in the form of enchanted lighthouses, built with principles used by wayfarer engines today (see page 75). They were promised that the lighthouses' eerie glow would keep lands warm despite the lack of sun, and would prevent monstrous hiveminds from forming. While that was true, the ligthhouses also robbed the will of millions, making them pliable to obey Han Jierre's commands.

A few resisted, however, led by Baldrey Korrigan, king of Risur. He destroyed lighthouses in the national capitals, then confronted the sovereign on Axis Island. Han Jierre intended to use some secret magic on that island to return the sun and stars and establish his family dynasty as rulers of the world. King Baldrey defeated him, and chose a different celestial arrangement that returned free will.

Contrition and Coup

The sovereign managed to return to Cherage on a damaged war dirigible, contrite after his failure. But by that point **Minister of War Eloise Duffet** had already begun consolidating power, setting herself up as military dictator. Jierre dumped leaflets upon the city confessing his actions, and encouraged the people of Danor to create a new government that would check the powers and aspirations of its leaders.

Duffet did not appreciate that advice, and her army's fusil artillery shot Jierre out of the sky.

Cherage's citizenry, who despite all the suffering of the Great Eclipse still respected Han Jierre, marched to block Duffet's forces. She ordered her soldiers to gun them down, which turned the entire city against her. Outnumbered a hundred to one, Duffet abandoned the capital and fled north to a secure military installation in the ruins of old Methia, former capital of the Clergy.

Over the next few months, the people of Danor tried to design a new government while fighting a civil war to unseat Duffet's loyalists. Duffet declared herself Empress, and those who sided with her mostly retreated to the lands around Methia, called the Imperial Holdout today.



The old Sovereign's Palace became a new Council Hall, and a hastily designed new government occupied it. The powerful sovereign was replaced by a "president," whose role was mainly to preside over the elected legislature and maintain order during disputes. The structure was codified in a written constitution, which rapidly became amended to byzantine complexity.

The constitution was intended to be easily amendable to allow for improvement, but in practice the haphazard and rushed lawmaking after Duffet's coup led to many revisions to patch oversights and stop abuses. Over time the new system became bloated and divided, with various multi-layered councils of elected representatives having say over disparate elements of law.

The Orithean Concordat

Danor was still fighting back Duffet's forces and writing its constitution when the Orithean Concordat was signed, two months after the death of Han Jierre.

In the last days of 502 AOV, representatives from the major nations came together in the free city of Orithea, and worked to apportion blame for the Eclipse. While Risur's king tried to ensure every nation understood the causes and fallout of the Great Eclipse, leaders of other nations focused on Han Jierre's confession. Fearful of Danor once again imperiling them all, and looking for a way to provide an easy-to-understand narrative to their people, the leaders quickly united on a plan that was only slightly less rushed than Danor's new constitution.

The treaty was termed a "Concordat," a Clergy term that rankled Danor's delegation, for it evoked centuries of rhetoric identifying Danor as "infernal."

Articles of the Treaty

The text of the Concordat has three main provisions.

First, a rough estimate of the damage in lives and resources was assessed, and Danor was billed for nearly all of it; the total reached roughly five times the combined yearly product of all of Danor's economy. Danor was charged with repaying that debt in the form of food, currency, manufactured goods, and technological training and agreed to onerous compliance audits and the options of asset forfeiture to enforce these provisions. It was expected to take fifty years to repay the debt.

Second, the treaty tried to reduce Danor's regional dominance, as it had attempted to wrest control of other nations. Danor was required to forbear increases in the number of ships in its navy or to arm its military with new technology until the other nations of Lanjyr could match it. Due to the phrasing of this section, other nations were free to bypass Danor's capabilities, but Danor could not increase its military footing if even one nation lagged behind it. (Currently, Drakr has a smaller navy, and Crisillyir has not yet produced any naval arcane fusils.)

Third, the Concordat established rules restricting all the signatories from taking certain actions to influence the internal politics of their peer nations. Drakr's representative Vlendam Heid suggested a formal conference of nations, meeting regularly, but Risur, Ber, and Crisillyir blocked that. After nearly having their free will stolen during the eclipse, the sentiment was that any international governing body would be abused. King Baldrey of Risur was widely praised for acknowledging that his country would be the chief beneficiary of such a "Concert of Nations" but declining anyway.

Danoran Response

The delegation from Danor pushed back on various requirements, rejecting demands to abandon its claim to the famous Avery Coast Railroad and its Elfaivaran colony of Rationalis. But it became clear that to refuse the Concordat was to invite blockades and embargos. By signing, they received promises that other nations would refrain from meddling in Danor's domestic politics.

In the light of the new dawn after the eclipse, the call for Danor to live by higher ideals and make things right was tempting. The delegation returned to Danor promising that the Orithean Concordat would lead to cooperative progress and make the rest of the world adopt secular reason, while refusing would make Danor international pariahs and leave the other great nations in darkness and ignorance.

Aftermath and Enforcement

Shortly after the treaty was signed, King Baldrey of Risur promised to forgive a quarter of the total debt owed to his nation for each year that Danor upheld the terms. Risur had weathered the eclipse better than any other, and Baldrey hoped this would incentivize adoption of the punitive terms. And while it did, for a time, it also perversely created a sense among Danorans that other nations should do the same.

Focused on a timeline of four years instead of fifty, the Danoran people celebrated in 507 AOV, feeling their duty discharged. But the restrictions remained, and public sentiment steadily soured.

Various councils in the government began exempting parts of the nation from their payments toward the Concordat debt, while other councils continued to enforce restrictions on the military and all manner of technological research. Inventors could work independently, but new patents were not granted for any sort of weapons technology, and it was made illegal to sell unpatented technology. The other nations responded to this incomplete cooperation with an equally patchwork set of tariffs, sanctions, and vote-buying to install councilors who would enforce the Concordat.

The Imperial Holdout

While the Concordat was being negotiated, Eloise Duffet came to grips with the fact that her nation did not understand she was the best person to lead them. Over two years she withdrew with a mass of people from Cherage and from military posts around the country, and her army—as well as their families, servants, and even university professors and technological researchers and whole enclaves of manufactory workers who built their weapons fortifications—took trains north to Methia, the former Clergy capital which had long been used for wargames.

She ordered the city to be re-inhabited, and she issued a clarion call to those who would come join the *true* inheritor of Danor's power and genius. Of course, not everyone who came did so willingly, and certainly the military was not averse to using its might to seize mines and railroads and farmland to support its impromptu new economy.

When Danor signed the Concordat, she responded by declaring herself **Empress Duffet**, and named her new government **Imperium Sophi Danoris** (the Empire of Wise Danor). Eventually the Imperium would come to control scarcely a tenth of the land territory of Danor, in a narrow slice extending northward through the Western Piscine Mountains to the sea.

The central government in Cherage petitioned Risur for military help ousting her, but in a bit of deft politicking, Duffet turned the text of the Concordat to her advantage, pointing out that other nations were forbidden from interfering in internal political matters.

Danor: Landscape and Cuisine

Arctic winds are funneled by two the landmasses to the north, turning the coast near the Western Piscine Mountains frigid. The high, young mountains deflect the chill down to the city of Beaumont, but shelter the rest of Danor, providing a fairer climate with temperate summers and cool winters. A small number of large rivers run across Danor, particularly the mighty Église. Canals as old as Triegenes feed farms and control flooding. The northeastern Hameçon region near the Malice Lands are dominated by rolling hills that provided the country's coal in the early days of the industrial revolution. (Later, Danor would claim islands in the Yerasol Archipelago so it could produce firegems in the stable magic zone.)

After the Great Malice and the Clergy exodus, the Jierre dynasty led efforts to more clearly distinguish Danoran cuisine from Crisillyiri. Popular ingredients in Danor include eggs, mushrooms, baby vegetables, wines, sweet pastries, potatoes, and mustard. Long centuries without curative magics have driven ingredients that spoil easily, such as shellfish, out of the Danoran diet. The national dish is the *omelette au fromage*. Holiday celebrations typically spurn rich foods in favor of particularly fine wines.

Capital of Progress

Under the rule of the Empress, Methia grew rapidly from a chaotic military bivouac into a planned city with the most advanced technology possible without the use of magic. Duffet's advisors were a mirror image of Danor's central government, wholly unfettered and able to build a city from the ground up, assisted by a disciplined military corps of engineers.

Looking to secure herself as a symbol of Danor's legacy, Empress Duffet exerted great effort to recruit the various surviving members of the Jierre dynasty. She enticed **Nathan Jierre**, nephew of the late Han Jierre, with promises that the Imperium would aggressively fund his astronomy research into the new planes. In 507 she wed the much younger man, and she has since given birth to four children with him.

The Powas Proxy

The Imperium blasted railroad routes through the mountains to the northern sea, where they founded a new city, Portus Artus. Meant to be foster new trade routes along the northern stretch of Lanjyr and be a hub of arctech innovation, it fell victim to several late spring ice storms that ruined its harvests, and in 512 was embarrassingly sacked by pirates from Powas, the subcontinent to the north that had been part of the Malice Lands and so was still effectively in the Iron Age.

Empress Duffet responded by unleashing the considerable pentup fighting spirit of her people, and they assaulted and set fire to every coastal settlement along a forty mile stretch of Powas. There were concerns internationally that Duffet had overstepped, and

The Last Stain of the Great Malice

Before the Great Eclipse, Danor was a place where magic *could* function, but only if a caster had a magic item to draw power from, and even those items would be drained within weeks or days.

But Methia, which had been capital of the Clergy during the Great Malice, was a true dead magic zone. Indeed reality itself there was said to be less wondrous, more weighed down by the limits of flesh and bone. After the eclipse, magic returned to Danor and the nearby Malice Lands became mostly stable, but Methia and its surroundings remained a solitary spot of wild magic, about ten miles across. To use any magic there is to invite chaos.

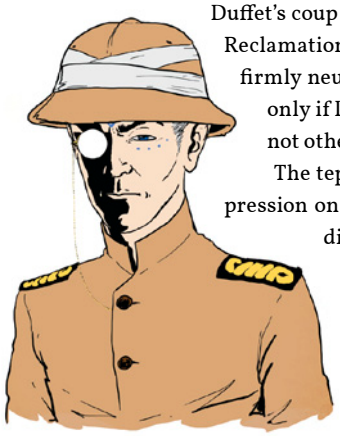
that other nations would involve themselves in the conflict, since Powas was not a signatory of the Concordat.

But Duffet chose not to continue her aggression or try to claim the subcontinent as her territory. Instead, she impressed upon local chieftains whom she had beaten that she would make a strong ally. The loose confederation of tribes became something of a client state of the Imperium, and other nations began recruiting their own tribes and investing in the resource-rich Powas, using it as a political proxy for actual conflicts with Duffet's self-styled empire.

The Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis

When Adin Radhasi's army invaded Vendricce in 519, Danor saw an opportunity to win an ally and showcase that it was still a force to reckon with. They sent orders for their colony Rationalis to dispatch a flotilla to support Adin. But the colonial goveror objected, citing years of Adin raiding their settlements for supplies and slaves.

Only once a Danoran merchant ship was fired upon for running a Crisillyiri blockade did Rationalis agree to send a single frigate, under the command of **Admiral Mathis Leblanc**, who was suspected of being sympathetic to Eloise Duffet. He had been away from the Danoran homeland and thus not part of Duffet's coup after the eclipse. In the Gulmohar Reclamation Crsis, Admiral Leblanc remained firmly neutral, declaring his ship would fire only if Danoran vessels were impeded but not otherwise aid either side.



The tepid response failed to make an impression on other Orithean signatories, but it did earn Elfaivaran gratitude for their efforts, resulting in a peace treaty protecting Rationalis.

The Present

For the first time in the twenty years since signing the Concordat, Danor has just elected a congress which has agreed to refuse to abide by the treaty, and who have enough unity to repeal laws passed to enforce it. But efforts by Risur's new queen to finally create the "Concert of Nations" mean Danor may find itself isolated. And Eloise Duffet, who styles herself Empress of Danor, would like nothing more than to wage war on a Danor that has no allies to protect it.

Apaisants and Revanchists

Since 503 AOV, a majority in the congress and each of its presidents have believed upholding the Concordat is essential for Danor's recovery and survival. They point out that the treaty mostly restricts their military, but that Danor was always about more than warfare. Now, they say, is the time to rebuild the nation in keeping with the country's true ideals of enlightened reason. Their critics decried them as "appeasers," a label they willingly accepted, naming themselves **Apaisants**.

Their opposition is more numerous but fractious, and they have repudiated large portions of the Concordat's restrictions. Angry from multiple national insults, they have named themselves **Revanchists**. They believe that most of the damage each nation suffered in the eclipse was self-inflicted, and that Danor was as much a victim as any other country.

Among revanchists, conspiracy theories are popular, often claiming that one politician or another is bought and owned by various foreign powers. Others insidiously posit that Han Jierre was forced to make a false confession, or that the original claims that Risur was responsible for the Great Eclipse are true.

Both the Apaisant and Revanchist factions have supporters from all classes. Industrialists with investments crippled by the treaty spar with peers who have found overwhelming enrichment supplying the government with reparations material. Artisans of the middle class waver on how to help their children: by supporting the treaty and earning access to foreign universities, or decrying it to win the protection of local partisans. Laid-off arms manufactory workers brawl with those who have kept their job in civilian industries.

A Third Course

The poor and working class gradually gave up on waiting for the government to actually help them, and instead created a parallel system, inspired by **courseur** doctrine: when you cannot defeat an enemy, you go around them.

Originating from iconoclastic groups within Danor's elite universities, the courseur philosophy declares the action of moving forward to be paramount, regardless of physical, societal, or legal obstacles. Stasis—be it economic and intellectual—is the same as death.

One of their new ideas is the **syndicalist council**. The syndicalist system started with unions, but workers in completely unrelated industries began to coordinate to take down the bosses and owners they saw as their common enemies. Through fits and starts and often violent resistance they organized work stoppages, starved their employers of capital or outright murdered them, and then used mass loans from workers in other industries to buy the businesses and grant shared ownership to all employees.

In this way, workers came to control many of the country's factories and farms and banks and railroads—and more and more.

Each industry forms a syndicate, represented by a council of workers—the membership of which regularly rotates so no one ever holds power for long. They negotiate with other syndicates, make deals with foreign countries, and sometimes bringing grievances to a greater council composed of the leaders of all the syndicates.

These days, the syndicates have firmly ensconced themselves in the cities of Beaumont and Keskay, where many workers try to ignore the elected Danoran government, often openly defying the law and using mass demonstrations to intimidate authorities who try to enforce the state's will. In the capital Cherage, though, draconian restrictions on free assembly are in place to keep the syndicates from threatening the power structures of Danor's richest industrialists.

Though the syndicate system was intended to be leaderless, its most famous spokeswoman is **Hushti Miasma**, a rare Danoran elf who claims to have been a steelworker for two centuries and who developed sorcerous powers after the Great Eclipse. Possessed of unparalleled patience, empathy, and weary optimism, she holds no interest in Danoran rhetoric of progress, focusing instead on people's responsibility to help each other. Though some find her self-righteous, her steady hand and skill at keeping rivals talking was pivotal in bringing the syndicalist council into effect. Of course, there are rumors Hushti and the syndicates in general are secretly backed by Duffet's Imperial Holdout.

That Old Malice

The Imperium keeps a dangerous balance of appearing strong and weak at once. Any effort to crush Duffet's reign would cost thousands of lives, and it has restrained itself from any overt hostility against Danor for seventeen years, so no congress or president is willing to fire the first shot. But both sides interfere with each other's politics, and likewise have spies and kingmakers from each of the great nations trying to meddle.

Today, Duffet is in her sixties, and she grows increasingly tired of ploddingly slow scheming, of bribing politicians to support Revanchism, of fostering the courseurs and the syndicalists to undercut the government, and, in the end, of hoping the people of Danor will recognize her as their savior. Her eldest daughter is only fourteen, and Duffet considers her unready to rule. But agents of the Imperium have been actively exploring Malice Land ruins of the old Demonocracy, and reaching out to scholars of the egregoric phenomena known as gestalts.

Might a woman who styles herself ruler of great minds be willing to bind her mind to others, to extend her rule should her body perish? And though Danor's mad geniuses are muzzled, what would happen if some terrifying experiment went awry in Methia's wild magic zone?

The Government and Its Leaders

Danor elects its congress every two years, and once every ten years the congress appoints a president. Various councils within the congress are given great leeway to write legislation on one specific topic or another, and the heads of these councils serve as ministers advising the president.

The Congress

Established amidst civil war, the Congress was originally titled a "Provisional Democratic Council," and was never intended to last five years, let alone twenty. High-minded ideals of democracy after the eclipse have fallen by the wayside as each new congress has created new laws to restrict who can vote.

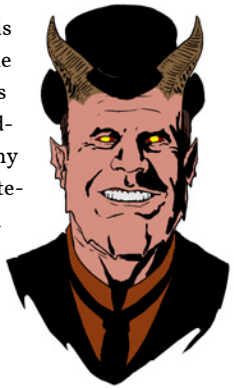


The latest election swept into power a coalition of revanchists, led by **Councilor Edyl Bryn**, which has scheduled a referendum for next year on whether to hold a convention to rewrite the constitution.

The half-elven child of a Risuri ambassador and a Danoran politician, Councilor Bryn had the rare distinction of graduating from the *Jierre Sciens d'Arms* college of war without becoming a member of the military, due to slander against their parentage and patriotism. Being denied a military career ironically made Bryn a perfect politician for Danor today: wholly unaffiliated with the Duffet-tainted military, yet graced with enough military knowledge and experience to serve as the Minister of Defense.

Councilor Bryn is forthright, unsentimental, cynical, and both an ardent Revanchist and an outspoken critic of the President. That the two maintain a healthy working relationship, based on a cautious trust, is almost an embarrassment for their two highly partisan political factions.

President Remy Duvall



The tiefling leader of Danor is renowned for his integrity. He served as a Danoran observer to the Orithean Concordat, but while his colleagues tried to paint a rosy picture of the treaty leading to Danor's swift return to prominence, Remy was consistently clear-eyed in his public statements that not only would it cause great pain to Danor, but that it was also Danor's obligation. While hardly well-loved, Danorans see him as a man of integrity and reason, which is one of the most charming qualities a leader can possess in this country.

Once the humble and somewhat hulking corporal in the military, he was a guard at the Congressional Hall during the Forward Symposium, when the building was engulfed by an egregoric monster. For a time his mind merged with other world leaders and with some alien presence, and when the hivemind was destroyed, Remy discovered his consciousness had expanded. He had gained the ability to communicate telepathically and to sense people's stray thoughts and subtle emotions, which turned him from a dour prejudiced soldier into a man of deep empathy and confidence. Personally, Remy busies himself with mastering disparate disciplines such as military strategy, criminal justice, baking, and glassmaking.

Though many question the wisdom of trusting a politician who can read minds, he proved simply too good at being a politician for people not to vote for him, and in 513 he began a ten year term as president.

Unlike many in the Apaisant faction, Remy is interested in limiting harm to Danor and building alliances, not in enriching himself, or at least so he claims. Sensing the winds shifting, he spent the last few years unwinding bureaucracy and empowering local enclaves, taking cues from courseurs while making sure these efforts

rewarded those groups that were obeying the Concordat in good faith. His term will be up soon, and with Revanchists having come to power, he suspects he will have to be the first president to hand over power to an opponent.

Cherage

The city that launched the modern era, Cherage presents a beautiful face to visitors, whose first glimpse from the Baie du Violet is of beautiful hills, stately manors, towering dirigible docks, and a fabulous gleaming elevated railroad. But beyond the hills, a sprawling metropolitan area is sharply divided into walled enclaves, where citizens' movements are restricted, and few in power care if someone's unsanctioned experiments get poor bystanders killed.

History

At the height of Triegenes's empire, Cherage was a humble port. Refugees fleeing the Great Malice flooded into Cherage, and within a generation Jierre's new social order imposed peace and prosperity.

Without traditional divine magical healing, plagues devastated the young city, but eventually scientific investment led to the creation of germ theory and the spread of hygienic practices. The industrial revolution was founded in Cherage in 300 AOV, and only recently has Flint eclipsed Cherage as the world's foremost center of mass-manufacturing and engineering.

Geography

Cherage is dominated by a trio of great hills known as Arlette, Belise, and Chloé; collectively, the Three Sisters. The heights bristle with affluence: manors, academies, state buildings, and airdocks dot each hill. The city's middle-class quarters run along the rocky coast of Baie du Violet. The Council Hall—Danor's seat of government—lies between the two.

Cherage is the seat of the Avery Coast Railroad, which runs majestically in parallel to the coast; from the coast, one can spot massive artificial islands in the bay. Travelers might assume that the hills and coastal comforts are the extent of the city, but inland past the Three Sisters they will find the enormous Esterhasé Jierre Industrial Garden, sprawling twenty miles. The smog from manufactories there tends to be blown northward by the sea breeze, leaving the city's façade pristine.

Architecture

Cheragan architecture evokes a sense of grand maturity, of centuries-old buildings preserved by generations of able caretakers: staid wooden manors with modern amenities, copper statue-monuments oxidized green by the wind rustling between the Sisters, once-rough cobblestones polished to a smooth luster by centuries of fine leather shoes.

Citizens know that this appearance is deliberate and deceptive. Riots have been semi-frequent across Cherage, and many of the "ancient" buildings and monuments are but veneers, erected and artificially aged so as to cover the scars of unrest.

Artillery batteries ring the city, most noticeably the immense cannons on artificial islands in the bay. Those cannons saved the city by destroying a titanic hivemind during the Great Eclipse, but after the Concordat they were filled with concrete, turning them into much-mourned symbols of Danor's declawing.

Even the city's layout is in conflict with itself. Streets, alleys, and boulevards writhe naturally and irregularly across the city. Yet military guard posts and watchtowers are erected in a perfect grid pattern, dividing city districts sharply, and many of these fortifications are built atop buildings seized by eminent domain.

Law and Travel Restrictions

The city watchtowers, district borders, and nightly curfew are maintained by the distrusted *Garde Indépendante*, also known as the Copper Crests for the strip of green-umber metal cresting their helmets. Old reforms intended to make the city guard incorruptible resulted in a paranoid, insular, and enigmatic armed force.



Time and time again, the Crests have been called out to maintain the peace in the face of riotous urban unrest. They are led by **Première Mirielle Mathologue**, an elite soldier who left the service shortly before Eloise Duffet's military coup. Mathologue has further militarized the Crests, striking illegal deals with courseurs to outfit her guards with the finest military arctech, which is arguably in violation of the Concordat.

When the last large workers' riot threatened to climb the hill Arlette, Mirielle dispatched autonomous mechanical carriages equipped with water cannons, as well as an actual BEAR construct to subdue the crowds. Afterward, the Crests blocked doctors and nurses from entering the area to provide medical care, and dozens of rioters died overnight in cells.

The Crests maintain a curfew that begins at nightfall, when passes are required to move between certain districts; the guards are permitted to challenge and send home anyone they deem likely to disturb the peace.

Three Sisters

The Three Sisters comprise the most famous districts in the city. Linking all of them and the ground below is a new invention: a pair of automatic monorails.

Propelled by gearwork and a wayfarer's engine, these trains—paneled in dark wood and gleaming brass—travel on an elevated track that is over forty miles long. They weave between the Sisters, down to the Bay, pass by the Avery Coast Railroad enclave, and then wind out and around to numerous enclaves of the industrial garden.

Various neighborhoods have sponsored or even built their own carriages. Though all share the same exterior, the interiors vary, at least within the bounds allowed by the Monorail Standards Committee.

In a rare concession to an oppressed working class, tickets are free, though travel passes are required to board the train after hours. Old members of the Copper Crests often get the cushy position of riding the train all night long, free to read or gossip with friends, since few are foolish enough to violate curfew.

Chloé

Atop Chloé can be found a patchwork of gardens and estates in constant flux, as the city's elite compete for space and trendiness. A particularly gauche fad is that patrons are funding statues of the city's famous figures, but building them as constructs that move and convey a personality at a scale of twenty or thirty feet tall.

Most estates are heavily guarded (most by mercenaries, but some by these celebrity constructs), as their wealth make tempting targets for thieves of foreign guilds like the Family, Kuchnost, and Last Ravens. The city's indigenous criminals are mostly disorganized courseurs, who find more profit in smuggling and selling to the rich than stealing from them.

The most infamous crimes in these parts though are the occasional violent attacks by Vekeshi mystics. The old tradition of Danoran elites keeping Elfaivaran slave-brides continue, and though most conceal the women at rural estates, the Vekeshi prefer the shock and terror of a brutal murder in Cherage's wealthy heart.

Belise

Originally the traditional home of Danor's great admirals and generals, Eloise Duffet's coup led to many mansions being seized by the state or torched by angry mobs. Taking their place today are workshops and storefronts of officially approved arctech artisans.

The largest "artisanry" is the BEAR machineworks, yet even that is dwarfed by Belise's largest construction, the airdock of the Danoran Civilian Aeronautical Body. A 100-foot-tall tower, crowned by a levitating, 150-foot-long stretch of dirigible platforms, dominates the Belise skyline. Engineers from the facility also work down at the bay retrofitting luxury vessels with levitationals, though for now no armed vessels can receive such conversion, due to the Concordat. Daily flights, however lavishly expensive, connect Cherage to Flint.

Arlette

The tallest hill in Cherage, and the home of Cherage's state buildings, Arlette's population was decimated during the Great Eclipse when the old Congressional Hall became the shell of an egregoric hivemind that tore the building free from its moorings and began disintegrating hundreds of people. The ruins remain as a memorial.

Many elected councilors take residence here, but even today dozens of the buildings that once supported the government sit empty, and are used as gathering places for spies and thieves. Economic contraction after the Concordat left Cherage with a patchwork of real estate no one can afford, and the hill where a giant psychic monster died is a tough sell even for the rational tastes of Danor.

Provisional Hall

The old sprawling Sovereign's Palace was renamed the Provisional Hall, and today the congress meets there, with only a small wing reserved as the residence of the president. After riots damaged the council chambers, it was repaired and retrofitted with a web of arctech inventions that feed into tubes, which run to several amphitheaters and winehouses around the city. At any time, images from council meetings (or of an empty room) are delivered via *asomatous canvas projectors*. Meant to let the public witness the grand work of government, in truth it is usually ignored.

Concrete Zoo

The industrial engine that drives the city lies to the north in the Esterhasé Jierre Industrial Garden. Named for the ruling Jierre in 400 AOV, the Garden is a massive district dominated by a series of artificial canals, dug to bring water to its hundreds of construct-bolstered manufactories.

Over two centuries ago, following the birth of Danor's industrial revolution, urban unrest and the ensuing march of workers from the fields and into the manufactories led to the decision to cordon off the city's workers in this northern district to maintain order. The Garden of its name was reflected in attempts to promote a placid workforce through architecture.

Artifice was intended to replace nature, like hard-wearing viridian carpet meant to evoke grass, or concrete walls daubed with green paint to resemble rolling hills of farmland. To add further credibility to the illusion of verdancy, enormous statues of animals dot various points within the district. Trumpeting elephants, roaring lions, skittering squirrels, marching turtles: all carved from stone and frozen in poses that look limp and dull to modern eyes.

The Daft and the Devious

Over time, new walls arose to further segregate the Garden, and travel passes became required to leave a specific enclave after curfew. And at some times, when the city leaders fear unrest, a pass is required to leave an enclave at all.

The Garden is a great center of courseur activity: its hundreds of construct-aided manufactories, laboratories, and warehouses are a prime location for illicit research into alchemy, magic, arctech, weaponry, constructs, or any combination of the five. The Crests know this all too well, and conduct frequent raids.

Their most-wanted target is **Geoff Massarde**.



The tiefling inventor defected thirty years ago to Risur, but returned to his homelandafter the eclipse, claiming he'd never been political; he just wanted to be on the cutting edge of arcanoscience. He has become something of a grandfather figure to young technologists who hope to impress him with their inventions, as he presides over raucous but illegal night-time exhibitions. The Crests' expertise has always been intimidation, not investigation, so how so many people manage to gather in defiance of numerous walls and curfews still eludes them.

Beaumont

The westernmost city in Lanjyr embraces its identity as a cultural churn, always changing. Gelid winters glide down from the arctic, while summer heat waves rumble up on thunderstorms from the Yerasol Archipelago. Syndicalists have thrown their old industrial bosses into the poorhouse, and a college of war puts its students into mortal peril for the sake of their education. A vast array of theaters, opera houses, and shoestring stages are breeding grounds for technological special effects and avant-garde ideas. And a belief that the poor can rise to the top here has led to vagabonds from around the world—and even beyond it—transforming a floating ship graveyard into a grand, half-flooded slum of failed dreams.

History

In contrast to Cherage's greatness and respectability, Beaumont is constantly reinventing itself with an air of distinguished decline. The city was always a bit of a melting pot due to its proximity to the eclectic cultures of the Yerasol Archipelago, but then in the Second Yerasol War, Danor turned Beaumont into its largest naval shipyard.

The war economy remade Beaumont with the latest train tracks, switching-stations, port dredging, and dry docks. But that war ended, and military investment dried up, and the city's hard times inspired some of Danor's greatest literature and theater. The cycle of military growth and contraction repeated with the Third Yerasol and again with the Fourth, but Beaumont's music and plays became a part of sailors' experience at war. They brought that culture home, and in peacetime people would return to recapture their glory days.

During the eclipse, Beaumont was briefly swarmed with arcano-scientists, and for several months it produced some of the greatest machines of war in history. The Concordat was an abrupt decapitation of that heady prosperity.

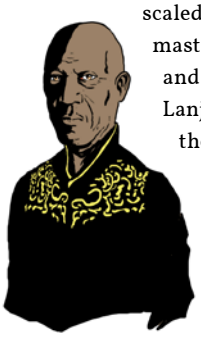
Geography

Beaumont boasts considerable natural defenses against assault from the sea. It sits within a cove that cuts into the mainland—its waters deep and dark thanks to dredging—at the foot of the Western Piscine Mountains, granting an unparalleled vista of soaring peaks.

The lands beyond the city itself, though, are low and too soaked with salty seawater to serve as good farmland, so the city imports the bulk of its fruits and vegetables from the rest of Danor or from Yerasl, but it has always been the beneficiary of a mighty fishing fleet. New innovations in refrigeration may give cause for Beaumont's seafood cuisine to spread throughout the nation.

For the Love of Art

The root of Beaumont's recent revitalization is art. As the military scaled down its presence, **Mayor Citroen Zugosky** masterminded a plan to recast Beaumont as the arts and culture capital of Danor, and perhaps even all Lanjyr. Famed opera singer **Gran Guiscard** serves as the city's arts minister, and many young performers revere the outlandishly bold old man for his patronage helping them succeed. Guiscard is also rumored to be at the center of a web of spies who hold sufficient blackmail power to keep government authorities from shutting down some of the city's more controversial shows.



The First Lady

Beaumont's most distinctive new construction is the Gelsey Jierre Opera House, named for the last Sovereign's wife. In contrast to most buildings, which emphasize a decadent experience for the audience, the Gelsey was instead designed from a performer's perspective. Rather than a traditional amphitheater-like design, the Gelsey keeps the audience intimately close, vertically stacking several close balconies with no floor seating.

The novelty is controversial, and so is the talk of high society, as only a couple hundred people can see each performance. They tell of a *genius loci*, the spirit of the city itself, sitting in attendance, and whisper that the building is alive, choosing performers from anywhere in the city to headline, with an emphasis on talent and creativity over celebrity.

Ninety-Nine Daughters

The many thousands who fail to acquire Gelsey seats can sate their dramatic desires with Beamont's other ninety-nine theaters. (The exact number is in dispute.) Shows range from classical, experimental, to shamelessly licentious.

Rebellious youth are often drawn to classical plays that ran in Danor even before the Great Malice, based on the religious themes of the Clergy. Popular today is "*Light and Ice*," an exploration of the meaning of virtue set during the Clergy custodianship of Drakr. The religious fervor in the play has been embraced by poor teens who see faith as a salve against the city's economic woes.

Meanwhile, a loose confederation of playwrights have challenged themselves to tell stories that were not possible without modern arctech. Their produce unrivaled spectacle, often with highly experimental structure, such as using *asomatous canvas projectors* to overlay the audience with images of those who sat in the same seats for previous shows, or putting on a mock aerial battle between dirigibles while transmitting the live singing voices of the cast across the city with ceraunic wave towers.

And lately, Beaumont's satires have taken on a transgressive lewdness. Three hot tickets are *Have You Met My Daughter?*, a saucy retelling of Risuri King Kelland defeating the titans; *I Hope This Never Ends*, a lascivious critique of Danor's politics under the guise of a decadent love story starring infamous Drakran doomsday cult leader Grandis Komanov; and *A Pious Guide to Gynocide*, a black comedy about the female commander of a company of Clergy soldiers upset they don't have anyone to rape as they conquer Elfaivar after the Great Malice.

Lamar University

The Lamar University military academy once was as large as the College of Divine Trials in Sid Minos. Its constituent colleges, such as the legendary *Jierre Sciens d'Arms*, instructed countless cadets on martial science, grand strategy and codes of conduct. In the aftermath of the coup by Eloise Duffet and of the Concordat, Danoran pride and trust in the military are anemic, and the faculty of the university have become a bit eccentric.

Spite and duty drive the staff to keep their institution running, both to preserve its secrets and to teach a new generation if and when the next president finally breaks away from the poxed treaty. It offers an educational experience unlike anything elsewhere in Lanjyr, and four years of officer training here promises more intrigue and adventure than most soldiers see in their whole careers.



Why Oh Why?

The university's current leader, **Directeur Yvonne Yves**, is widely seen as having lost her grip on reality. Unable to cope with her institution's diminished prestige, she compensates with wild stunts that she claims make the school a greater challenge, which will thus produce stronger cadets.

She smuggled in flayed jaguars with witchoil for blood from Flint to enforce curfew, and encouraged students to learn the art of sapping to use tunnels if they wanted to leave campus. She hired a pair of sadistic ex-cultists from Drakr to provide mountain survival training by actually hunting the class. The final exam of last year's graduating class consisted only of the command, "Please hand me your test before the end of the day"; the director had left an hour earlier for a dirigible flight across the Avery Sea.

The class managed to hijack an airship of their own and commandeered a ceraunic wave tower to send a false storm warning that got the director's dirigible to turn around.

Despite appearing unhinged for putting her classes in extreme peril, the director has had no student deaths under her tenure, and she has on a few occasions revealed that she always has robust rescue plans and contingencies to protect the student body. Beaumont's newspapers have certainly provided the school with breathless coverage, and it seems that perhaps this is all some clever performance art to raise the school's profile.

Donors and High Society

Due to the tightening of government funding, the university has petitioned for donations from alumni and members of high society. One deep-pocketed group was the Queen Bee Lodge, an esoteric society founded in Beaumont with the goal of maintaining proper decorum even in times of frustration.

As a condition of the lodge's donation, the university created a public program where members of Beaumont's high society can learn self-defense techniques adapted from military manuals. They also constructed a fraternal house on campus for students whom the lodge deems as having the right potential, and over the past decade many graduates have—in lieu of a military career—navigated their way into city and national politics.

The Vagabond Raft

The Concordat forbids Danor from expanding the size of its navy, a restriction that led Minister of Defense Edyl Bryn to aggressively mothball smaller and older ships before their normal end of life, freeing up "slots" for newer vessels.

Those abandoned ships were moored just off the coast of Beaumont's Sea Rim Park, a barrier island that once was a memorial to the Yerasol wars. The park became too overclogged with unsightly derelicts, and its appeal as a tourist attraction rapidly faded. Once the ships had their valuable components salvaged and their engines removed to match the terms of the Concordat, they simply drifted for a time.

The squatters trickled in, and tried to muster classic Beaumonter style and turn the park into an exciting community for artists and inventors. They connected hulls with bridges, and jury-rigged running water, but tides and rusting hulls thwarted their good intentions. Like a poorly-made soufflé, it simply never quite rose to match its aspirations, and today the park is a sprawling slum rife with crime.

Politics

The acting mayor of Beaumont, standing in for the amnesiac Emiline Fitzlaurence (see page 65), is **Citroen Zugosky**. A tiefling industrialist and steel baron, Zugosky vowed to devote his twilight years to public service and the arts. He has been keeping members of high society and international tourists happy while gradually leveraging his popularity to stymie the syndicalist council from eroding the rights of business owners and wealthy investors.

The city's industrial workforce, while raucous and outspoken, is far less prone to violence than those in Cherage, and had seemed somewhat content to be happy with their slice of the pie. But spies for one of the syndicates posing as waiters captured a candid conversation by Zugosky at a recent political dinner, using a new piece of arctech to record the mayor's remarks. The mayor promised to legislate a ban of the syndicates, and requested an unnamed visitor to see what "her mother" could do to help.

Public consensus is that the mayor's guest was **Morgane Duffet-Jierre**, teenaged daughter of Eloise Duffet, and the outrage at Zugorsky courting help from a traitor attracted radical agitators from around the region. Kuchnost operatives from Drakr are ginning up Beaumonters to spill blood in the streets to show their patriotism. **Thames Grimsley**, a respected voice from Flint's early docker protests, has come to the city with a cadre of Risuri citizens, who act as human shields during protests, daring authorities to harm them and invite the anger of Risur.



Cheragan courseurs see a chance to unseat the mayor and claim political power. **Hushti Miasma**, a prominent public face of the syndicalist council, has given a forked warning, read differently by Zugosky and by her allies, saying that anyone who holds an elected office is an enemy of the syndicalists.



Methia

Seen from a certain angle, Methia appears to be nothing but a ruin: bone-white marble walls, broken towers, neighborhoods emptied and destroyed by the chaotic exodus of the fall of Clericist Danor. From another angle, new life can be seen: the beaten yet unbroken military regime, determined to return Danor to imperial glory, restoring the city even as they build a loyalist society anew. Amidst wild magic and culture clash, old faith and new duty, Methia stands tall, solemn, and haunting.

The Department of Dreams

A captured Risuri war galleon sits in drydock in front of the university's administration office. The RNS *Monarch Thisraldion* has sat on campus since the end of the Second Yerasol War, and the archaic warship provides a popular stage for university ceremonies and city government gatherings. But in recent years, classes have met inside, studying the Dreaming, a place that stands in antithesis to the reasoned bedrock of Danoran society. Each year, guest fey professors are given freedom to teach whatever they want, and the university uses a cherished *portable wayfarer's lantern* to take excursions into the little-explored Danoran version of the Dreaming (see page 187).

Porteurs du Mort

The vaunted *Porteurs du Mort* were created by Minister of War Eloise Duffet shortly before the Great Eclipse. Meant as a counter to the elite constables of Risur's Royal Homeland Constabulary, the Porteurs recuited a broad mix of military talent that innovated novel tactics. They were renowned for fearlessly deploying close range explosives and for predicting enemy movements and seeding local civilian populations with disguised soldiers.

After the eclipse they were formally removed from the military hierarchy, and instead shifted to a nominally-civilian spy agency, which freed them from Concordat restrictions. Today they are headed by **Agent Directeur Gautier Spanier**, who has faced on the battlefield—and later shared Yerasol cigars with—soldiers from each of the other five great nations.



Porteurs wear no formal markings or rank insignia, and they act "off the books," leaving little to trace them to any specific government official in Danor. When operating in public, they usually adopt an accent and pose as being from some minor border state. Nearly all were trained in classic courseur mobile combat, though Directeur Spanier squelches any sympathy toward the radical courseur social movement among new members of the unit.

Their primary base is a pair of steam frigates that can conjure fog banks to conceal themselves—*La Rêve Invincible* and *Boucherie des Mers*. These usually stay out to sea, while a much smaller steamship—*Ipsum*—serves as courier and scout. The *Ipsum*'s hull is enhanced with tideglass to let it outpace even the mightiest warships, and the whole vessel can be draped with illusions to let it pass as a ship from some other nation. They also used to field a submersible named *Lya's Lament*, but that vessel's crew defected during Duffet's coup.

History

Long ago, great Triegenes stood on the northern edge of the Église River, and waded in to do battle with his foe: the chthonic Thuuga-el-Shembul, the last elemental titan of old Danor. The fisherman broke his foe into gravel and let the river wash him away. He strode to the southern bank, accepted the allegiance of the titan's cowed court, and founded his nation and the city of Methia upon that spot.

Centuries passed in peace and prosperity.

When the goddess Srasama perished, her Great Malice fell upon the city and beyond. Clericists sprouted horns and tails, their demonic visages driving the city to confusion and riot. The goddess's curse stole the land's magic. The Clergy abandoned the city and fled to Crisillyir.

Five centuries later, the city is beginning to thrum with life once more. Like Triegenes before her, former Minister for War Eloise Duffet stood on the bank in 503 AOV and founded her nation, the Empire of Wise Danor. She has vowed that either she or her children will rule all of Danor; may the stars fall from the sky again if she breaks her vow.



Geography

The Église River divides the former capital into two halves: Holy Methia and Urbem Postulatoris, with the remnants of the Lance of Triegenes on an islet in between. The city lies far inland, in what was once the heart of Danor. The great forests of *Marie* and *Marius* are to the north, empty and forbidding, and today home to new malice beasts twisted by the region's wild magic.

Duffet's new Methian citizens have toiled to reverse the five centuries of near-abandonment that led to nature reclaiming nearby farms, vineyards, corrals, and cowsheds. The bounty of unclaimed land attracted ranchers who helped feed the city in the unsteady first months after its rebirth, and now the beef of the region is its most popular export, carried by refrigerated cars traveling on a precision web of new railroads.

When farmers practice drills and flee back into the city, they trek upon enormous roads that snake their way in from eight cardinal directions before joining at the city's three gates. Their shining stone was clear of weeds and dust even before Duffet arrived, the result of some Clericist technique or material property long lost to history.

Architecture

Methia benefits from its sixty-foot walls, which rise like marble cliffs. They are split only by the river and three gates:

- **Ostium Judicii**, the southern Gate of Judgement with its marble statues of a harpoon-wielding fisherman and an armored holy warrior.
- **Ostium Splendoris**, the northwestern Gate of Splendor and the brilliant reflection its sealed doors make against the setting sun.
- **Ostium Piatem**, the Gate of Piety, a final exit and sally-point locked by a long-lost Clericist key.

The Aspirant's Bridge serves as the sole connection between both halves of the city, made of the white stone that marks most Methian structures. The three-foot-high railing of the bridge was etched with the names of the triumphant army returning from the First Victory. Architecture of the city's buildings is ancient, with a great reliance on tall marble columns.

Holy Methia is a maze of the temples, shrines, academies, refectories, and civic buildings once needed to support the Clericists of an entire empire. Its new citizens have barely occupied a third.



Arms manufactories, storehouses, amphitheatres, and vast extended barracks have been constructed to support the new Methians, allowing for clusters of life amidst entire neighborhoods that are still abandoned.

Urbem Postulatoris, which once held the many faithful who came to offer obeisance to Triegenes' great city, is still a ruin, but an active one. The Imperial Army spends much of its time therein, merrily blasting ancient taverns to ruins in arms tests whilst playing out urban combat wargames amidst ancient shantytowns and dormitories.

The geographic center of the city is a small island in the middle of the river, containing the remnants of the Lance of Triegenes and a set of docks with a very special vessel. This immense tower still dominates the skyline, even though barely a third of its former 1,500-foot glory remains. Hundreds of small shrines once spiralled up around its exterior, serving as the foci for powerful abjurations that guarded old Clericist Danor. The Great Malice sundered Methia's magic, destroying the supportive spells, leading to the tower's collapse.

Before the Great Eclipse, the Danoran military garrisoned several divisions in Methia as part of war-games and the field-testing of experimental vehicles. One such craft is the retrofitted *Lya's Lament*, a state-of-the-art submarine.

Respect and the Uniform

A particular culture clash within the district of Holy Methia is driving both support and opposition for Duffet's military regime. The city's first new arrivals were cosmopolitan and military-minded: officers, attendants, scholars, and manufactory craftsmen. In the two decades since, the Empress protected and offered sanctuary to many nearby villages and towns, from which have come farmers, herbalists, blacksmiths, spinners, and weavers. Interactions and clashes between these groups fuels duelling perspectives.

Some villagers gaze in admiration at the unity and conduct that binds their protectors. Some soldiers are shocked at how their leaders' absolute focus on defence interferes with the harvests and traditions of the villagers. Some blacksmiths bristle at the curfews and the absolute respect demanded by officers and their spouses. Some scholars look to the intellectual stasis enforced on the rest of Danor by the First Minister and the Concordat, and are grateful for Duffet's drive to innovate.



Sous-lieutenant Florentin Mazet was a grizzled loyalist whom Duffet entrusted with expanding her Imperium's reach northward to the sea. He persuaded himself at the time that his seizure of lands and razing of Danoran forts that would not join was a necessity for the sake of his beloved nation's heart and mind, but after the foundation stone was laid for Portus Artus, he retired with honor and decided to live in the new nation he had helped build.

Since spending more time with civilians he has grown increasingly uncomfortable with the strictures of martial law and how some of Duffet's more self-righteous generals are using the situation to demand the personal allegiance and property of villagers, like old feudal nobles. He is one of the few citizens of the Imperium whom Duffet allows to publicly voice critique of her.



Wild Magic

Once a dead magic zone, the city and its outskirts now more closely resemble the old Malice Lands. Within the city walls, almost no magic can be relied on, but the effect fades, spreading tens of miles in each direction. Beyond the unstable magic, sometimes various bizarre effects simply manifest of their own accord. Candles go damp and water troughs burn, stone starts to sprout blossoms, and wood crumbles into gravel. Methians are working to either contain, embrace or avoid this effect.

Rumors claim that an egregoric column has manifested somewhere within the boundaries of Methia, and that it is the source of this chaotic magic. Empress Duffet has recruited three experts in such magic to try to locate it and either negate or harness its power. The Risuri gnome **Meece Upknot**, known as the "pandaemonicist," conducts reckless experiments on deserters and enemies of the state. Nalaamese human cleric **Anna Kulpa** has managed to stabilize a few pockets in the countryside. But it is the Drakran dwarf **Nadia Kamenshik**, known as the "sculptor of chaos," who has most impressed Duffet, having designed a novel arcane fusil filled with white stones from Methia's walls, which disrupt the magic of whomever they shoot.

Duffet's Cathedral of Reason is defended by an anti-aircraft turret mounting these fusils, designed specifically to bring low Risur's new flagship the RAS *Burning Sky*.

Politics

Empress Eloise Duffet-Jierre is the undisputed ruler of Methia. Broad in an impressive manner, six-foot-three not counting her

horns, she is an unmistakable presence. A veteran, the Fourth Yerasol War left her with a clockwork left arm and a burning resentment towards Risur. After the war, she served as Sovereign Han Jierre's Minister of War, and part of the delegation representing Danor at a botched Flint peace conference in 501 AOV and an even more catastrophic Cheragan symposium just a year later.

In 507 AOV, Duffet married the timid modern skyseer **Nathan Jierre**, and has since given birth to four children: **Morgane**, **Mathéo**, **Maeva**, and **Médard Duffet-Jierre**. Her publicly-stated goal is to return Danor's prior glories: Jierre rule, and the pursuit of technological, political, and military hegemony. These goals appeal to multitudes of Danorans who have flocked to her cause, multitudes who must increasingly overlook Duffet's tyrannical tactics and the rise of a cult of personality around her.

Those who look beyond her performative patriotism fear her plans to dissolve congress, institute an absolute monarchy, launch national conscription, and aggressively confront Risuri dominance. These seem wildly beyond her actual capacity to achieve, but rumors abound that she has masterminded a conspiracy, and that already her agents have infiltrated other nations and are nearly ready to reveal themselves.

What is known is that her agents have been probing the wreckage of Cherage's Congressional Hall. The legendary organic labyrinth, left behind by the great egregore that emerged during the Great Eclipse, might yield immense power to whoever is able to seize it. Duffet attended the disastrous Forward Symposium and was temporarily subsumed into the "godmind," and she herself speculates that she retains a bizarre connection to the godlike egregore's remnants.

Other Places of Interest

- **Axis Island** is the most famous landmass in the Yerasol Archipelago. It is famous for many battles in the four Yerasol Wars, and for a landscape that shifts and morphs like the Malice Land used to, though without the wild magic. Danor maintains a joint defensive fleet and ground force here along with Risur, though what the two nations defend is a great secret. While Danor's military technology restrictions seem like they would play second fiddle to Risur, many Danoran experts in planar science are stationed here, and Risur seems to defer to them.
- **The Gulf of Crochet** lies northeast of Cherage. The western shore is one of the poorest areas of the country, full of salty bogs serving little strategic value in the nation's long conflict against Risur. Today its people are discovering strange new sinkholes which people have disappeared down. Some suspect these are pathways to the Dreaming, long inaccessible. But a research expedition sent an arctech contraption down and found waxy structures of alien beauty filling flooded tunnels.
- **Hameçon** is the eastern region near the Malice Lands, full of rolling hills. It fell under Danor's influence mostly by default due to being within the dead magic zone after the Great Malice, but since magic has returned, the region's farmers have been courted heavily by the central government to keep them from being drawn into Orithea's orbit.

The City State of Orithea

A city of about forty thousand people in the Malice Lands, **Orithea** was once heavily subsidized by Danoran investment. Now it is trying to establish itself as the capital of a new nation, encompassing all of the temperate land south of the Eastern Piscine Mountains, stretching east to include Drakr's Stena region.

Orithea is still small and poor compared to the great nations, but the people of the Malice Lands send their best and brightest there with high hopes and rugged pride. The city is even winning favor from the wilder regions to the north by funding and supporting the wide-ranging Knights of Sangria, who specialize in hunting malice beasts.

Orithea remembers its friendship with Danor, and unlike most cities it has not dismantled the lighthouse that they built under Han Jierre's guidance. It still stands (albeit without its mind-numbing components), a symbol that for at least one foreign land, Danor was the source of enlightenment and progress it always promised to be.

- **Keskay** is a wholly average Danoran city, between Cherage's strict splendor and Beaumont's defiant creativity, and literally between them along the route of the Avery Coast railroad. Its greatest claim to fame is that it sits near the mouth of the Église River, and so has frustrated apaisants by allowing the Imperium to travel and trade on the waterway.
- **Marie** and **Marius** are two mighty forests near Methia that were nearly untouched by logging since the Great Malice. The gap between them was once a heavily urbanized trade route, now filled with ruins. Danor's small native elf population live here, maintaining an odd off-shoot of the old Clergy religion.
- **Portus Artus** is the Imperium's only port, which railroads link to Methia by threading numerous tunnels through the Western Piscine Mountains. Though less than two decades old, the Imperium invests heavily in it, as a seat of their arctech research.
- **Powas** hosted a half dozen small cities before the Great Malice. The subcontinent's center is controlled by monstrous icy beings who once were the Tundarasne elves of northern Drakr, twisted by wild magic. Unlike the central Malice Lands, where Danor and Drakr culled the worst monsters, the malice beasts on Powas were effectively unchecked. The survivors of the old cities have regressed to the iron age, but they greatly value non-magical medical knowledge, and have a deep knowledge of malice beast anatomy.
- The **Western Piscine Mountains** were the site of many Danoran research communities, studying climates at different altitudes. As such, many famed scientists hail from rural towns in these young, jagged mountains. Paleontological and geological digs were long popular here, as Danor tried to make sense of the scientific history of a world that had at one point been drastically reshaped by magic. Today, many of those scientists act as guerrilla warriors, opposing efforts of the Imperium to turn a garden of study into a mine for militarism.

The Other Malice States

North of the towering Piscine Mountains, the Malice Lands are substantially colder than Danor. Farms and ranches are still common, but good land is availale only in pockets of limited size, a fact that leads to scattered villages and small areas of moderate population density, but no towns larger than about five thousand people. Including the fractious tribes of the island subcontinent Powas, a patchwork of sixteen self-styled Malice States control the area.

The two most prosperous Malice States are heartless **Arrovia**, on the shores of Lake Sallion on the border of Drakr, and Dreaming-tinged **Nikhal**, wedged between the western edge of the mountains and the shore of the Gulf of Crochet.

Arrovia has somehow managed to develop a teleportation circle activated by blood magic, and eagerly participates in many illicit trades, especially the production of witchoil and the trafficking of enslaved people. People who oppose Empress Duffet-Jierre or some cruel clan scions in Drakr can find themselves delivered to this haunting land, and then sold off to distant Shaha.

Nikhal was once home to a major settlement of the Elfaivaran diaspora, and it has received support from the new ranimandala. A gulmohar druid named **Eshadual** has begun teaching the residents of Nikhal how to reach into the Dreaming and produce samsāra-fey—creatures imagined in lucid dreams and given physical form as guardians.

Drakr

Name: Federated Drakran States
Capital: Trekhom
Other Major Cities: Bhad Rhyzhavdut, Knütpara, Mirsk
Teleportation Beacons: All major cities
Government: Federal parliamentary republic
Head of State: Chancellor Vlendam Heid
Official Language: Dwarvish
Common Heritages: Human 69%, dwarf 28%, frost giant 0.1%, other 2.9%

Introduction

A proudly pensive confederation of dwarves and humans founded on virtues of egalitarianism, but divvied up by hereditary clans, Drakr learned well from its two nearest peer nations. An alliance with Danor resulted in an unequaled industrial sector and the most heavily-armed military in the world. Ecumenical traditions inherited from Crisillyir produced a unique reverence for philosophy, with citizens from all classes consumed with finding answers to the great questions of existence.

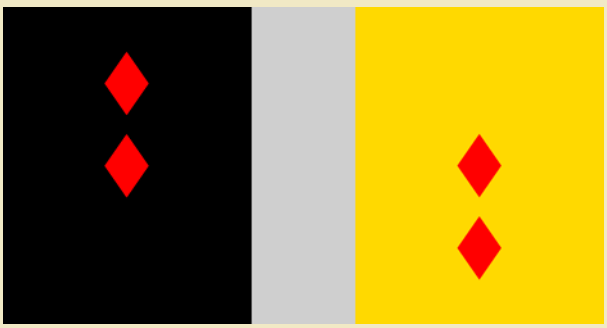
The nation suffered perhaps the worst loss of life during the Great Eclipse, and suddenly *political* philosophy became a national focus as people argued over how to rebuild and recover. The rise of a reformist Chancellor has led to the hope that some of the nation's institutional injustices might finally be reversed. Conservative dwarven nobles who have long undermined Drakr's ideals of equality lead a fierce opposition to the reformers.

In the clans' arrogance, they have allied themselves with a criminal syndicate to sow confusion among the disenfranchised, but the group they've gotten into bed with has enough blackmail to have power over them. People are growing disgusted as they glimpse the fullness of the clans' abuses—from shameless profiteering to the use of foul magic—while from the far north, frost giants and other neglected peoples seek to join Drakr's glory, bringing with them a legacy where the Demonocracy was seen as a golden age.

Drakr at a Glance

These are the major figures, groups, and locations in Drakr most foreigners have heard about.

- **Chancellor Vlendam Heid.** A philosopher whose ideology prepared the nation for the catastrophe of the Great Eclipse. Afterward the nation called for him to lead, but he has struggled, as he had qualms about using his own power, and no political skill.
- **Utyosova Andreevna.** Leader of the Armigers, a faction in government opposing Heid's reformists. Helped defend the city Mirsk from the armies of Grandis Komanov.
- **Grandis Komanov.** Deceased leader of an apocalyptic cult that tried to destroy Drakr during the eclipse.
- **Keigar Arukova.** Famous explorer who tried and failed to map the Dreaming, but delighted crowds with tales of her adventures.
- **The Clans.** Four major and numerous minor families descended from heroic dwarven warlords, which now own most of the country.
- **Heid Eschatol.** Philosophical movement that advocates preparing for "endings." Currently driving many cultural reforms, as advocates want to empower the weak and poor to control their own endings, not be at the mercy of the powerful.
- **Delkovitch Nihisol.** Introspective philosophy that rejects authority and encourages people to find their own meaning. Regularly misunderstood by even people who claim to follow it.
- **Kuchnost.** One of several Drakran crime syndicates, which is particularly adept at sowing uncertainty and distrust, leading many to overestimate the group's actual power and scope.
- **Tolstyak Besporyadok.** Head of the Kuchnost crime syndicate, with leverage over the clans.
- **Planarnaya Razvedyvatel'naya Kompaniya (PRK).** Company trying to devise magic and vehicles to travel to the planets.
- **Trekhom.** Coastal capital city, known for buildings that descend into bedrock and tower menacingly above the city center.
- **Mirsk.** Somewhat remote city surrounded by a massive complex of mountain forges, many staffed by prisoners.





Grand History

Drakr began much like Risur: a harsh landscape where the roiling of titans destroyed every seed of civilization before it could flourish. Following Risuri King Kelland's example, great dwarven heroes subdued the undead titans of their land, encased them in crystal, and buried them in hidden vaults beneath the earth.

These heroes erected sky-scraping towers as symbols of their power, and founded noble clans to carry on their bloodlines. Pride and ambition drove them to ally with the Demonocracy to the east, trading the lives and souls of their mostly-human subjects for unholy power. Unnatural armies embarked from these dark citadels on conquests of territory and battles for supremacy. Many warlords flew on draconic steeds gifted to them by their demonic allies.

Rule of Angels

The tyranny of the warlords ended when Triegenes came to Drakr. He assailed the towers, bringing down blazing star-showers until at last the warlords were overthrown. Triegenes left Clergy caretakers to oversee and prevent the dwarven clans from rising up and reinstituting tyranny.

After the last demon lords were defeated, the Clergy ruled for centuries. Their pious guardianship slowly turned to theocratic despotism, but not before the tradition of theological debate between followers of different gods became part of the region's culture. During the centuries of Clergy rule, groups from around Lanjyr had settled in territory that the Drakran clans saw as theirs. The dwarves' sprawling territory contracted as they built their settlements deeper underground.

Then came the Great Malice, shattering the Clergy's web of control.

Thawing Time

Modern Drakrans refer to the aftermath of the Great Malice as *Tayat*, the Thawing Time, a euphemism based on a common occurrence of people going missing in winter, and unidentified bones being found when the snows thawed.

For a century, the clans prosecuted a series of gradual purges and genocides against groups that refused to submit to their authority. Many remote villages would be whittled away over a few years, then wiped out in one night when they were too weak to defend themselves. But the clans usually did not act in concert, and some human groups survived by pledging to work the land in exchange for protection by one clan against another.

Other groups tried to organize and engage in large-scale battles, which simply galvanized the clans to coordinate and accelerate the slaughter. Many trains of devastated survivors settled in the border states to the north and east—the most famous of which are the **Tundarasne** elves with their diamond-edged axes, who for a time controlled the northwestern Tunda peninsula; and the **Fildessian** humans, wealthy stoneshapers who would go on to found Nalaam in the Penance Peaks.

Reluctant Federation

As the dwarves reclaimed their power and dominance, they prepared to break away into factions, fighting wars to regain their old borders. But a new threat intervened: monstrous malice beasts, growing larger by the year, until in 100 AOV some were spotted ten times as tall as a war elephant.

It became infeasible to keep fighting over territory, and the dwarven clans were forced to create a loose alliance with millions in the human remnants they had not yet wiped out. This coalition slowly unified as abjuration-warded and undead-guarded towers were built across the western border as defensive strongholds. A reluctant kinship was forged, with regional human governors overseeing farming and trade, whilst dwarven lords directed great mining operations and the nation's military.

Soldiers who returned from the horrors of fighting in the Malice Lands longed for order. Many were drawn to prophecies of the end of the world, but most simply wanted a life with less upheaval.

Sensing a rare moment of leverage, the various human governors forced the alliance to follow old Clergy traditions and codify their founding virtues. A grand philosophical debate eventually settled upon a statement of the political philosophy of a Drakran nation and a declaration of its right to exist, built upon ideals of egalitarianism. The new federation printed and distributed copies across Lanjyr. They even made a grand show of engraving the entire text on long stretch of polished stones along the docks of the capital city Trekhom, so that any invading navy would have a sign that Drakr was united.

Due to this, the founding principles of the nation came to be called the *Kamni Zakona*, the Stones of Law. They outlined the precise set of powers possessed by the Chancellor, the dwarven clans, the human governors, and the government structure in general. They also defined legal arrest, and prevented the dwarven clans from directing their armies upon rightfully-appointed government officials. In theory, the scion of a dwarven clan would stand with only slightly more rights and privileges than any other citizen.

Despite the principled rhetoric, the chancellor of Drakr has always been a dwarf, and always with at least grudging approval of the dwarven clans. While the country's laws are codified and judges strict to avoid arbitrary rulings, precedent has grown heavy and skews the system in favor of the clans.

Drakr: Landscape and Cuisine

Drakr is cold; some claim a final retribution of Tundarasne elves cursed the nation with bitter chill, but meteorologists say it's because the Shawl Mountains are spaced widely, too wide to provide the same protection against arctic winds that the Piscine Mountains offer Danor. Drakran summers are brief and warm at best, while winters are long and can be so dark and cold that one might think that the end of the world has come again. Drakran civilization clusters around its boreal forests in the northwest and its flat, rocky coasts to the south.

The environment, particularly the temperate peninsula bordering the Malice Lands known as the Stena region, yields ingredients such as caviar, berries, tea, honey, and wheat. The Drakran diet is dominated by meat from pigs and goats, typically smoked. Dwarves favor beer, humans vodka, and frost giants a rich juice that the dwarves call "*gornyy med*," drained from a cave-dwelling fungus. The national dish is traditional dwarven porridge called *pyoneer*, often served with a variety of jams and berries.

Philosophical Bedrock

Throughout the Drakran Federation's history, factions allied around different philosophies, and a growing sense of national identity caused ideological debates to become stand-ins for interclan violence.

Particularly prominent ideologies would be identified by their originator's name and a name for the philosophy. The most pervasive philosophy for most of the history of the Drakran Federation was the family of **Armiger** movements. (Different decades had different variants, like Sendov Armiger, Grunor Armiger, etc.)

While there is some variation over the years in how welcome alliances are with other cultures, and how subservient humans need to be, the particular manifestation of different Armiger movements has always stuck to three core ideas. First, cultural homogeneity and oathbound loyalty are the highest virtues. Second, cultures only survive if they have sufficient superiority of weapons or other tools of war. And third, cultures should establish a hierarchy, and should not mingle with others—this mandates distinct borders, clear racial divisions, and precisely codified laws.

Other ideologies would compete against Armigerism (see The Clash of Ideas in Drakr, page 146), but this philosophy was the bedrock of Drakran identity for roughly four centuries.

The Siege of the Shawl

For two decades starting in 380 AOV, Drakr engaged in a protracted war along its northern border. Tundarasne elves had made a pact with frost giants and acquired mass immunity to cold, and so could use the high, wintry peaks as a highway to harass and raid Drakr's wealthiest mines. They besieged the eastern tower fortress Bhad Rhyzhavdut and called forth supernatural winter that starved perhaps a million Drakran humans.

The city Mirsk, already a defensive bastion, ultimately turned the tide of the war by adopting Danoran industrial techniques and producing tens of thousands of muskets. They armed nearly every Drakran family in the mountains and drove the invaders back.

While Risur and Danor spent much of the fifth century AOV fighting for control of the Yerasol Archipelago, Drakr took eight decades to grind down the Tundarasne. They burned hundreds of miles of woodlands and all but obliterated them as a people. It was a scale of death second only to the two holy wars between the Clergy and Elfaivar, but since there was no global fallout like the Great Malice, few outside Drakr know the details of the grim, bitter extermination.

Some survivors of the Tundarasne fled by sea to the subcontinent of Powas, north of Danor. The wild magic of the Malice Lands twisted many into icy monsters who maintain a remote and eerie Court of Winter. Their lives are long, and some fear the return of magic means the Tundarasne will return for vengeance.

The darkly ironic consequence of the Siege of the Shawl was that it led Drakr to build roads and later a rail infrastructure stretching into the north, which created a sense of national unity. Sadly, it also strengthened a tradition of strict punishments where people could be sent for nearly any infraction to work in the war forges of the north. Once the war ended, those same forges produced steel and steam engines for Drakr's navy.

The Spread of Heid Eschatol



Drakr had come together to obliterate an enemy, and as the conflict petered out, people who had participated in the slaughter or toiled to support the machine of war found themselves drawn to the recently published *On the Proper Ending of Things*, by a philosopher and historian named **Vlendam Heid**. The book was a treatise on the myths of the nation and how they continued to influence modern perceptions. Most popular was a section that used the legend of the Lost Riders to explain the Drakran tradition of defining civilizations and eras by how they end.

In the last decades before the Great Eclipse, Drakran culture shifted its focus, consciously looking forward, not with hope, but with a certainty of an inevitable ending. The Great Eclipse made Heid seem a prophet in the eyes of many.

The Great Eclipse

The chancellor in charge when the Great Eclipse began, **Dmitra Takhenova**, was much like all her predecessors: corrupt, a servant of her noble clan and its allies, and a perpetuator of unjust laws and systems designed to benefit those clans. She attended the Forward Symposium in Cherage and personally pledged Drakran forces to the invasion of Risur, seeing the sunless world as a grand opportunity for dwarves (who possess darkvision) to rise in prominence.

The White Tongue



With Dmitra's ambitious gaze and Drakr's soldiers drawn overseas, the nation was unprepared for a crisis at its heart. The megalomaniacal nihilistic eschatologist **Grandis Komanov** allied with resurrected warlords known as the Lost Riders, and she marshaled an army with a promise of glorious debauchery as the world died. Armed with a necrotic superweapon named the *Cyclopean Revelation*, she laid waste to Bhad Rhyzhavdut, slew every citizen and defender, and marched like a reaping scythe toward

Mirsk. She took Bhad Rhyzhavdut's sole survivor, Vlendam Heid, as a hostage, treating the whole slaughter as a protracted philosophical debate, with the end of the world being her greatest argument.

The End of the Age

While Komanov was ultimately defeated, betrayed by one of her generals, the entire disaster was revelatory for Drakr, unearthing ugly truths. Investigations into Chancellor Takhenova's conduct exposed the degree to which the ancient dwarven clans had clinched their stranglehold over Drakran life and law. Inquests discovered multiple misdeeds: filling the bureaucracy with partisan patsies and wastrel scions, embezzling federal funds to pay for building undead-assisted manufactories on lands the government had seized from human villagers (in turn sold to the clans for coppers), and rigging the judicial system to allow the clans to throw their enemies into private prisons.

All of these factors had contributed both to weaknesses in Drakr's defense, and to the multitude of the dispossessed and downtrodden Komanov recruited. Dmitra did not live long enough to be held to account for her role in this; a sniper ventilated her with a fusillade of bullets, mere hours before the end of the Great Eclipse.

The Present

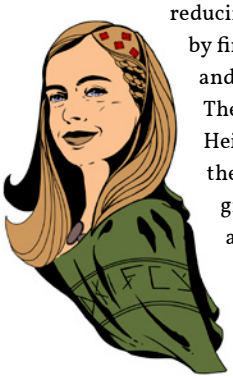
In the days after the sun returned, a coalition of lesser parliamentary parties, who had long been in stringent opposition to the noble clans, united to promote Vlendam Heid as the first chancellor of the new age. Heid thought it temporary, and agreed mostly so he could represent the nation at the Orithean Concordat.

Reformists and Armigers

Initially the dwarven clans found Heid, who had no political experience, easy to control, but he quickly gathered allies and gradually built a **Reformist** faction. Heid's talent was long-term contingent thinking, so he built his early reputation on repairing damage from the eclipse—which the clans generally agreed to, and which demonstrated to the broader nation that he was a competent manager.

Within four years, though, he began rallying public support for changes in the clans' archaic web of privilege. The clans were slow to put aside their competing interests to oppose him, but eventually established the **Armiger** faction. Publicly, they are dedicated to the defense of Drakr; they believe that the chancellor is ill-prepared for defending Drakr against international threats, and they paint his "reforms" as attacks on the clans who are critical in protecting the nation.

Privately and covertly, the Armigers know the public supports reducing clan power, so they oppose the chancellor by finding fissures between parts of his coalition and driving wedges to weaken their resolve. Their professional philosophers chip away at Heid's popular support, partner companies use their capital to disrupt government social programs, and clan-loyal bureaucrats sabotage and mislead Heid wherever possible.



The Armiger Leader of the Opposition is **Utyosova Andreevna**, a clan-born dwarf who fought to defend Mirsk from Komanov's mad army, and in the aftermath took control of a vast arms company. She adheres to the long philosophical tradition of Armigerism. Andreevna is painstakingly building a reputation as a capable economic manager, forger of international trade, and ally of the military. She even wears her company's firegems as jewelry.

Stones of Remembrance

Komanov and her followers slew tens of thousands of people in Bhad Rhyzhavdut and beyond. Today the region is being resettled by former prisoners who escaped from nearby mines at the end of the Great Eclipse. A prominent voice among them is **Markus Brodzki**, an adherent of Heid Eschatol who spent years identifying as many of the dead as possible from records and ruins. He then raised funds from around the Avery Sea to construct a monument to the dead.

All along the banks of the Volgir River, past Bhad Rhyzhavdut and to the sea, dark grey stones line walking trails, tall enough to be seen from the opposite shore. They bear the names of the victims of the area, but also excerpts from both Heid's philosophical teachings about "good endings" and the Dirge of Vekesh's meditations on how no story is a tragedy if you refuse to let it end.

Challenges to Leadership

Despite this opposition, Heid's Reformists feel their work is restoring Drakr and giving its people an opportunity to imagine endings that aren't grim. The chancellor's loyalists investigate the buried crimes of the noble clans. His allies free political prisoners. Week after week, idealistic clan youths come forward to decry their family's misdeeds and aid the Reformist cause.

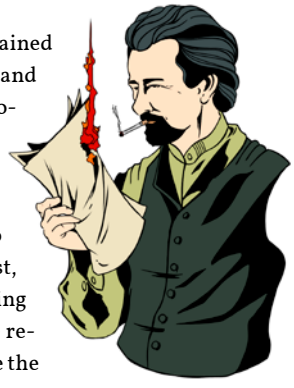
Yet while united in purpose, Heid's faction is divided in methods of execution. His backbenchers constantly demand strange and dramatic reforms, grand social experiments, esoteric research, and impose penalties upon the noble clans that would tempt civil war.

Heid also earned wide condemnation during the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis. Dueling orders from Heid, Andreevna, and their respective government operatives led to confusion and paralysis. Armiger arms were sent to support Crisillyir whilst food and medical supplies were sent to aid Adin Radhasi. When Heid appeared in person for international diplomacy, Andreevna tried to negotiate behind his back to form a military pact to fight Elfaivar. Heid ordered her arrested for violating the *Kamni Zakona*, though eventually he had to release her.

Exasperated, Atto's colonial **Governor Moroz** almost seceded, independently arranging an alliance with a local apsara fey.

The Kuchnost

The final force opposing the Reformists gained their power thanks to the Armigers, and perhaps it will be the noble clans' undoing. The clans partnered with **Tolstyak Besporyadok** of the then-small-time **Kuchnost** criminal syndicate.



Tolstyak is, according to those who have met him, a determined eschatologist, outstanding for his talent for manipulating events to his desired end by predicting the reactions of his foes. His few close allies share the

same ideology, and they have shown a knack for finding the flaws in Drakr's systems and leaders, bringing them to a premature end.

However the best weapon his syndicate possesses is a rival philosophy, **Jaromir Delkovich**'s solipsistic nihilism.

While Heid Eschatol encouraged people to look forward and plan their endings, Delkovich Nihisol—especially the mangled, tainted version that the syndicate spreads—has led people to look to the present day with doubt. Delkovich intended for people to *start* with doubt and use it as a basis for introspection. But the Kuchnost instead made doubt and distrust the goal.

Funded by clan coin, Tolstyak massively expanded his syndicate by scooping up those among Grandis Komanov's old followers who survived the eclipse. They now serve as the syndicate's foot soldiers, and are quite eager to make themselves rich while sowing merry chaos across Drakr.

The Kuchnost are accused of many crimes—blackmailing philosophers, assassinating community leaders, exploiting ill-conceived laws, enacting murders involving "uncontrolled" undead creations—but they are not braggarts. When accused of crimes, they respond with glib disavowals and knowing smiles.

In short order, Tolstyak's partnership with the clans elevated him into one of the most powerful men in Drakr, and his reach extends to other nations. Or perhaps not. His great trick is that he peddles uncertainty and anxiety, and lets any random cutpurse or low-level blackmailer claim allegiance to the syndicate. Most people dare not risk doubting.

The Clans

Four major clans hold sway over easily half of Drakr's dwarves, and command (or purchase) the loyalty of a large fraction of non-dwarven citizens. Other smaller clans grind against each other for influence, struggling to stay in the good graces of the four major clans. Not all dwarves trace their lineage to a clan.

Clan members traditionally take their warlord ancestor's name as their own, and keep as a close secret all records of that warlord's powers, personality, and domain. Drakran society, as a whole, rightly recalls the warlords as profane tyrants who traded the lives of their subjects for power, but each clan finds ways to convincingly explain why *their* ancestor was one of the good ones.

Within the clans, lords tend to hold power for decades, coordinating councilors who control the clan's various financial interests. While seldom the source of major philosophical movements, these four clans have always been skilled at reinventing their images.

Clan Andreevna

The Adreevna are known for food production and hospitality, especially in recruiting Clergy priests for their healing expertise and bringing artists and performers from other countries. They are the only major clan that the broad Drakran public has an overall positive opinion of, thanks to their propaganda talent. They have a knack for creating the illusion of choice by actually owning any business that competes with them; those competitors invariably offer sub-par services. Any *actual* competitors tend to be crushed quickly, with the clan's vast wealth letting them undercut rivals until those businesses go bankrupt.

Clan Vladimirovna

The Vladimirovna are known for weapons manufacturing and the civil service. Centuries of nepotistic appointments have granted the noble clan an immense amount of informal influence over government expenditure, in turn leading to a hefty amount of government orders for Clan Vladimirovna weapons and expertise in arms research.

Clan Volodovna

The Volodovna are known for mining and necromantic reanimation. Its clan councilors are steel barons and coal counts, coordinating the mining of the umpteen tons of ore required every day to feed Drakr's industrial revolution. But these titans of industry are served by cadres of mages who maintain centuries-old rituals that control masses of undead servitors.

Clan Vyacheslavovich

The Vyacheslavovich are known for prisons and railways. The noble clan runs private prisons in a number of discreet locations across Drakr, gladly renting convicts to toil as part of the local workforce in many cities. Prisoners are often forcibly called upon to assist with the construction of Clan Vyacheslavovich's railroads, laying track across innumerable miles of frozen steppe and chiseling railway passages through mountains and hills.

The Government and Its Leaders

The Federal Parliament of Drakr meets in Trekhom, but aside from economic integration and military defense, the national government has generally let each of the nation's five regions control their own affairs.

The Parliament

The distribution of seats is based on a mix of population and monetary payments to the national government coffers, but traditionally each region decided how it wants to assign its parliamentarians. Most were appointed by clan leaders, often with favors being traded and threats being levied.

The Chancellor

Chancellor Vlendam Heid was born into a dwarven family of thinkers and soldiers, recently enriched by a chance investment. His treatise published in 470 AOV, *On the Proper Endings of Things*, founded a new and transformative philosophy: Heid Eschatol.

His ideology encouraged people to learn to end things well, and to be prepared for their own endings. But after witnessing firsthand the horrors of the Great Eclipse and Grandis Komanov's megalomania, his views shifted slightly. He realized he had assumed people had more independence to decide their lives, while in truth most people's choices were constrained by those far more powerful than them. One can be *prepared* for a bad ending, but it is better if one has the freedom to *pursue* a good ending.

After twenty years, much of Heid's aura of righteousness has faded away. His Armiger rivals have repeatedly stymied his political agenda and stained his reputation, and Drakrans are finding other newer philosophies more appealing, encouraging immediate action instead of far-sighted patience.

Critics claim that Chancellor Vlendam Heid loathes his position because it forces him to reconcile political realities when he prefers philosophical purities. This is incorrect; Heid loathes his position because it has forced him to learn to be impersonal. Heid became famous for, during his lectures and speaking tours, abandoning the lectern and walking amidst the aisles, speaking with individual audience members about their fears and hopes, and how they might live better lives. As Chancellor of Drakr, Heid is forced to base decisions on statistics, be they wealth, access to education, or crime rates. His mistakes and those of his parliamentary partners have impersonally harmed his citizens many times.

Because of the stress of his position, Heid has fallen into brief periods of depression over the years, clearing his itinerary for two or three days while he allegedly holes up in his study. In truth, he has hired wizards teleport him out of the country so he can have long conversations on novel topics, to keep his mind fresh. From these outings, he has formed a friendship with **First Minister Remy Duvall** of Danor and **Prime Cardinal Fiore Tullius** of Crisillyir. The tiefling savant offers empathy and understanding in the way only another national leader can, while the young Prime Cardinal has let Heid speak with various shades that Clergy spirit binders can conjure.

Kuchnost

Though not part of government, Tolstyak Besporyadok has nearly as much influence as the chancellor. After nearly two decades doing the clans dirty work, the head of the Kuchnost syndicate is a man in the prime of his power, even while he maintains a variety of pretenses to disguise his true status. Unlike the Armigers or the Reformists, Tolstyak does not use power to pursue an agenda; he uses the agendas of others to accrue power for himself.

Tolstyak has an immense talent for acting. To the noble clans, he plays the patriot; to his criminal allies, he plays a puckish robber-from-the-rich; to the remnants of Grandis Komanov's army, he plays the nihilistic solipsist, solipsistic nihilist, or whatever is convenient to bring someone under his sway long enough for him to discover their weakness and exploit it for leverage. Those few he targets but fails to corrupt, he likes to leave alone, though the public is quick to believe rumors that *those* people must surely be his *closest* minions.

Tolstyak has three sons and four daughters, each of whom has married into a different clan, helping secure his growing influence.

Past and Future

A full and detailed tale of Tolstyak's history is widely circulated, and at least parts of it are definitely fabrications. But some parts of his personal legend are verified, such as that he trained in the witchcraft of the Mirskwood Folk, or that he served as a spy for Clan Andreevna, and protected the father of Utyosova Andreevna when the apocalyptic army of Grandis Komanov assailed the clan's fortress in Mirsk.

He has been accused of being a servant of different global conspiracies, and in various interviews he has confirmed claims of his association with three. He seems to intentionally drop clues about one in particular, about a so-called "Encore Court" that seeks to unwind time to the Great Eclipse and set the world down a different path. People have spotted him checking a pocketwatch with the wrong time, or have received thank you letters for theatrical performances that were on different dates. In one of his homes he has framed a copy of the Flint Tribune with a headline claiming the *RNS Coaltongue* exploded and killed the king, an event which never occurred.

Given his already uncertain past, these oddities have convinced many he's actually from an alternate timeline. When asked about that, however, he scoffed and offered a rare denial.

The Chthonic Canal

One project that Heid and the Armigers agree on is a massive effort to excavate a predominately subterranean canal that connects the "Droplets," the four massive bodies of water that run along Drakr's western border. The Drakran navy currently exists in two halves, the primary on the Avery Sea, but an auxiliary in the north to defend primarily against Malicelander pirates and Empress Duffet-Jierre's Imperium.

The Chthonic Canal will eventually create a passage 250 feet wide, stretching over a hundred miles in multiple segments. The Armigers see it as a way to connect Drakr's two fleets, while Heid imagines the vast untapped prosperity that will come from fostering the growth of ports and shipping along the northern coast of Lanjyr. Critics say that trains overland would be just as effective, and fear that Clan Vyacheslavovich will find excuses to arrest more innocent people to create the workforce they'd need for the project.

Doomsayers warn that Heid should beware what might be buried there.

Frost Giants

Since time immemorial, the frost giants have roamed northern Drakr and the border states beyond as nomadic tribes. These blue colossi hunt giant elks, mountain-river sharks, and mammoths for food. Their greatest warriors ride unusually massive arctic bears with grace and skill, and their stealthiest hunters can move through the snow whilst perfectly camouflaging their tracks.

Drakrans generally see frost giants as savage and either stupid or mad. A common tale tells of a frost giant hunter having a long conversation with his own echoing voices in a valley, eventually following the sound and finding a goat pen, whose bleating he thinks is the source of the voice he heard. Drakrans joke not to whistle or sing on their hikes, lest nearby frost giants hear their voices and follow them to settlements.

To the contrary, frost giants seem to have one ear in the Waking and one in the Dreaming, and they have long seen the liminal spaces between the worlds as their domain. It was the expedition of **Kiegar Arukova** to map the Dreaming that finally brought the Drakran public a clearer sense of these people.

Dreams of Might

The frost giants are led by hunting leaders known as *Khangitche* and war leaders named *Tonbaia Shomorokh*, a "man of might." In frost giant culture, strength is seen as proof of good character, and somehow through their bond with the Dreaming, believing this seems to make it so. Frost giants hoping to be entrusted with important tasks such as hunting, fighting, child-rearing, crafting, navigating, genealogical record-keeping, and meat-smoking will seek the



largest chunk of ice or heaviest rock they can find and spend their days carrying it, to the exclusion of anything else, as a sign to their people of their moral rectitude.

It was this belief that made many frost giants ally with Grandis Komanov, for she commanded the five Lost Rider, also known as the vsadni. After she was defeated by forces of "civilization," many frost giants became interested in joining Drakr, to learn what made them strong enough to defeat the end of the world.

The Illuminated Hunt

Though the frost giants are hardly unified, as far as most Drakrans are concerned, their leader is **Khangitche Daini Ryaaf**. A rare arctech savant among her people, Daini somehow recovered a half-destroyed *wayfarer's lantern* in the ruins of Knütpara and managed to reproduce it, then fuel it with strange and unidentifiable planarite by gleaning meteorites that landed on the pristine white snows and even mining into glaciers to find older samples.

Her people used the lanterns to pacify and only sometimes kill Drakrans who intrude on their territory. Armigers tried to paint them as a threat to rally for a quick war, but Heid instead sent Kiegar Arukova to open negotiations. Though the process took years, as of 521 AOV Knütpara has begun to welcome outsiders. The settlement has become an unlikely, inhospitable nexus of planarite researchers. Ber has taken particular interest, seeing some kinship with the frost giants, who are still seen as savage by many Drakrans.

Tradition's Jape

The frost giants whom most Drakrans deal with are the "commoners" of their people. Much like the dwarves, the frost giants have their own "noble clans" who care immensely about their bloodlines and ancestral grudges going back millennia. But they mostly stay to the Shawl Mountains, the Tunda Peninsula, or even farther north, and the frost giant commoners mock them mercilessly.

Despite being "cultured" and skilled at memorizing their histories, the distant frost giant nobles are insistent on keeping their culture frozen, in the same shape it ever was. Seven centuries ago some proud frost giant king lost a toe to infection, and even today every adult frost giant noble must amputate that same toe, because of tradition.

Among Drakran Reformists, evoking the ignorance of frost giant nobility is a way of criticizing the powerful dwarven clans. The clans assert their merit to rule through their traditions too, after all.

Trekhom

Trekhom is a city unafraid of change. It remade itself into labyrinthine tunnels and a great harbor to accommodate Drakr's new federation, and remade itself again to accommodate Danor's industrial revolution. Chimneys rise from manufactories hidden below the earth, belching gray smog high into the sky. Great new philosophies and social movements now clash within; they fight to redefine the city, Drakr, and this new age of revolution.

History

When Triegenes began his march to defeat the Demonocracy, he struck Trekhom's guardian dragon from the sky, and his followers purged the settlement's tunnels of the taint of its ruling warlord. Cultists of profane Abyssal faith either repented or burned. Cheering cityfolk threw vile tomes and relics onto the pyres, along with records of clan tyranny and all history of the city's origins.

Later, the newly-formed human-dwarven federation needed a capital the clans had not already claimed. They chose humble Trekhom, beginning its rise as a modern metropolis. Mirsk remains Drakr's industrial heart, but Trekhom is the nation's cultural head.

Geography

The city occupies the eastern side of the strait of *Pozvonochnik Drakona*, the "Dragon's Spine." Its most eye-catching geographic features are its great towers and lighthouses, and its immense docks that extend partially into caves within the coastal cliff face, which is carved with the *Kamni Zakona*, the Stones of Law.

Every morning, a great fishing fleet emerges from these docks, bearing intricate tapestry-flags with familial coats of arms. The pier is also the stronghold of the Drakran navy.

Trekhom is fed by the fruits of Drakr's southern steppes: vast herds of goats and dark-furred pigs, protected by human overseers mounted on horses and reindeer. These humans tend to *plant-growth*-enriched farms where they collect berries and the honeycombs of a particularly hardy species of bee. These food sources flow into the immense network of train-tracks now criss-crossing Drakr, with Trekhom as the central hub. Sturgeon from the far north and tea from the far south can be brought as easily to Trekhom as local pork and caviar.



Architecture

Though it is the nation's capital, visitors will spot no capital building as they roam Trekhom's streets. The parliament meets underground, though the ground above is one of the city's few parks, its corners marked by eight obelisks, symbolic of the towers that long defended the nation's western border from the Malice Lands.

Indeed, far more of Trekhom is underground than above. Many dwellings are wholly constructed within the earth, and even aboveground houses often incorporate multiple cellar levels. The poorest of the city live at ground level, where they must contend with the grimy pollution belched out by subterranean manufactories. Those more well-off have the luxury of living underground, where ancient runes cycle fresh air in from the city's outskirts.

Families and businesses pay taxes to the city's local government, which, in turn, constantly builds and expands a structurally-sound undercity of well-lit and spacious tunnels. An individual district in this undercity is known as a *serdtse*, or "heart." The *serdtsa* are each distinct communities with their own traditions, histories, and codes of conduct. Naturally, this unity leads to competition with other *serdtsa* centered around philosophy; each *serdtse* pushes its own subtle reinterpretation of a philosophical movement, and constantly revises its stances as perspectives change and old generations die off.

Noble clan leaders extol the *serdtse* system as a stalwart simulation of clan life: being part of a wider community that mixes family, economic, and loyalty ties. Naturally, though, they claim a *serdtse* is still infinitely inferior to a *true* dwarven clan.

Dark Towers

The prideful dwarven clans of Trekhom would not tolerate living inside *serdtsa*, nor could they bear living at ground level with the city's grimiest and poorest. No, the dwarven nobles live in the many tall towers spread across Trekhom, high above the pollution. While each clan has some presence in the city, three clans claim to control the tallest tower in Trekhom. Colloquially they're called the Vol, the Vla, and the Vyach.

Tower of Death and Stone

Volodovna Tower claims to be the tallest by virtue of its depth. While it is only 300 feet tall above ground, it sinks a further 400 feet into the earth, its base resting atop a sturdy vein of granite.

Within Volodovna Tower, clan scions quietly learn to control reanimated bodies and command them to perform physical labor. Scholars from other nations decry this necromancy, claiming it is fueled by the torment of the spirits those bodies once housed and keeps those spirits from finding a rest in the afterlife. Drakrans treat it as a given that graveyards are robbed for bodies by the Volodovna. They would cremate their remains, but cremation is illegal in many parts of the country.

The Tower's largest public event is the Teardrop Ball, where an entire iceberg is hauled out of the sea, set up in the Tower's massive foyer, and then extravagantly sculpted into an enormous ballroom. The clan pays handsomely for ice that happens to trap interesting corpses, especially those of monsters.

Tower of Ink and Shot

Vladimirovna Tower claims to be the tallest by virtue of its belfry. It's 400 feet tall at its roof, but a great steel spire rises an additional 175 feet. Attempts to secure the record by climbing the spire and ringing the mithral bells have repeatedly failed due to slips, lightning strikes, and an alleged curse placed on the tower by those who died in its construction.

The Tower's largest public event is the Trekhom Arms Festival, an enormous gathering of representatives from arms manufacturing corporations, workshops and mad inventors. It's so large it spills out into the streets of the city, attracting amateur gunsmiths and all manner of mercenaries.

A particular concern for Reformists is that government bureaucrats are invited and then fêted with applause, fine drink, and finer caviar. They're then prodded for information and persuaded into making favorable deals on arms contracts.

Tower of Chains and Trains

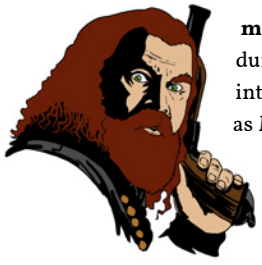
Vyacheslavovich Tower is the tallest by virtue of its impressive height above ground. Its apex soars to 550 feet, and it is stabilized by immense struts such that the entire complex seems to cling to the ground like a great stone claw.

Hidden within Vyach Tower is the immense Dark Archive. Aside from voluminous clan histories and lockboxes, the Archive contains records of all prisoners overseen by the clan, including the many political prisoners and whistleblowers who opposed clan interests and were unceremoniously gulaged.

To Boldly Go

One of Trekhom's newest and most exciting buildings is the headquarters of the ***Planarnaya Razvedyvatel'naya Kompaniya*** planar exploration agency. Commonly called the *Planarnaya*, or just the PRK, this government-owned project cleared a slum near the city's rail yard and erected a 200-foot-tall cube of cement, named the Dock.

The purpose of the PRK is to explore other worlds and acquire their resources for Drakr. They study well-known magic like *plane shift*, construct vehicles that can travel to the planets, purchase enchanted objects that lead to pocket dimensions, and send expeditions to explore interplanar portals hidden around the world.



Missions Director of the PRK is **Ilarion Vladimirovna**, a wizard and ballistics engineer who during the Great Eclipse conducted some reckless interplanar travel to the now-absent world known as Mojang, where he claims to have had a revelation about the fundamental nature of planarite. He has described his mission at the PRK as working to let Drakr sit upon a tower so high that the nation can look down upon the entire world.

Politics

The leader of Trekhom is **Mayor Losevskaya Fyodor**. A dwarven judge who was forcibly retired after she expressed Reformist opinions in her judgments, she was later appointed mayor by Chancellor Heid through some legal legerdemain following a scandal involving the previous mayor.

Let Us Welcome Controversy

One of Trekhom's most infamous attractions is *Knigi, Grudi, Bingi i Vzryvy* (for "Books, Boobs, Bongs, and Booms"). This controversial shop caters to all sorts of marginally legal desires, and its adjacent beer house welcomes all manner of scoundrels.

Knigi holds a great library of controversial tomes and scrolls covering crackpot theories, such as the self-obsessed writings of Grandis Komanov and a series of graphic novels charting the schemes of various alleged conspiracies. Its catalog of pornography is a test bed of innovative technologists experimenting with *asomatous canvas projectors*. They also sell a variety of drugs, including powerful hallucinogens refined from planarite for literal out-of-this-world experiences. And, of course, there is the weaponry: racks and vaults of any armament one could desire.

The store's manager **Kordov Delonovri** insists that any claims their products are involved in sex slavery, illegal trafficking, or money laundering are simply Kuchnost lies. They peddle titillation and transgression, he says, not cruelty and suffering.

Red-haired, arch-eyebrowed, and possessed of a voice so cold that it can freeze the guilty to their bones (some say quite literally), Fyodor's priority has been to usher in municipal reforms so that Trekhom can be an example for the rest of Drakr of what functional government looks like.

A test case for Fyodor's new laws will be the unpleasant scion **Zorin Volodovna**. A contrarian socialite and star of Trekhom gossip broadsheets, his embrace of the Hardt Multitude philosophy of worker solidarity (see page 147) has made him *persona non grata* at clan events. Zorin has recently come forward, claiming he has evidence that will expose the deepest lies of the Armiger faction. Clan leaders and their Kuchnost operatives have been targeting Zorin ever since, and Fyodor's guards have been protecting their unpleasant whistle-blower day and night as the Reformists' investigation proceeds.

Another pressing issue Fyodor hopes to solve is public distrust in journalism. She managed to persuade one of the *serdtse* neighborhoods to enact a law mandating absolute truthfulness within its boundaries, which is enforced by closely guarded pillars carved from an obscure form of planarite that resembles purple-stone with green veins. Ber's *executores dola liberta* have sent a monitor to determine what their formal policy should be on such matters. No sooner had she reached the city than people started whispering that she was seen meeting with Kuchnost leader Tolstyak Besporyadok.

Mirsk

Once the lair of an undead titan, Mirsk now dispatches mountains of steel goods to the rest of northern Lanjyr's industry. Miners and forge-workers toil amidst smoke and dirt, many of them functionally slaves of private prisons. Accidents and "accidents" are legion, and morticians extort families to keep their deceased loved ones from joining the rumored ranks of necromantically-reanimated miners. Nowhere is the influence of the old dwarven clans and the Armigers more sharply felt; Mirsk is the stronghold of their avarice and cruelty.

History

The cave-riddled mountains near Mirsk show signs of habitation and mining from before the invention of writing. The area's access to enormous seams of coal, iron, copper, and other valuable metals, plus a vast expanse of high-quality lumber in the rolling forests, made it a center of wealth throughout history, hindered only by its lack of river or port.

The clans long ago made accomodations to share control of Mirsk and its nearby mountains, but they each built their own massive bunker fortresses to withstand the occasional war. Railroads have now connected Mirsk's natural resources to the rest of the world, and the clans have both welcomed the extra riches and rushed to hide some of their unsavory secrets in these underground castles, lest outsiders try to make them change their ways.

During the Great Eclipse, the doomsday army of Grandis Komanov gathered on the outskirts of Mirsk and slaughtered many of the unwalled settlements, but they were defeated before they breached the clan strongholds.

Geography and Architecture

The city most people think of as Mirsk sits nestled in rolling hills between the Mirskwood taiga and a group of four low mountains. The largest of these mountains, Mount Mirsk, has been immensely hollowed out in one of the greatest feats of engineering in Lanjyr's history. An open-air passage several hundred feet in diameter and over a thousand feet tall pierces from the mountain's pinnacle to its stony roots. Astounding forge palaces from the Demonocracy and earlier ring the maw.

Locals call it ***Pustaya Bashnya*** (for "empty tower"), whereas the the Clergy named it *Vulkan Darvaza* ("volcano gate"), evoking the image of a rift to hell. Though the mountain is not volcanic, forges constantly emit a constellation of fiery light, as if the heart of Mount Mirsk were burning.

Other excavations are less grand but no less expansive. Mirsk sits at the center of an ant's nest of mining tunnels, many serving long-forgotten purposes, called the ***Polosti*** (for "Hollows"). The city's Tekton Council employs professional delvers to maintain a thorough map of all these passages; Mirsk laws gives the council authority to forbid new digs they believe would threaten the integrity of the ground.

The Hollows need constant patrol thanks to natural cave-ins, sabotaged support struts, and three destructive earthquakes over the centuries. Delvers face undead, monstrous creatures, skulking criminals, and secretive clan factories run off-books. Miners spread rumors that somewhere amidst the honeycomb is a passage leading to an underworld where immortal dreamers sleep cushioned by the bones of a drowned empire.

Structures of Note

While Drakran architecture is known for its stark aesthetic, Mirsk's rail station is a standout exception. A majestic wing-like structure of white steel and blue glass seems to float above the main rail platforms and associated buildings, connected to the ground in only two spots which somehow have sufficient counterweight for the awning to defy gravity. Prisoners toil each night to wipe soot and snow from the windows and keep the painted metal pristine.

The Lost Riders

After most of the Demonocracy-allied dwarven tyrants had fallen to Triegenes, the last five warlords gathered at a fiery tower in the Shawl Mountains. As they camped and discussed a plan for war, one of their archmage servants warned that a winter storm stronger than any in history was approaching. Afraid of being stranded from their battle, the five warlords mounted their various dread steeds and rode forth. But when the storm fell upon them, they lost their direction.

Too cruel and convinced of their invincibility to die, the five continued riding until they vanished forever into the blizzard. For over a millennium the dwarves of Drakr told tales of the **lost riders** (also known as the **vsadni**), continuing to search for the battle that they should have fought and won. Folk tales warned never to offer aid to lost travelers, lest you anger their pride and earn their wrath.

During the Great Eclipse, the vsadni returned in gargantuan bodies made of meteorites and cold flame. The lost riders acted as heralds of Grandis Komanov, but when she was defeated outside Mirsk, one of the five—the warlord **Tzertze**—turned on his brethren, his betrayal having been bought with a promise of a place of prestige in the aftermath. He lives today in luxury, renowned for his old-fashioned tenor. His grand war stories of a time when Drakr seemed far mightier make him an odd sort of celebrity among the dwarven clans, one of which found a way to give him a normal-sized dwarf body, though he can control his gigantic body as long as it is within sight.

The weapons of the four defeated vsadni are kept in a museum in Mirsk, but stories of the riders remain popular, as do theories that the other riders survived as well and have joined with this or that nation, still seeking to conquer Drakr.



Of newer fame is the Domik Avantyurista—the Adventurer's Lodge, a narrow two-hundred-foot tall tower shaped like an axe-head, owned by the world-renowned **Kiegar Arukova**. The building is guarded by frost giants she befriended in her past expeditions. She helps recruit adventurers from around Lanjyr to help with the surveying needs of Mirsk's underground, and she tasks particularly talented explorers to travel the world and bring back treasures and tales to share at her exhibitions.



She is currently filling her library with the writings of monster hunters and mountain climbers and mystic seers. She has announced that before she dies, she wants to have a collection that can be definitively called *The Adventurer's Guide to Surviving Anything*.

Spirit of Reform

Two disconnected efforts are being made to reduce the grip the clans have on Mirsk.

The Sredi Ravno ("Among Equals") are an ongoing legal effort to free prisoners from their mining servitude, spearheaded by **Siyan Aleksi**, a hammer-wielding dwarven lawyer who despite sharing a goal with the chancellor's Reformists is dismissive of Heid Eschatol. Aleksi's shame is that in his youth he was a follower of Grandis Komanov, though he claims he did not contribute to any violence during the Great Eclipse. Still a bit of a radical, he follows the axialist philosophy, believing that morality is not based on perspective or context; rather, deeds can be measured along a two-axis system: lawful-to-chaotic, and good-to-evil. He shaves his beard to divorce himself from what he sees as Drakr's evil tradition of moral relativism.



A crusader with a compassionate heart, Aleksi works to bring Mirsk's formal legal code in line with his magically-assisted research into the nature of reality, and he has gathered many to his cause. They refuse to take actions that either violate their own moral code or Drakr's legal code, but through investigations, boycotts, and protests have managed to get judges to re-try and release hundreds of prisoners.

Recently Aleksi was approached by Dame Cozzi of the Family crime syndicate, who wants to cooperate to root out the Kuchnost, but the lawyer's code keeps him from directly coordinating with her, no matter how strategically useful the alliance would be.



Meanwhile, a group of escaped miners known as the Lovor ("Laureled") use more desperate measures. Their leader, a young **Zubovna Tattar**, is a Mirskwoodswoman who was a forge slave for the first twenty years of her life, forced to work alongside the animated corpses of her parents. She is said to be funded by sympathizers of the Hardt Multitude philosophy, who hope to prompt worker revolts.

The Lovor mark themselves with certain hair braids, and are adept at passing unnoticed into mines and prisons, where they deliver relief supplies and arrange accidents to kill particularly cruel wardens. They have raised their public profile by turning their violence upon moderately infamous local figures who had managed to escape justice. To kill one mortician accused of reanimating the dead, they captured and smuggled zombies and locked them in the man's house in the middle of a blizzard.

Likewise, they publicly hanged the foreman of the Mirsk Railyard for sabotaging trains carrying goods for companies that compete with the clans. Then they dragged his body behind a train, which they derailed into a Clan Vyacheslavovich depot. The whole event was captured with autosomous cameras, and commemorative photographs were mass produced and sold throughout the city.

Tattar recently met with Kiegar Arukova, who said the young human asked about guardian-fey from the Drakran Dreaming, and had a bold plan to form a pact with an ancient "house spirit" of *Pustoy Vulkan*, much like the monarchs of Risur maintain a pact with that nation's fey titans.

Mirskwood Folk

After centuries of indentured workers farming and herding within the Mirskwood, the railroad has made it more economical for Mirsk to bring in food from elsewhere. Reclusive Mirskwood villages—mostly human—are slowly reclaiming their land. It is a rare place of agreement between Reformists who desire more autonomy for the locals, and Armigers who were tired of the expense of maintaining order among folk they see as supersititious witches.

In most ways, the Mirskwoodsmen culture never assimilated with the rest of Drakr, but their shamans did adopt Drakran customs of philosophy and rhetoric. While they want to keep their own traditions, they see philosophers as warriors, and ideology as weapons that can keep the powerful Drakran clans from threatening them. Many prisoners who escape servitude in Mirsk seek refuge among the Mirskwoodsmen, but if they cannot provide a compelling case for why they should live, they find themselves fed to the villagers' dogs, and their skulls tossed into mountain streams.

Politics

The mayor of Mirsk is the young dwarven clan scion **Abara Vyacheslavovich**. Ruthless and possessed of a keen intellect, she was once hailed as one of Clan Vyacheslavovich's future leaders, but in recent years she fell under the sway and adopted the distorted version of Delkovich Nihisol espoused by the leader of the Kuchnost. She began feeding blackmail to the syndicate, and gradually replaced officials who might check her power. Before the clans' representatives in Mirsk realized it, Abara had practically turned the city into a weapon for her mentor and idol, Tolstyak Besporyadok.

Tolstyak maintains three lavish residences, each on a different mountain around Mirsk. One is full of polished marble, statues of Clergy gods, and religious scripture. One has walls of inlaid obsidian, a hearth built upon the bones of a dragon tyrant, and a library of demonic scrolls. The last is in a rich Risuri style, with polished slate, viridian hangings, and a bronze crown atop a throne that sits in an otherwise empty front yard. Tolstyak has commanded his servants to steal artifacts to help him fill these estates. He has his eyes particularly set on the diary of Triegenes, the egg of a dragon, and the crown of Risur's Skyseer-Queen Iain Waryeye.

Knütpara

Once the center of an alliance between Drakr's profane warlords and Crisillyir's demon lords, ancient "eternal bastion" of Knütpara is now frozen within an enormous glacier and being slowly excavated. The frozen city today hosts an uneasy peace between Risuri, Drakran, and frost giant leaders, where fabulous planar wealth mixes with draconic, demonic, and necromantic relics.

History

"Gaze ye upon Knütpara, eternal bastion of the Demonocracy, built to withstand any army's siege." So do the stones declare at the edge of an ice-cloaked valley in the Shawl Mountains. Long ago Drakr's ruling warlords traded the lives of their servants, and from the Demonocracy received unholy magic and draconic minions.

On his march to defeat the demon lords to the east, Triegenes destroyed Knütpara by calling down massive meteorites in an act beyond all known mortal magics. Over the centuries, a glacier swallowed the city remnants. After being unearthed by Risuri archaeologists, they now excavate planarite of worlds of the distant and wider multiverse, divvying the bounty between Risur, Drakr, and the frost giant tribes.

Geography

Most of the city is hidden beneath the glacier, where tunnels trace paths to dozens of buildings, each of which is a trove of history and sometimes horror. Meltwater runs like a river throughout the city, creating shining waterfalls that feed perfectly pure pools. Above the glacier's surface, however, jut three towers.

Demons

As the center of a pact with the Crisillyiri Demonocracy, Knütpara holds many demonic artifacts. The Demon Tower looms inky black, its roof adorned with a crown of stone branches like an elm tree. Here Drakr's warlords learned profane magic and bound many of their subjects' spirits to doors within this tower. Their masters are dead, and in their absence, the tower doors make demands before they will open: solving a riddle, battling undead guardians, or singing or reciting poetry.

Dragons

Archaeologists speculate that it was at Knütpara that the Demonocracy first gifted dragons to Drakr's warlords. The Dragon Tower is adorned with carved stone dragons, and filled with ancient cracked eggshells and discarded teeth. It was clearly intended as a breeding aerie. The prize of the tower is a steel-bound book on techniques of draconic breeding and rearing.

Death

The barred windows of the Tower of Death overlook a perilous ravine melted into the glacier. Once a torture prison, the tower was discovered to contain detailed records of confessions, casting a wretched light on what made someone a foe of the Demonocracy.

Politics

Per a remarkably awkward treaty, struck after Drakr discovered Risuri archaeologists unearthing the city and trading planarite with frost giants, the city has three leaders.

Professor Xambria Meredith of Risur's Pardwight University is the nominal leader of the Risuri expedition; however, she is often away on her other main project in the Beran city Ursaliña, and **Commander Myrna Ffrewyll** leads instead. Ffrewyll oversees a detachment of fifty guards, and as the representative of Risuri power, it is her role to be an iron fist within a silken glove. Her control over the stupendously valuable planarite mine is absolute, but she makes every effort to befriend the Drakran and frost giant leaders, and to build the groundwork for future alliances.

Polkovnik Andrij leads the Drakran contingent. An old veteran of the long wars against the Tundarasne elves, he carries out his duties overseeing the treaty with a lifeless efficiency. As a devotee of Heid Eschatol, the opportunity to examine a fallen city from so long ago is the only thing that truly rouses his interest. He spends his time off-shift carefully excavating tools and carvings within the Demon Tower: attempting to determine what the daily lives of its inhabitants were, and what manner of death they would have chosen for themselves.

Though she has the least political power backing her, frost giant technologist **Khangitche Daini Ryaaf** is clearly the person who has the most say over how Knütpara's planarite deposits are divvied up. She sees the city's wealth as belonging to her people, and she shares the planarite only because it is the only good her people have access to that the other nations care to trade for now. But she works methodically to tease out the secrets of rare planarite, hoping a breakthrough will mean protection for her folk from old Drakran hostilities.



Though she directs a workforce of only a dozen frost giants, her respectful leadership and deep catalog of oral history tales has attracted a following of over fifty non-giants, many of them researchers from Ber. Together they are committed to ensuring the frost giants are not taken advantage of.

The Clash of Ideas in Drakr

There are many philosophies in Drakr, with four most prominent today

Armiger

The clans heavily promoted various lines of the Armiger family of philosophy and considered the payment of wandering philosophers as a vital investment. After the Siege of the Shawl, though, exhaustion with war and a lack of a clear foe created an opening for a nationwide shift in philosophical beliefs. The latest version, Utyosova Armiger, borrows some elements of Isobel Muktism (see below) to extend armigerism's concept of "defense" to include material prosperity with a clear sense of economic competition, not cooperation.

Muktism

Another prominent philosophical movement in Drakr looks to an Elfaivaran philosopher for inspiration, and broadly define themselves as transcendental libertarians. They take the name "muktists," after the concept of *mukti*, which is a form of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release.

Muktists promote three goals: freedom from shame by living virtuously, freedom from toil by achieving material prosperity, and freedom from desire by experiencing and understanding as much of the world as possible.

Muktism was popularized in Drakr by **Isobel Travers**, an Elfaivaran woman who grew up enslaved by a Danoran family but who never felt at home with her own people once she was rescued. She had gone from being a trophy bride to being treated like a fragile child, always in need of protection. The return of the gulmohar gave her the confidence to leave Elfaivar and seek a place in the world where she could feel like she was in control.

Isobel's muktism began with old Elfaivaran religion but added an intense value on letting people structure their lives as they want. Muktists often seek reforms that localize power in preference to central government rule over a vast area of people with disparate desires. However, they recognize that small communities are vulnerable to the whims of larger groups unless multiple small groups coordinate to counterbalance larger groups' power.

Most muktists see the philosophy as personal, not political, but the fact that muktists often adopt Elfaivaran aesthetics—food, music, and dress especially—has led to a misconception that the group is related to the Vekeshi mystics and involved in assassinations and terrorism. Among Drakr's ruling class, muktist ideology is seen as foreign—a greater threat to stability than Delkovich Nihisol. Indeed, muktists lament that they didn't discover the philosophy before the Great Eclipse, because they suspect they'll need a similar period of great upheaval to break the power of Drakr's central government enough that their political aspirations can be realized.

Many muktists are organizing to create "exclaves" in the Malice Lands, while others are agitating to turn the Yerasol Archipelago into a confederation of states. Isobel has reached out to old Elfaivaran warriors of the diaspora, trying to recruit a sort of distributed militia force, committed to defending any community that is at risk from trying to buck federal control. Already a muktist exclave just across the Drakran border in the Malice Lands was crushed and annexed by a nearby Drakran clan lord. The conflict leaves Chancellor Heid the dilemma of punishing a powerful figure he needs political support from, or earning the ire of both the various Malice States and of countless muktists around his country.

continued on next page

Letter to Risur's King Baldrey During the Great Eclipse

I, Vlendam Heid, son of Anisim Heid, son of Modya Bohm, dictate this letter to professional stenographer Dema Derellova, whose keen fingers won't type on anything but a mastercraft Unalako brand mecha-typograph. It was personally delivered courtesy of a novel understanding of the teleportation mechanics of this new world. May you have the wisdom and calm to face your coming end.

In a previous correspondence I alerted you to the threat of Grandis Komanov, a radical who had perverted the intent of my philosophical writings and in the process acquired a following of depraved and disgruntled ne'er-do-wells. You might be imagining now what the recent changes in the cosmos could have done for her recruitment efforts, but I assure you you have underestimated her success.

If I may get to my point, I am in the city of Bhad Ryzhavdut in the far east of Drakr, and we are under siege. Scouts report she is digging for something in the Old City, and we suspect she will transition from siege to slaughter once she has whatever she is excavating.

Already several thousand citizens of this small city have defected, enticed by Komanov's promise of unadulterated freedom to follow their most base urges. She claims the end of the world is nigh, and I admit it is hard to dispute her. As you appear to be the foremost experts in averting calamity, I write to you in the hope you will make this your problem to address. Should you decline, I have witnessed your heroics and, with the assumption that your absence is for honorable reasons, I shall not begrudge you. But humbly I entreat you to not let this madwoman lead my nation to an ill-deserved end. Wherever your duty takes you, prepare yourself that your best efforts may fail, and that you might perish in undertaking your duty.

Your friend at the end of the world,
Vlendam Heid

Delkovich Nihisol

Of all the philosophies with broad support in modern Drakr, the fastest-growing is a brand of solipsistic nihilism called Delkovich Nihisol. The philosophy's creator, **Jaromir Delkovich**, regularly tries to clarify that the name reverses the emphasis—it is a solipsistic approach to nihilism (not a nihilistic approach to solipsism, which is obviously nonsensical!)—but the portmanteau "Nihisol" is reminiscent of "Eschatol," and indeed the public seems drawn more to solipsism and the idea of doubting reality.

Delkovich started with the idea that the world's survival after the Great Eclipse was so unlikely that perhaps the world *did* end, and all that we experience now is an illusion, or some other creation of our minds. As such, nothing has any value inherently—nothing has *truth* inherently—which frees people to decide what matters to them, as part of a gradual process of not simply *knowing* that nothing matters, but *embracing* that idea.

Delkovich Nihisol encourages rejection of authority and faith as well as abandonment of arguments couched in morality. But it also contains a sort of proto-psychoanalysis, directed solely inward (rather than from the perspective of a doctor helping a patient). Adherents learn to study their emotions and thoughts, and to seek the root causes of their drives and desires. If the world is a creation in one's mind, then the question becomes: why did your mind create this *particular* reality?

Many old Drakrans scoff at how Delkovich's writings deemphasize aesthetics and morals, putting nearly all the attention on epistemology. They warn that, much like how poor understanding of eschatology led to violence, there is a similar threat that solipsistic nihilists will turn to indulgent mayhem, thinking such actions will have no consequences.

Popular among criminals, this philosophy is actively advocated by the Kuchnost crime syndicate. They use this seed of solipsism to make people doubt all manner of things that stand in the way of the criminal enterprise.

If you can't be certain the world itself exists, how can you trust local police and judges? How can you know your mayor or governor isn't being bribed by nefarious groups? And if you're a politician yourself, how can you know your rival isn't going to outmaneuver you by working with the Kuchnost? It is smart, then, to doubt everything, except the Kuchnost, who are villains and murderers, but who will always keep their word.

Heid Eschatol

Heid's *On the Proper Endings of Things* gave birth to a whole field of academic study devoted to finding the perfect way to end friendships and romances, business relationships, wars, serialized literature, and even one's own life. When the sun vanished and the Lost Riders returned at the vanguard of an apocalyptic winter, adherents of eschatology had ample opportunities to find practical applications for his philosophy.

Tragically, many who only understood the surface idea embraced the end of the world with violent abandon, which led to hundreds of thousands of murders. But, as a credit to Heid, when the Great Eclipse ended, people who had survived what appeared the end of the world, who had witnessed whole villages and citizens obliterated by doomsday cultists, who had lost loved ones—were able to find closure and not despair.

Certainly, vast psychological wounds persist in Drakr, but far less than would have without eschatology teaching how to move on after something ends. Nevertheless, many think it is time for eschatology's grip on the nation's consciousness to end.

Other Philosophies

Many Drakrans reject Delkovich Nihisol but promote various teachers of **absurdism**, which acknowledges that life has no meaning, but does not encourage people to find their own meaning or value system. Instead it says that people must accept this condition—this *absurdity*—and understand that any meaning one finds is transient and should not be over-valued.

The founder of **axialism**, by contrast, claims that briefly during the Great Eclipse he was able to sense cosmic forces that dictated clear good and evil, clear order and chaos. Axialists often pursue study of planar travel and divine magic, in hopes of categorizing morality the way that a geologist might categorize minerals.

Absurdists and axialists have little support from scholars, but they are quite active in Drakr's artist community. Their conflicts play out in street murals and architecture and even the designs of household appliances like irons—one side radical and subversive, the other grandiose and triumphant.

The techno-racist **clannism** movement is a radical form of armigerism. It seeks to eject non-dwarves from Drakr and actively retells historical events from a dwarf-centric perspective, with emphasis on the eternal cycle of dwarven suffering. Clannists believe the cycle of suffering can be broken through technology, when dwarves stop relying on the labor of humans and support themselves through industry and machine labor.

The somewhat confusingly named novelists (who believe in **novelism**) have the view that new things are always being discovered, which they take as metaphysical evidence that the world has no end to its novelty or invention. They have a stoic opposition to technological development, positing that there is no end, nor even any progress, in understanding the world, and so effort should not be wasted in science or philosophy. Rather, people should simply accept what is, since no discovery truly changes anything.

Hestra Xenoism seeks to use arcanotechnological discovery to give people the ability to alter themselves in body and mind. Drakran culture is very conservative, and xenoists—who seek to replace limbs with magical prostheses or even body parts of other creatures—sometimes find themselves arrested for "insanity" and locked away "for their own good."

In the field of political philosophy, **Beirom Mazumova**'s theory of distributed power is becoming popular as a pathway for Drakr to challenge Risur for regional supremacy. It advocates for two prongs of engagement. The first seeks ways to produce low-level everyday fear in Drakr, to motivate vigorous work to prepare against ambiguous threats. The second is to undercut Risur's alliances around the Avery Sea by identifying stable power structures and offering support to groups who seek to usurp them. The goal is not really to let those weaker groups rise to power, but rather to make them perpetual thorns in the side of Risur's allies, forcing Risur to confront an impossible number of challenges at once, which will make it appear weak.

Finally, the **Hardt Multitude** philosophy declares it a moral imperative to create a global economic web where everyone is affected by the affairs of the rest of the world, with the ultimate goal of global civil war triggered by the working class acting in solidarity. Though few public figures admit to holding this belief, conspiracy theorists claim battle lines are already being drawn between global secret societies. Chancellor Heid has joked that if Drakran clans want to avoid being overthrown, they had best work fast to build colonies in the planets above, so they have a fallback if this globe's civil war goes badly for them.



Other Places of Interest

- **Balingrad** is a city on the Tunda peninsula, famous for its whaling fleet.
- For centuries, **Bhad Rhyzhavdut** has guarded traffic along the Volgir River, where frigid mines in the Shawl Mountains feed ore to the eastern sea. It still serves as a bastion against invasion by frost giants of the north. Most residents live in subterranean compounds dug into the hills alongside the river. The highest hill rises 500 feet above the river, and from its peak rises a 200-foot-high tower fortress. The fortress and hill still has a gaping wound from where the doomsday army of Grandis Komanov disintegrated a 20-foot swath hundreds of feet long. The city's population was butchered; the current residents are mostly prisoners escaped from nearby mines.
- **Graftower** is an academy of arcane spellcasters on an island surrounded by sea ice, off Drakr's northwestern peninsula. The school centers its study on entropy and destruction, and sorcerers who struggle to control destructive energy within them can practice shattering glaciers on a frozen sea. The cult leader Komanov studied here. Students are encouraged to be cremated upon death, and to have their ashes bricked into the walls of the school's tower, but Komanov's remains were never recovered.
- **Koffimsov** is a small farm city south of the Mirskwood. Seen as a perfectly average Drakran city, it is host to annual philosophical debates, where new movements test if they'll find support of the broader public.
- **Lukala** is a city that lies where the Mirskwood reaches the eastern coast. It is seen as a place where outsiders of Drakr tend to congregate, and is often the source of extreme philosophies.
- The **Mirskwood** is a series of forests that sprawl more than three hundred miles in hilly land south of the Shawl Mountains. Villages here of humans known as Mirskwood Folk have long resisted control of the clans, but they have never formed a unified nation of their own. Most begrudgingly identify as Drakrans and earn tolls by maintaining roads and rail refueling depots in the woods.
- **Morteshka**, the valley of windmills, sits mostly abandoned about twenty miles southwest of Mirsk. Massive windmills, older than the Demonocracy, form a ring around this wooded valley, creaking and spinning still despite their decrepit state. People who enter the valley report animals speaking with the voices of dead relatives, and shards of crystal that lie in the center of rings of dead plants. The few safe paths are marked by old guttered candles, with warding symbols in the demonic tongue chalked onto the trees, though no one ever sees who refreshes them after the rains.
- The **Orbal Coast** is a stretch of land west of the Tunda peninsula, which lies on the Malice Lands. The region is heavily militarized, and hosts the dachas of many wealthy clansmen.
- **Pretba** is a heavily militarized city built on an inland sea to defend against the Malice Lands. Excavators for the Chthonic Canal operate from here.
- The **Shandau** is a snowy but temperate region on the east coast, north of Mirskwood. Nearly all the original population either joined Grandis Komanov's apocalyptic slaughter during the Great Eclipse or fell victim to it. After the eclipse, tens of thousands of prisoners in mountain slave mines escaped and occupied the area. Vlendam Heid has cultivated the loyalty of these people, try to rehabilitate the region's new reputation as being awash with crime.
- The **Shawl Mountains** are tall, frigid, and widely spaced. Many old Tundarasne outposts still have active treacherous magic that imperil travelers.
- The **Stena** is a temperate region west of Trekhom bordering the Malice Lands. It is a rich agricultural breadbasket, though its idyllic landscape is marked by towers and old killing fields for defending against malice beasts.
- The **Tunda Peninsula** was once heavily forested and crisscrossed with placid woodland trails marked by trees that bore a sour fruit whose pit was a diamond. Drakr burned all but a few patches of these forests in their war against the Tundarasne. Now railroads connect remote settlements in a grim, denuded landscape.

Elfaivar

Name: Greater Elfaivaran Ran
Capital: Rumah Terakir
Other Major Cities: Kanta Mahala, Kirimpulang; colonial cities of Redenzion, Sawyer, Valence
Teleportation Beacons: Redenzion, Sawyer; ruins of Ravana, the old imperial capital
Government: Monarchal council
Head of State: None
Official Language: Elvish
Common Heritages: Elf 67%, human 27%, tiefling 2%, dwarf 2%, other 2%



Introduction

Once a culturally rich empire with unrivaled magic, spanning two thousand miles and straddling two worlds, Elfaivar fell after their triple-goddess Srasama was slain in a holy war against Crisillyir. This resulted in the sudden and immediate death of nearly every Elfaivaran woman.

The Elfaivaran civilization collapsed, with many surviving men throwing their lives away in suicidal vengeance against the Clergy, while many more preyed upon each other to rule over the empire's ashes. They were then picked off by colonizers from the other nations looking to scavenge and claim territory.

A small portion of the population, buoyed by the guidance of the poet Vekesh, rallied around the few remaining Elfaivaran women in five demiplane enclaves that lay between the Waking and the Dreaming. These sanctuaries provided a haven for new generations to be raised. Led by matriarchs of great power, the survivors gathered as much of the empire's wealth and magic as they could, though much of their history, art, and religion was lost.

Other survivors—nearly all men, growing old with no prospect for heirs—simply hid in remote villages, scattered to other lands, or even became servants in the foreign-run colonies.

Elfaivar at a Glance

These are the major figures, groups, and locations in Elfaivar most foreigners have heard about. A common thread is that foreigners misunderstand much about the country.

- **Vekeshi Mystics.** Even today, most people's first thought about Elfaivar goes to the secret society that perpetrates assassinations around Lanjyr. Most view them as terrorists, but some admire them for terrorizing those who prey on the weak.
- **Gulmohar.** The millions of women who died in the Great Malice and returned to life twenty years ago.
- **Asocar.** The rest of the Elfaivaran population that was already present before the gulmohar returned, also called remnants. (And the term *chotar* is used for the children born since the gulmohar returned.)
- **Ranimandala.** Elfaivar's ruling council, composed entirely of women, who do not have a singular leader.
- **Adin Radhasi.** A young gulmohar who led an invasion of Crisillyir three years ago. One of the three most prominent leaders of the ranimandala, who is in favor of using the nation's military might to expand its territory.
- **Athrylla Valanar.** An asocar matriarch who has lived since before the Great Malice, and most influential member of the ranimandala, who is in favor of seeking peace and prosperity with the other great nations.
- **Dhebisu.** A gulmohar, legendary warrior, and oldest member of the ranimandala, who attracts outcasts and ne'er-do-wells, preferring underhanded tactics to keep Elfaivar's enemies weak. Made infamous by pulp novels that cast her as a nefarious mastermind.
- **Harimau.** An oppressed population of elves who can take on features like tigers. They are scorned by most Elfaivarans due to ties to a traitorous god.
- **Rumah Terakir.** An old city once reclaimed by nature, now Elfaivar's capital. The old ruins remain as a remembrance, but grand new construction is spreading out into the jungle and even into the Dreaming.
- **Kanta Mahala.** A predominately Harimau city, said to welcome fugitives and outcasts.
- **Kirimpulang.** Secretive city, unseen by foreigners, where Adin Radhasi is said to have an alliance with Elfaivar's own archfey.
- **Colonies.** Crisillyir, Danor, Drakr, and Risur each maintain a colonial presence, and various Elfaivaran factions seek to ally with or drive out different groups of colonizers. The political situation is complex and tenuous.
- **Shaha.** East of the jungles of Elfaivar, this hostile and insular city-state enslaves people from across Lanjyr, and has a special preference for gulmohar.



But the memory of Srasama's fall was kept alive by followers of Vekesh. And, as the stars returned at the end of the Great Eclipse, so too returned millions of the women who had perished five centuries earlier. They came to be called the **gulmohar** (a tree renowned for its flamboyant red flowers), and they grew the population overnight at least ten-fold. With their sudden power, Elfaivar became emboldened to reclaim its lost borders.

Much like Ber was fifty years ago, few outsiders have been to Elfaivar, and many see it as exotic, mysterious, and dangerous. They mostly know it for what other nations have done to it, particularly the Great Malice and colonization, rather than understanding it on its own merits.

The nation's future is uncertain, as there are clashes between wildly different cultures. The Elfaivarans who were alive before the Great Eclipse, known as **asocar** (a tree associated with pride and sorrow) view their place differently from the gulmohar, and even among those returned women there are clashes between efforts to reconstruct and efforts to conquer. And millions of colonial citizens from other nations did not vanish, but instead find themselves wary of provoking the people they once saw as their inferiors.

Yet as the old borders are reclaimed and the jungle begins to reverberate with music and power, there is more hope than ever before.

Grand History

Civilization on the Elfaivaran subcontinent goes back as far as when the Ancient orcs dominated in prehistory. But the peoples here had ties more to distant lands to the east than to the rest of Lanjyr. Legends of this time were all but forgotten before the gulmohar returned, but now the world is starting to understand how Elfaivar came to be.

Weaving an Empire

The original Elfaivaran Empire arose over a thousand years ago as a reaction to the threat posed from the old Demonocracy. Disparate small countries in the region were corrupted and fell, but

eventually the rest unified under the rule of the Rajadhiraja (King of Kings) **Raoof Dayaalu**. Raoof was renowned for the compassion he showed to those who allied with the demons—compassion, in that he branded and banished tens of thousands, rather than executing them.

For centuries after purging that corruption, holding back the Demonocracy remained a constant demand on Elfaivar, and it gave the elves across the subcontinent a unified identity. Raoof's armies cycled soldiers from throughout his kingdom to the western isthmus, and his elite rajputs learned to use pathways through the Dreaming to outflank the Demonocracy's forces. However, to control the mingled masses of so many peoples, the Seedist religion gradually arose. It united hundreds of gods into a complex metaphysical nesting, and ranked dozens of cultures into castes. Political dynamics at play at the founding of the empire by happenstance became by the end of Raoof's reign to be seen as divine law.

Then far to the west, Triegenes began to assail the Demonocracy's flank, and within the span of a human lifetime the Demonocracy was gone. Elfaivar rejoiced, and initially saw the Clergy as allies. Raoof finally surrendered to old age, having decreed that no single heir succeed him, but instead a rajamandala—a ruling council of kings and queens—balance each other's ambitions.

Seeking a way to seize more power for themselves, many of these rajas and ranis turned their attention eastward to expand the empire. Occasionally they vied with the dragon tyrants of old Ber, but the hassle was not worth the prize. Most of their conquered territory were in lands that today seldom even show up on maps of the world, far to the east of Lanjyr.

For another four centuries those eastern holdings brought jewels and pearls, ivory and enslaved people, plus a growing understanding of the Dreaming's many shifting forms. Elfaivaran cities spread into the Dreaming, with the realm being tamed into a garden, overseen by immigrated fey beings. Entire mighty wars were waged in lands hardly known today, but eventually one such war grew too costly and stalled the empire's growth. Greedy rajas sought to appease their avarice by plundering the much-closer wealth of the Clergy.

Perang Devar and the Great Malice

For a period of decades, different small rulers commanded skirmishes and conquests that ate away at the periphery of the Clergy's lands. But in the year 50 BOV the Clergy's prime cardinal impelled all the faithful to engage in a holy reconquest. These battles became not merely political, but blasphemous, as the Clergy targeted priests and desecrated shrines. The Elfaivaran Empire responded in kind, but by the time they stalled the Clergy, Elfaivar had lost the Crisillyiri territory it had previously conquered, and even some parts of the Elfaivaran subcontinent.

The Clergy rested on its victory, but with wounded pride and elven patience, the rajamandala built up religious grievances, and finally launched their own *Perang Devar*, or holy war.

It was *cruel*. Both great civilizations abandoned their highest principles. The Clergy desecrated the elven dead in search of trophies and enchanted arms, and they necromantically reanimated Elfaivaran corpses in droves. Elfaivaran armies slaughtered prisoners of war en masse in attempts to break the Clergy's morale. Dissident and pacifist elements from both sides were forcibly conscripted.

The final battle of the *Perang Devar* took place in Crisillyir as Elfaivaran forces pushed to the gates of Alais Primos and laid siege. On New Year's Day, weekly skirmishes ceased as a miraculous conflagration bloomed, and from it stepped a living deity: Srasama, the Elfaivaran goddess of womanhood. She led Elfaivar's charge against the city's enchanted shield wall, but the faithful defenders hurled every weapon they had at Srasama, and finally she fell.

Srasama's death rippled across the world, but whatever damage it may have caused in Danor, it destroyed Elfaivar. From among the entire Elfaivaran Empire, only a few hundred women survived: those who were in the Dreaming, or shapeshifted, or the rare Seedist apostate who was still part of her native culture.

Civilization's Collapse

Half the population had died in an instant, and it did not take much longer than that for the Elfaivaran Empire to collapse into chaos. Surviving warriors in Crisillyir fled to the homeland, only to find despair and rage in every corner of the nation. Rajputs slew rajas and became new warlords, executing any soldiers who were disloyal. They fought over territory and treasure, but especially over enslaved wives. The few surviving women who were not hidden and protected suffered unspeakably.

Whole cities were split in two as the circle magic that let them straddle between worlds had lost half the mages who knew the rituals. Within a year war swept through the Elfaivaran heartland, plague in its wake, and famine as its partner. Within a century, the Clergy defeated the Elfaivaran remnants guarding the borders and found a ghost nation: cities reclaimed by jungles, collapsed magical imbuements spilling strange energy onto the landscape, the once bountiful garden of the Dreaming cut off, and the survivors with their spirits irreparably broken.

In the empire's distant holdings to the east, conquered and enslaved peoples turned on their crippled overseers, and mighty magical contingencies meant to deter revolts triggered, scorching the earth. Even five centuries later, civilization has struggled to regain a foothold, and to go east beyond Elfaivar's forests is to find a thousand miles of jagged, accursed steppes.

The Dirge of Vekesh

But some points of light survived. Inspired by the stirring eulogy for the lost women sung by the poet **Vekesh**, a faction of remaining Elfaivarans chose to hide and build new communities, rather than die vainly defending territory against foreign invasion.

The vast majority of Elfaivarans returned to the jungle, trading their grand ruined cities for humble, illusion-warded villages and tribal camps. To protect the precious remaining women, several matriarchs used magical *waystones* to create enclaves hidden away in demiplanes.

While some were eventually discovered and sacked, over decades and centuries, new children were born and wed between the enclaves. Only rarely were visitors from the thousands of male-dominated jungle villages outside allowed in, usually as a reward for rescuing an Elfaivaran woman from slavery. The population grew, though with controversial rules to maintain gender parity.



Vekeshi Mysticism

When the Clergy captured and executed Vekesh in 17 AOV, it only raised the poet's fame.

The teachings of Vekesh spread quickly across Lanjyr, with guilt or fascination about the Great Malice drawing many to the philosophy's focus on patience and endurance on scales that exceeded human lifespans. The cult of the Vekeshi Mystics used those principles to persuade sympathetic foreigners to seek positions of power where they could act subtly to protect Elfaivar and help it heal and regrow.

Much of the enclaves' histories remains secret, but it is clear that not all the matriarchs agreed to simply hide and wait. One matriarch saw the potential in radicalizing some members of the mystics, to create agents provocateur around the world. These agents began a campaign of vengeance against the Clergy, against any foreigners who attempted to claim Elfaivaran soil, and against various other targets. The motives of these attacks were always justified as a "defense of the weak," but historians see a pattern that these more violent members of the mystics—sometimes distinguished with the name Vekeshi assassins—were creating power vacuums, which were then filled by people who would go on to carefully steer the fate of Lanjyr.

Elfaivar: Landscape and Cuisine

The majority of Elfaivar is a sprawling rainforest, broken up by a half-dozen ranges of squat mountains that each stretch for less than a hundred miles. A hot monsoon system breaks the sky and brings forth ocean after ocean of rain, flooding rivers and allowing millions of fish to hop between otherwise-separated lakes and rivers. Hundreds of ancient rivers were magically-shaped by the Empire to ease flooding, and broad canals called *jako*—now restored by the gulmohar—connect rivers and allow boat traffic to traverse most of the subcontinent.

The eastern extent of the subcontinent rises in rocky forest, and then opens into arid steppes. Beyond those, a desert stretches for a thousand miles. It was once held by the Elfaivaran Empire and sustained by Dreaming oases, but since the empire's collapse only nomads and a few scattered city-states survive.

One of the main cultural bonds between the gulmohar and the asocar is a shared cuisine. Traditional foods include rice, barley, breadfruit, mangoes, chickpeas, curries, and yogurt. However, many spices cultivated in the Dreaming have been lost, as were some whimsical novelties, like aerated chilled yogurt beverages called doogh and the famous kebapple, a fruit which looked and tasted like meat that got increasingly cooked the longer the fruit ripened.

Languages and Time

We simplify the language of Elfaivar as being "Elvish," but the old empire absorbed many cultures, and most people were multilingual, mixing traditional Elvish with their native tongue. After the Great Malice, those other languages mostly died out, but the gulmohar have rekindled them.

One linguistic challenge for the nation is Lanjyr's calendar system, which uses AOV (After Our Victory), a Clergy term. Elfaivar prefers to annotate UA (*Usia Abadi*, Perennial Age) starting after the Great Eclipse, and UG (*Usia Gerhana*, Eclipse Age) for the years before. Some propose the pidgin abbreviation A-aur-D (*Achae aur Dvesh*, which loosely translates to Goodness and Malice), since it sounds close enough to AOV.

Colonialism

While the enclaves kept Elfaivaran culture alive in secret, Crisillyir established colonies to plunder the continent's abandoned riches. They were joined gradually by Risur, Danor, and Drakr.

Relations between colonists and the native Elfaivaran population varied. The Clergy fought for centuries against guerillas, while Risur's was home to a number of movements such as the **The Ford** which aimed to earn the trust and loyalty of the Elfaivaran people and make them equal members of a new nation.

While each colony was tightly controlled by its homeland, and colonists were expected to send back wealth or to project the nation's interests, these distant lands became lightning-rods for those ideas and people deemed controversial back home. The unique cultures of these colonies became ever more distinct as the Danoran industrial revolution reshaped the world. The rise of Ber and its status as a nation of liberty sparked some calls for colonial independence. Some Elfaivarans even began laying the groundwork for an alliance with colonists who were thinking of revolt.

But that movement was cut short by the Great Eclipse.

The Great Eclipse

During the Great Eclipse, travel to the Dreaming became nearly impossible, and the enclaves splintered apart. Only two enclaves survived. One, Ushanti, began to drift untethered to any precise location. In the other, Sentosa, its matriarch **Athrylla Valanar** managed to transition the enclave fully to the Waking, amid the ruined city Rumah Terakir.

Tens of thousands of residents of the other enclaves were stranded in the jungle without access to food or shelter. The lucky ones found shelter in the colonies Kellandia, Atto, and Rationalis. Those who sought succor from the Crisillyiri colonies were seen as invaders and repelled into the wilds. Many people hid far from civilization and were never heard from again. The subcontinent might have experienced comparable horrors as the rest of the world, but if so, they were broadly unwitnessed and unremembered.

At Danor's Forward Symposium in 502 AOV, only one representative from Elfaivar attended, a Harimau chieftain named **Betronga Sidhon**. The novelty of his presence raised the profile of his people, and was a first step to them being treated as simply another culture on the continent, rather than a cadre of monsters.

Months later, Sentosa (in the ruins of old Rumah Terakir) was besieged by an army of colonists from across Elfaivar. They sought to eliminate what they saw as the source of ongoing Elfaivaran resistance to colonial control, and so they assailed the enclave with artillery, sorcery, and infectious maladies. Risuri allies broke the siege mere hours before the eclipse ended, and when the sun returned the enclave received unexpected allies.



Usia Abadi

No one is sure how it happened, but when the sun returned, simultaneously across Elfaivar millions of women who perished in the Great Malice returned to life. Each of them had a sense of being given a choice—to return to a changed and imperiled land, or to pass on to some long-delayed afterlife. The returned women would come to be called the gulmohar.

They knew that a great length of time had passed, but otherwise were completely surprised to find their cities destroyed and overgrown, and confused by how those who came out to greet them wept at the sight. A few reunited with long-lost family members, but only perhaps one-in-ten of those who died centuries earlier had chosen to return. Swiftly, joy at the miracle turned to panic: how to feed, clothe, house, and generally *deal with* a new population that was many times larger than the existing surviving Elfaivaran?

The remnant Elfaivarans who had always viewed women as rare and precious now saw men drastically outnumbered by women. The gulmohar in turn found the asocar obsessed with insular elitism in their now-ruined enclaves, and obsessed with survival in sad little jungle villages. But in those first chaotic months, many gulmohar were captured by elite slavers of the far eastern city-state of Shaha. Among those gulmohar taken were the legendary **Cahaya Varal**, once a great general of the *Perang Devar*. This common enemy helped the asocar and gulmohar unify.

Though Elfaivar was barely even a husk of the great old empire, the gulmohar's return brought hope. It also brought power, knowledge, and numbers—assets it would need to become a new great nation. Conflict began to brew, however, over competing visions of what the new nation should be.

Three Rivers

The gulmohar gradually divided into three groups. The first group remained close to the asocar remnant, struggling to ration supplies and understand how their people had survived in the interim, even making tentative moves toward peace with the colonists. The second group targeted foreign-run colonies, first in supply raids, but increasingly with an eye toward driving out the interlopers.

The third group withdrew to remote locations, intending to rebuild old cities and restore the lost pathways to the Dreaming.

Elfaivarans call them the three rivers, because though they take different paths, they all fill the same sea. Though they may disagree on tactics, it is taken almost as a matter of faith that all Elfaivarans are allies, working toward the restoration of their nation's power.

The three rivers are not distinct factions, and have always been loosely cooperative rather than competitive, but still it took several years for a new system of government to arise. In 507 AOV, the Greater Elfaivaran *Ran* ("Queendom") was formally created, with the *ranimandala* as the ruling circle. This circle of nine matriarchs was styled after the court of *maharaja* and *maharani* that led the old empire. **Athrylla Valanar**, a respected enclave matriarch who has been alive since before the Great Malice, is seen as the foremost voice of the first river: reconciliation.

Adin Radhasi, a young temple sentinel who was with child when she died, was resurrected still pregnant. The mythic resonance of her pregnancy, combined with her passionate rhetoric comparing the nation to a temple that she would fight to defend, attracted her many fervent warriors. She is seen as the voice of the second river: reconquest.

Dhebisu, a legendary aged warrior who knew what made the old empire strong, and had kept many of its dirty secrets, found herself more comfortable with outcasts, cripples, and traumatized people. She understood that Elfaivar could use the facts that foreigners feared and misunderstood them as weapons in their arsenal, and so she became the quiet voice of the third river: guile.

As a compromise with the other two rivers, Athrylla and her allies agreed to announce *de jure* claim to all of Elfaivar's lost territory, from Crisillyir in the west to long-dead countries in the distant east. This declaration immediately brought them into conflict with every nation with a colony in the subcontinent, but uncertainty over the strength of the Ran persuaded the great nations to make concessions. Adin completely ceased raids on Risur's Kellandia, and limited her raids against the other colonies. Elfaivarans began to reclaim their old cities, unlocking hidden and abandoned troves of wealth that had been lost in the Dreaming for centuries.

Testing Their Strength

For a time after the creation of the ranimandala, reconciliation was in ascendance, but the other rivers still flowed. Adin's raids provided pressure for colonial governors to agree to negotiations with Athrylla, and helped her keep honed the fighting skills of her soldiers and attracted the attention of older generals who could provide military counsel. And when rampaging monsters killed thousands in the colony Vigilia in 510 AOV, and Crisillyir responded by evacuating its population, many assumed Dhebisu had somehow coordinated it.

Dhebisu was accused of directing the radical Vekeshi assassins, a few full-weretiger Harimau elves, and other spies in a campaign of assassination and sabotage against Crisillyir and other colonizers. Adin meanwhile formed a proud fellowship of warriors, the *Shahi Santaree* (Imperial Sentinels), and called for the creation of a modern college of war, the *Keataram* (Palace) in the city Kirimpulang. It was a discovery by archaeologists at that college which tipped the balance in the ranimandala in favor of reconquest.

Current Status of the Colonies

Crisillyir controls **Angelus** in the northwest. The region is rapidly militarizing under Ottoplismist leadership, and Elfaivarans who had previously lived as second-class citizens are being consigned to serfdom. Adin's raids still strike here, since the jungle makes guarding a border impossible.

Danor controls **Rationalis** in the southeast. Relations with Elfaivar are generally calm and cooperative. A growing secession movement seeks to break free from the homeland and become part of Elfaivar, with the argument that peaceful integration now will forestall a slow oppression later. But the slaver city state **Shaha** to the east is trying to pull the colony under its control, or at least to buy modern weaponry.

Drakr controls **Atto** in the north, though the population is small, and increasingly detached from the affairs of the homeland, since it suffered little during the Great Eclipse. Philosophers are eagerly trying to understand the minds of the colony's new Dreaming allies.

Risur controls **Kellandia** in the southwest. Though well-defended and on good terms with Elfaivar, the colony is having an identity crisis. The capital Sawyer has its own secession movement, in cahoots with the one in Rationalis, while anti-technologists on the island Titania sabotage the colony's industry and are close to provoking a conflict with Danor, whom they still see as enemies.

The central spine of the subcontinent, plus lands in the northeast and along the south coast, are solidly under Elfaivaran control.

The Gulmohar Reclamation

In 519 AOV, after years of breaking wards and pacifying guardians, a *Keataram* expedition discovered an old shipyard in the Dreaming, guarded by fey still loyal to the old empire. There Adin found a small fleet of ancient wooden "fire ships," a glorious addition to Elfaivar's navy.

Unsatisfied with the *ranimandala*'s pace of conquest, Adin led tens of thousands of warriors to invade and occupy the Crisillyiri city Vendricce, and the fire ships were her vanguard.

The broad strokes of the international view of the conflict and its political fallout are detailed in Crisillyir's section (page 111), but the perspective from within Elfaivar was very different.

Adin did not lead an army solely composed of her own people, but also relied on enslaved foreigners whom her forces had taken from the colonies. Adin's followers claim that so great was her majesty that the slaves toiled and fought for her freely, believing in her mission. Throughout Elfaivar, news reported that Adin's army was greeted with cheers from the people of Vendricce, many of whom it was said were Meliskans, fearful of the violent Ottoplismists in the rest of Crisillyir. These stories even spread to the other nations, helping win broad public sympathy in Danor and Risur.

Retreat and Aftermath

After a year of conflict and escalation, Adin finally agreed to a peace conference coordinated by King Baldrey. That failed, however, and Clergy forces surged into Vendricce and drove Adin's army back. In the years since, embittered soldiers have grumbled with rumors that they had expected some key assistance from Dhebisu's gallery of minions, but were left hung out to dry.

Adin and her sentinels were forced to flee, and rather than continue the long trek to territory that was clearly controlled by

Elfaivar, they marched into the colony Kellandia. Adin begged sanctuary from the regional governor, promising eternal alliance in return. The governor agreed, and the colony's own soldiers even defended Adin's when Crisillyir's army came searching for the bloodied warriors.

From within that safehold, Adin was already planning to bring up more forces, perhaps even starting a full war, when King Baldrey sidelined her and instead worked with the Prime Cardinal of Crisillyir and one of Athrylla Valanar's allies to negotiate the Treaty of Sawyer.

Adin and her Imperial Sentinels had failed at their primary objective of claiming Vendricce, and the deaths of thousands of women under Adin's command caused many men among the asocar to reject her, as they saw Elfaivaran women as near sacred, no matter that they were no longer rare. But the invasion did net Elfaivar territory and a daunting military reputation.

The Present

In 522 AOV, Elfaivar is still coming into itself, but there is a sense among its predominately female population that they can achieve anything. Memories of the Great Eclipse (for the asocar) or the *Perang Devar* (for the gulmohar) are two decades old, and both mostly want now to plant a healthy crop for future generations to harvest. In many places, the country is idyllic.

But that sense of security and opportunity is hard-won through the practical politicking of Athrylla's faction, the international spycraft and skulduggery of Dhebisu's allies, and the constant war footing of Adin's *Shahi Santaree*.

As for internal problems, sometimes Dreaming pathways loose Shaha slavers mounted upon strange nightmare fey, but the nation has plenty of warriors for that. They also have alliances, such as with Danoran Admiral Mathis Leblanc, seen with favor since the Reclamation Crisis (see page 125). The old warrior is encouraging Adin Radhasi to build a skyship fleet to patrol the eastern border, and is actively recruiting international crews, which lends credence to the rumors that the colony is eager to break from Danor and the burdens of the Orithean Concordat, become instead a state of the new Elfaivar.

Elfaivar is less experienced at finding its way through cultural clashes. Many gulmohar are beginning to resent the powerful wealthy residents of the old enclaves. The myriad tribes of previously male-dominated jungle villages often balk at the changes being forced upon them as the gulmohar not only bring back strange customs from the past, but completely reject the idea that women should be cautious and sheltered.

The Government

A recurring structure in Elfaivaran society are nestings of three circles. Local towns and villages tend to ally in groups of three to make up a *tehsil*. Each *tehsil* may send three respected figures (who are not on the *tehsil* council) to be their representatives to a *zila* (roughly a county, composed of three *tehsils*), which in turn usually is one of three members of a *mandal* (roughly a state), and then up to a *mandhimandala*, which is subordinate to the national *ranimandala*.

In practice the actual system is far more complex, with each administrative division having various experts and appointees handling daily challenges, and with the occasional reshuffling of members between triads to counter each other politically.

While the national *ranimandala* is composed only of women, they are trying to find ways to ensure men receive at least some voice on these councils. If a mandal doesn't have at least one man out of the nine members, it falls out of favor.

Slavery in Elfaivar

The old empire often enslaved people from its remote colonies and brought them to the homeland so "proper" Elfaivarans could live in luxury, but after the Great Malice it was the Elfaivaran people who often fell prey to enslavement, and thus the practice came to be banned in the enclaves and most villages.

Many gulmohar do not share the same deep hatred for slavery. But the structures of the old institution were unenforceable for the first few years after the Great Eclipse, and when the slaver-state Shaha became an early shared antagonist, Athrylla Valanar and her fellow matriarchs were able to exert pressure to keep a new slave trade from arising in the Great Elfaivaran *Ran*.

But Adin Radhasi has kept up the practice of war prisoner enslavement. Her warriors often claim defeated colonials as property, and though they are legally forbidden from selling enslaved people, it is an open secret that some newly-rich gulmohar consort with agents of Shaha. The *ranimandala* had hoped to invite the help of Beran *executores* to stamp out slavery in all its forms, but Ber's intervention in the Gulmohar Reclamation of 519 soured relations between the two countries.

Ranimandala

The ruling circle is a council of nine, and though its membership shifts every few years, it generally has three asocar representatives from the old enclaves or reborn cities, three nationally-influential gulmohar, and three women (who can be from either group) who represent *mandals* of the formerly-hidden jungle villages.

The *ranimandala* meets in a special demiplane, which is only accessible to them, though it is itself nested in another demiplane where a court of invited guests and onlookers can witness the affairs of state. The nine members can enter from anywhere with special icons attuned to them, but the viewing demiplane is accessed only through a portal in the city Rumah Terakir.

The demiplane contains a temple to Ingatan, god of knowledge and memory. Meetings begin with each member performing a display of martial and magical prowess, and the symbolism of different choices serve as something of a rhetorical debate, often opaque to outsiders.

First Matriarch



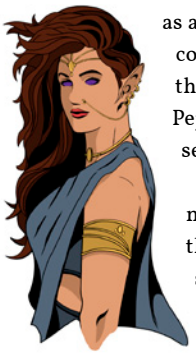
First-among-equals, and a member of the *ranimandala* for its fifteen-year existence, **Athrylla Valanar** has ruled the enclave Sentosa for centuries, and is the only living enclave matriarch to have survived the Great Malice.

Gregarious and principled, Athrylla was always opposed to pursuing revenge against the Clergy regime, citing the poet Vekesh's words while supporting peace and reconstruction. However, she's enough of a realist

to understand that few in the Clergy share the same stance toward Elfaivar, and so she knows military defense—and sometimes even offense—is necessary.

Athrylla's pivotal role in protecting the Elfaivaran people and preserving its culture for five centuries earned her the admiration of many, even among the gulmohar. Yet her present-day temperance has not satisfied Adin Radhasi and Dhebisu.

Princess of Honor



Adin Radhasi came of age during the *Perang Devar*, and served as a temple sentinel of Pejuang Pencari, god of war and discovery, though Adin personally never saw combat during the war. After the Great Malice, every last follower of Pejuang Pencari died seeking vengeance, for their god was seen as one of Srasama's lovers.

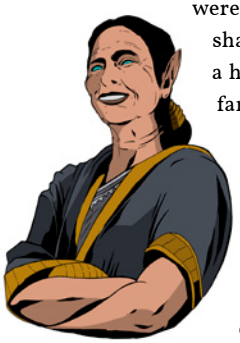
When the Great Malice slew Adin, she was eight months pregnant. When the gulmohar returned, even though they all had the same struggle to find food and shelter, many people felt obliged to ensure those who returned pregnant had a safe delivery.

Adin was unique, though, because she persuaded people not to protect her, but to *follow* her. They navigated the jungle to reach her old temple in the city of Kirimpulang, turned into a stretch of drought-stricken barrens, ruled over by a gargantuan cobra called the **Avrati** which laired in the temple ruins. Adin organized the women with her to assemble arms from the wilderness and slay the serpent. Not long thereafter, monsoons brought life-restoring rain, and filled the rivers that connected the city to the sea. Amid that downpour she gave birth to her daughter, **Retta**.

Adin's fame quickly spread, and many gathered to her movement.

Stern and strict despite her youth, Adin is an honorable warrior, but nevertheless a warrior from a past era. She holds old prejudices, particularly against the Clergy and the Harimau, and the glorious Elfaivar she seeks to build has no place for foreigners except as slaves. Her zeal, and the certainty of how she thinks her people should live, fills her many followers with a grand sense of righteous purpose. Indeed, she is particularly popular among young asocar women, who grew up in a time when they were seen as priceless. Adin gladly recruits such disaffected women to her Imperial Sentinels, and teaches them that they will restore Elfaivar to its old glory.

Grandmother Grievance



For centuries, some of the most famous legends from old Elfaivar were tales of the warrior **Dhebisu**: she who defeated a rakshasa god, with a fallen star in her hair that reshaped into a hundred weapons at her command. Her exploits were famous even before the Clergy defeated the Demonocracy, so most assumed she was already dead before the Great Malice. But she had simply withdrawn from the public eye. Long past her fighting years, she had served her empire in more subtle ways.

When the gulmohar returned, Dhebisu was over 700 years old (not counting the 500 years she was dead). She tried to maintain her low profile, but she gradually rose to prominence: she possessed forgotten magic to easily access the Dreaming and shape its wilderness, and she used this knowledge—and an understated cunning—to protect some of the most vulnerable.

Common sentiment is that Dhebisu seeks to rekindle the empire's glory, much like Adin, but this misunderstands the old woman. She cares nothing for glory, just for humbling the cruel and the wicked, though she is neither a nationalist nor an ideologue. She has been on enough different sides in conflicts in her life that she finds loyalty to a government childish. What matters to her are the people, and she has found the best way to protect them is to make sure that wars don't happen. To do that, she will make sure neither side is confident in its ability to win. A balance of power ensures no one will risk making the first move in a conflict.

Witty, charming, and kind to her comrades, Dhebisu has a lewd sense of humor and a deep well of spite to draw upon when people cross her.

Where Adin is honorable and dogmatic, Dhebisu is ruthless and pragmatic. She wrested control of the radical Vekeshi assassins by persuading their existing leaders to undertake prideful suicide missions. She accepted the maligned Harimau and various gulmohar who had been outcasts or criminals before the Great Malice, positioning herself as a trusted voice for a cavalcade of scoundrels and outcasts. She proved her worth to the nation by planting spies and saboteurs in the colonies and even in foreign nations, so that when the *ranimandala* formed, her knowledge was too valuable for her not to be offered a seat.

And, while Adin was away trying to conquer Vendricce, Dhebisu manipulated the woman's daughter Retta to become sympathetic to the plight of the Harimau. The young Retta volunteered to undergo a ritual to receive a blessing from the god Hewanharimau. Now Adin—with all her outdated prejudices—dare not target the harimau, lest she lose her own daughter. The balance of power keeps the peace, even if it stokes grievance.

Rumah Terakir

Center of the Greater Elfaivaran Ran, Rumah Terakir is the most prominent of the many cities being reinvigorated.

History

Rumah Terakir was once a wealthy sanctuary for nobles, priests, and powerful merchants, about ten miles upriver from the old imperial capital city. Nearly every residence was palatial, and during one period of religious fervor around 150 BOV, the community built great stone temples to numerous deities in the outskirts.

After the Great Malice, the nearby capital city was devastated by repeated battles to control it, but Rumah Terakir's air of holiness kept it safe. Over time it did still decline, but it was never fully abandoned. Eventually it became site of an enclave demiplane, **Sentosa**, under the leadership of Athrylla Valanar.

Sentosa hid for centuries, entry protected by a small population that remained in the ruins of Rumah Terakir, and further guarded by a mighty saṃsāra-fey that took the form of a ten-headed lion. Ensconced in secrecy, Athrylla and her people sent out expeditions to recover wealth and magic from throughout the fallen empire, only occasionally letting in new residents or reaching out to the other matriarchs' enclaves.

Peril of Ravana

Most travelers come from the south coast and take the Sindu River to within about twenty miles, then finish the journey by overland roads, which are recently built and well-patrolled. Athrylla hopes that soon the river route will be safe all the way to Rumah Terakir, but for now it passes through the old capital city of Ravana.

A mere ten miles from the modern capital, Ravana saw over a century of successive invasions, which brought elementals, samsāra-fey, undead, and other monsters that still linger in the ruins. Those willing to brave the ruins and cull some of these perils can win the favor, and often join the *Vached* collective (see below) or coordinate independently with Thakurani Auryn, the *de facto* head of the city's government.

However, the dangers do not all come from the past. Slavers from Shaha occasionally emerge there from strange pathways—perhaps through the Bleak Gate. And a cell of ultranationalist gulmohar hide out there, enraged by the current peace with the Clergy.



A singing Beran hobgoblin sailor named **Juan Águila** has become famous for sailing his ship all the way upriver to Rumah Terakir. He styles himself a pirate or smuggler, and claims that his resonant baritone lulls to sleep any threats in the ruins.

In the Great Eclipse, Athrylla barely managed to land her enclave safely amidst Rumah Terakir. The city weathered attack by colonizer forces, and then after the eclipse ended, Athrylla again drew her enclave into a pocket dimension between the Waking and the Dreaming, but she kept the pathways open so that the returned gulmohar would have a safe haven.

The city began to flourish, and people built new homes. Athrylla decreed that any ruined building that could be restored must keep at least a portion of the structure still in disrepair or still claimed by jungle foliage. She said this would convey the spirit of her old friend Vekesh, and remind Elfaivarans forever that their people had survived great tragedy and loss.

In 507 AOV, the Greater Elfaivaran Ran established Rumah Terakir as its capital, though magic allows the ruling *ranimandala* to conduct its affairs without the members having to come to the city.

Geography

Four colossal stone statues of bare-chested warriors stand over the river docks. Three other statues long ago shattered, which Athrylla has forbidden the removal of. The once-flooded docks were rebuilt to elegantly incorporate their ruins. Farms and fisheries line the river, and the city regularly invites visiting scholars of agriculture from other nations to help its gulmohar farmers—who learned their trade before the Great Malice—integrate modern scientific knowledge to aid their food production.

In 501 AOV, the city was visited by an invisible Dreaming-colossus. Citizens have since taken to sowing wildflowers in his great footprints, each of which was fifty feet across.

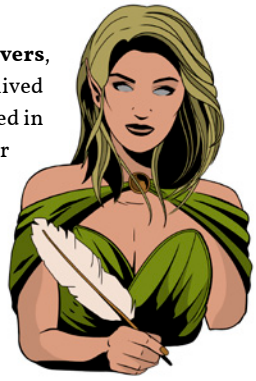
Architecture

The city's architecture is a mixture of restored palaces, modern neighborhoods of humble conformity, old temples left in respectful disrepair, and grand new architecture erected by newly-rich collectives. A handful of Risur-style factories bustle along the river, while in the demiplane Sentosa arcanoscience is joining with traditional dreamcrafting to give birth to a uniquely Elfaivaran style of magical industry.

Palace Tenants

It is popular for powerful asocar women who were from the enclave Sentosa to take ownership of Rumah Terakir's various abandoned palaces, renovate them, and then invite the arriving multitude of gulmohar as tenants. Dozens of palaces collectively house thousands of Elfaivarans amidst their labyrinthine corridors, stairways, and ballrooms, decorated with gaudily-colored flags, tapestries, and scarves.

Modernization



The palace system is criticized by **Isobel Travers**, who escaped from enslavement in Danor, lived for a time in Elfaivar before the eclipse, settled in Drakr, and then returned to Rumah Terakir with an eagerness to find a new life among her people. Though the people were in crisis, she saw a strange sense of liberation in many of the gulmohar who had been stifled in their old lives before the Great Malice.

Isobel learned of the concept of *mukti*, a form of philosophical emancipation, and argued that having palaces overseen by an enclave lady disempowered their residents and made them dependent. As a counterpoint, she persuaded the city's *tehsil* to invite Drakran architects to design and construct more modest new structures, clustered into large neighborhoods. Their similar design prevents the politics of arguing over who deserves the best rooms, an issue endemic to the palaces. These humble homes' compact size also creates space for numerous fruit and vegetable gardens, which allow each neighborhood to grow their own food and have a place to share their thoughts and opinions. In many ways, they emulate Trekhom's *serdtsa*.

Half-Restored Religion

Numerous temples trace a loose ring around the old city center and its palaces. The three most well-known are those to Srasama, Ingatan, and Hewanharimau. Each building has been partially restored, but clear signs of the decay of five centuries remain.

Srasama's temple is a great stepped pyramid topped by the legs of a giant statue. Beyond the legs, the torso is fallen and broken in twain. Rocks that once made up the head and six arms litter the grounds. Within, the temple is bare, and the once elaborate murals contained within have been burned and broken. Many asocar come here to remember the lost goddess, though gulmohar are made uneasy by what they see as worshiping a dead deity.

Ingatan's temple was built downward into the ground like a twenty-foot-deep inverted step-pyramid, with the vertical risers engraved with faded scripture. However, if one steps to the bottom

level and has been approved as a visitor, they will transition into the demiplane of the *ranimandala*'s viewing chamber (see page 155). There they find a far grander temple structure, where a statue of Ingatan rises above them, head bowed, four arms spread like the sheltering boughs of a tree.

Hewanharimau's temple is an ominous structure built from a pair of stone slabs propped against each other like a steeple. It stands out for the lack of any other structures within 300 feet. It was long left alone due to superstition, but Dhebisu insisted that Harimau elves be allowed to restore it, and to place obelisks with the true history of their god at the periphery of the temple grounds, to help remove the stigma from their people. Nevertheless, many Elfaivarans who come within sight of the building make warding or cursing gestures at it.

Industrialization

Three years ago rajput and arcanotechnologist **Rashmi Dayal** negotiated with Risur for help to establish modern manufactories in Rumah Terakir. So far only five have been constructed, all for consumer goods, not arms or steam engines.

Their presence and the products they make have been met with a mix of enthusiasm and skepticism, a reminder of the diversity of cultures that make up Elfaivar. Dayal recruits workers to the manufactories by claiming they'll bring wealth to the nation, and so make future war unnecessary. Those who align with Adin Radhasi see industry as giving in to the colonizers' culture, and prefer instead to pursue magical innovation. Others who align with Dhebisu instead want to build muskets and railroads, because the strength they provide is more important than petty worries about cultural change.

But many are simply thrilled to find that canned food, cheap lumber, high-quality fabrics, and exotic foreign fashion have all become available. Indeed, while traditional Elfaivaran fashion still dominates in most of the city, factory women have adopted cage crinolines, fine corsets, and ornate heeled shoes as a lavish sort of uniform, wedding the new foreign forms with the local patterns and colors.

Wealth Collectives

Meanwhile, a system somewhat similar to the syndicalists' in the Danoran city Beaumont has arisen from the efforts of a number of entrepreneurially minded Elfaivarans. Since the gulmohar returned with no wealth, those looking for a way to acquire riches joined in collective ventures called *samanya*. Some *samanya* are like adventurer guilds setting out into the jungle to find treasures of the old empire. Others are traditional business ventures, just with a much broader base of investors.

The most successful collectives have funded the construction of artistic buildings to raise their profile. The *Mangal* collective, which runs the city's new natural gas network, has a campus of gleaming metal structures like the ribs of a silver titan. The *Vached* collective of treasure hunters operates from a small penthouse office atop a pair of curved plinths that form a towering O shape a hundred feet high. A nearby spire has a staircase that lets out onto a balcony, with a twenty foot gap to the penthouse; Elfaivarans can simply *fey step* across the gap.

The Lonely Companion

The *Akela Sathi* (Lonely Companion) is something of a sacred tavern, built into the trunk and root system of a massive tree, which snakes up the side of a great stone statue depicting Srasama, in her aspect of the maiden. The building serves three functions: aristocratic court, school, and brothel. It is that third role that generates controversy.

Shortly after the Great Malice, one of the overriding challenges among the Elfaivaran survivors was to protect the few surviving women—and later their daughters and granddaughters—while dealing with the threat of abduction and rape from the much larger population of men. And even though harm to women was grounds for execution, pride and lust was causing outbursts of violence.

The solution that Athrylla and the women she gathered to her at the founding of Sentosa was the *ananta paudha* (eternal saplings). Women could volunteer in a sacred role for seven years, serving as primarily a teacher to instill new customs their society needed, but also offering companionship. Men who passed their classes and met certain standards of behavior and duty could request one night per year at the *Akela Sathi* where, if an *ananta paudha* approved, he could enjoy luxurious pleasure and sensitive companionship.

Over the centuries the *Akela Sathi* changed the culture of Sentosa, teaching techniques of empathy, treatment for emotional traumas, and exceptional parenting. Compounds on the ground served as more traditional schools for the enclave's children.

Today, many gulmohar and most non-Elfaivarans see the *ananta paudha* as prostitutes, victims of a society dominated by men. However, even though the national gender disparity now skews the opposite direction, the asocar of Sentosa still see the *Akela Sathi* as a place of prestige, and indeed many prominent women of Rumah Terakir credit the school with giving them the skills and temperament to lead. The city is slowly reevaluating the institution.

Daily Life

Each day at least one of the broad thoroughfares in Rumah Terakir is transformed into an open marketplace, with hundreds of varicolored stalls and shops built from wood or erected under canvas, and with a constant flow of vendors. Most of these markets anchor to one of the city's old temples, and prosperous merchants have taken to commissioning new statues of Seedist deities they favor, to raise their profile. More scurrilous vendors will discreetly add advertisements for their wares onto the statues in order to claim divine association, which eagle-eyed rajputs constantly dismantle.

The marketplace is an immense point of pride for the city, as the ability to freely travel and sell their goods is an affirmation that the secrecy, rationing, and oppression of the previous age is over.

Once per month, a *grand* market threads between multiple thoroughfares, as travelers from around the country converge to buy and sell and share news. Nearly every single village in the Ran makes at least one appearance a year at one of these grand markets, and the most successful are those who distinguish themselves for some unique craft, no matter how niche. One of the most sought-after vendors is the coffee-bean trader **Bana Bhatta**, an old gulmohar woman who uses magic to sneak into the dens of dangerous animals and monsters that live near her village, so as to gather the finest beans found in the dung of such creatures.

Enclave Sentosa

The enclave of Sentosa lies within a pocket demiplane, coterminous and coexistent with the city of Rumah Terakir, though Sentosa's reality is far more verdant and rife with magic.

Entrance to the enclave passes through a great stone archway overseen by a woman named **Faedravan**, who bears the *enclave key*. Pocked and ancient, she considers the welfare of the enclave guardian, a great ten-headed lion, to be far more important than that of any entrant.

The enclave is relatively small, particularly compared to the glory of Rumah Terakir. A few dozen palace-sized buildings and the temple of Srasama are duplicated from the Waking. Several of these are closely guarded, as they are the site of arcanoscientific research, particularly into the use of planarite.

Occasionally the inhabitants of Rumah Terakir will manifest as ghostly figures in Sentosa, typically in times of great emotion, though the great spellcasters within the enclave have ensured such apparitions only flow one way.

Politics

After five centuries running Sentosa, Athrylla Valanar now is focused on guiding the nation. Her representative on Rumah Terakir's *tehsil* is **Auryn, daughter of Galadin**, known by the title *thakurani*. While she has Athrylla's favor and could basically run the city directly, she deeply values having others to question and challenge her impulses, so she insists the other two members on the *tehsil* be political rivals.



Born in Elfaivar just over a century ago, Auryn's course to her current position wove all across the world, but along the way she married a deva, **Gabriel Caryle**, who had in his first life been an adherent of the Clergy. During the Great Eclipse, the lovers' knowledge of both Elfaivaran and Clergy culture helped save the enclave Sentosa from a siege, earning Athrylla's enduring trust.

After years spent opposing injustice around Lanjyr, Auryn gained a mature understanding of the causes of crime. While she condemns the murderer, the thief, and the arsonist, she now recognizes how their crimes are impacted by the decades-prior malfeasances of the slumlord, the embezzler, and the corrupt bureaucrat. Rumah Terakir is, in essence, a newborn city, and Auryn has set herself the task of destroying institutional avarice before its rot can spread. Her focus is the rorts of those who were nobles in the old empire; the anticompetitive sabotages of nascent merchant-princesses; and the jungle-warping whims of powerful Elfaivaran fey.

Auryn demands that her rajput constables become masters of both balance sheets and battle, for crimes that begin on paper tend to resolve in bloodshed on the streets. One of the few indulgences of power she has allowed herself is earmarking a portion of Rumah Terakir's taxes to the construction of a musical venue, one to match the famed Navras Opera House of Flint.

Kanta Mahala

A temple refuge hidden by briars and waterfalls, Kanta Mahala, or "Bramblehome," was once the seat of the Children of Hewanharimau, known as the harimau elves. Now, the sanctuary is so much more. The cunning crone Dhebisu commands the service of harimau weretigers, divine assassins, and foreign anarchists in her plots to protect Elfaivar. Kanta Mahala is a city of dark joys, violent ambitions, and harsh justice.

History

For centuries, the harimau have been demonized as unclean savages, and their patron god Hewanharimau called a fiend or rakshasa. Enclaves rejected harimau, even actively hunted them, keeping them from establishing permanent settlements.

In approximately 446 AOV, the Sidhon tribe of the harimau discovered Ingatan's Refuge, an ancient abandoned temple to the god of fire and memory. They named their settlement Kanta Mahala and decided to serve the ancient deity, hoping Ingatan would bestow upon them the proof needed to exonerate Hewanharimau.

After the Great Eclipse, their prayers were answered. The vanished stars reappeared and the gulmohar stepped out of the forest, carrying forgotten memories. The legendary warrior Dhebisu spoke of her experience slaying what appeared to be a mighty rakshasa, and doing so with regret, for she recognized that this was some strange and debased alter ego of the once-beloved Hewanharimau. Whatever the rakshasa was, it was not the true Seedist god of the animals crucial to civilization.

Out of gratitude for this truth—and because she defeated the previous weretiger *raja* in a duel—the Sidhon and other tribes accepted Dhebisu as their leader.

Geography and Architecture

Kanta Mahala is built on multiple levels of a jungle growing outward from a dramatic jutting cliff, flanked by a pair of waterfalls. The cliff overhangs a cave, within which a massive statue of the four-armed Ingatan looms over a comprably humble temple. The entrance to the cave is a steep series of switchbacks surrounded by great thorny vines, and the oldest homes in the city are elegant wooden structures nestled within those vines.

Druidic architects have grown similar vines up and between the city's trees, creating a dizzying highway of greenery to connect different communities. The city's actual ground level is irregular, hilly, and often tangled with underbrush, with only a few paved streets. It is around these that foreigners tend to live, while the harimau residents are more comfortable navigating the forest floor or canopy. For holiday celebrations, the vines will blossom with flowers in celebratory patterns, and the city's parades are renowned for the stunning beauty of falling petals drifting on a gentle tidal breeze, almost like the city itself is inhaling and exhaling.

Temple of Fire and Memory

The temple of Ingatan is a humble, six-room stone structure, a sharp contrast to the grandeur of the statue above. Its most distinctive physical feature is a fresco of the idealized form of the god Ingatan: rotund, four-armed, flanked by elephants, and wielding flames of different colors in each hand, grey, red, yellow, and white.



There is no formal priesthood, only various volunteers who feel an obligation to maintain the building and who welcome visitors who want to meditate where the waterfall drowns out the outside world. Temporal magic thrums within the walls, and meditants experience visions from the far past, far future, near past, and near future. It is said that with the right offering to the four fires, these visions become visceral, providing a crucible for the visitor to face their mistakes and grow strong for a future challenge.

Politics

Dhebisu might hold power in Kanta Mahala, but she doesn't flaunt it. She has a modest mansion on a hill where she gardens and cooks for a large adopted family, casually discussing her global political agenda as she makes samosas or practices her dancing to stay flexible despite her advanced age.

Three of the most prominent groups in Kanta Mahala are the blessed weretigers, the misfit rajputs, and the vekeshi mystics.

The first group is led by **Betronga Sidhon**, head of one of the largest harimau tribes. Most harimau simply have some tiger features, but a few who receive the full blessing of Hewanharimau can transform fully into tigers, and gain other supernatural powers. One of these is fertility or virility. Kanta Mahala has more men per capita than any other major settlement in the country, and Betronga himself has eight children, unheard of among Elfaivaran men.

Betronga often acts the formal ambassador of the city and of the harimau more broadly, and has established strong ties with Danor. Danoran industrialists looking to bypass restrictions on their nation from the Orithean Concordat have been welcomed and granted citizenship here, though as yet the city is struggling to build the supply chains for meaningful industrialization.

The second group is a loose collection of warriors from diverse martial traditions. Dhebisu calls them her misfit rajputs, though only a few are formally trained in traditional Elfaivaran arts of war. One of those is the company's proud and prim asocar leader, **Saanvi Devdas**, said to be able to slice a musket bullet in half with her bare hands. The "rajputs" and their families often have small villas with servants, and are expected to act as protectors for small groups of menial laborers.

The third group, the vekeshi mystics, operate in shadows, handling spy networks in the city, the country, and beyond. Though many masked visitors are seen meeting with Dhebisu every day at her manor, no one really knows the true size of the group.

Muktism in Action

In a radical embrace of the transcendant libertarian philosophy *muktism*, Kanta Mahala has relatively weak laws compared to other Elfaivaran cities. There is no formal city watch, though there is a strong culture of protecting outsiders, and this draws many runaways and criminals who know that they can find shelter. But anyone who lives in the city for long ought to be intimidating enough to protect themselves, or else align themselves with a group that will back them up.

Many are recruited into a network of watchful eyes, reporting to a tangled web of spymasters from around Lanjyr, at least a few of which share the secrets they glean with Dhebisu. Others join religious cults, mercenary companies, or popular performing troupes.

Though this system might seem fertile ground for gangs and extortion, one of the few laws is that no one can be forbidden from leaving any of these groups. Dhebisu keeps an ear open for groups that terrorize the weak, and dispatches the *cakar malam* to teach them a lesson in what fear really feels like.

The *cakar malam* (or Night Claws) are the top of the food chain in Kanta Mahala, and many are suspected to be vekeshi mystics. Normally they oversee tasks as minor government functionaries, but when some group starts to take advantage of the city's lax laws, these servants of Dhebisu will stage violent assaults. Wearing terrifying masks, they abduct the leader of the offending group, bring them before the people they victimize, and then polymorph the person into a small game animal like a chousingha antelope, and polymorph the victims into tigers.

The rough edges of the city don't typically need dramatic shows of violence to keep things orderly. Every night some estate or other will be hosting a lavish party or sporting competition. The *cakar malam* often attend these gatherings, being courted by people looking to stay in the *rani*'s good graces, or persuading hosts to do her favors. After all, debauched parties are a good source of blackmail.

Fear, Fey, and the Foreign

The akhara of the Durala Carao (adepts of the Way of the Gun, page 53) lies on the outskirts of Kanta Mahala.

The adepts of the Durala Carao are renowned for the study of modern firearms, and often take on the added challenge of exploring the Dreaming analogue of the area and maintaining contact with the beings there. One of the monastery's early teachers, the gulmohar guru **Mallaya Asma**, has an old rivalry with Saanvi, head of the misfit rajputs. Saanvi is said to have torn off the guru's arm; today, Mallaya has an enchanted prosthesis of wood and steel that terminates in a gun barrel.

Retta Radhasi, Adin's daughter, also trains in the way of the gun and often performs public acrobatics for onlookers who visit the akhara. Spies who serve Adin Radhasi are said to be planning to abduct her and take her back to her mother, and so both Mallaya and Dhebisu are looking for a way to protect the young woman. Mallaya has invited representatives of the wayfarer cirquelistes to come to Kanta Mahala, thinking they and her adepts could learn much from each other, and perhaps they could bring Retta somewhere safe.

Kirimpulang

Port-base of the temple-warrior-queen Adin Radhasi, Kirimpulang is a city beholden to a more ancient morality: slavery, discipline, and unity through war.

History

Kirimpulang had been a shipyard during the *Perang Devar*, building enchanted vessels in the Dreaming, but after the Great Malice the magic that kept it connected to that other plane failed. Afterward a series of warlords claimed it as their redoubts, but by modern times it had become a ruin filled with evil spirits. Adin Radhasi retook it shortly after her resurrection, and began revitalizing the city, with the temple of her long-dead god as its heart.

Five years ago archaeologists from the city's new *Keataram* war academy managed to recreate the old link to the Dreaming, where a small fleet had survived, tended by fey who had been magically pledged to guard them. Since her failed attempt to annex Vendricce, Adin has focused her attention on growing these links to the Dreaming and building new military arctech.

The Arsenal of Dhebisu

Elfaivarans long told a tale of a god who turned against their pantheon and was transformed into a tiger that walked like a man: a rakshasa. As a god, no weapon in the world could harm him, and he ravaged the lands of Elfaivar, drowning villages and tearing entire cities free from the earth with a swipe of his clawed hands.

In the story, it was the warrior Dhebisu, infamous for her incongruous brilliance as a poet and lewd sense of humor, who befriended the cats of the jungle to learn of the monster's weakness, and consulted with sages to learn when the next meteor shower would occur. That night she sang a mocking tune to lure out the rakshasa.

The beast attacked her, but she pulled a falling star from the sky and wove it into her hair. Thenceforth any weapon she touched became infused with the powers of the heavens. They battled through the night, until finally, the rakshasa tried to slay her with a poisoned arrow. But Dhebisu snatched the bolt and plunged it into the fiend's loins, destroying it so that it could never reincarnate.

The story, long thought a legend, has been promoted to history, albeit with its embellishments sanded off. The aged Dhebisu, returned as a gulmohar, corroborated some of the details, but has promised not to spoil the tale by correcting parts that were wrong. She does, however, wonder whatever became of her arsenal after she died.

Geography

The old city center from the time of the empire lay in a wide valley surrounded by high walls cut through with canyons. The old temple of Pejuang Pencari—now rebuilt into Adin's palace—is the largest structure remaining. Much of the current population lives in structures built into the walls of the canyons, some of which descend into an as-yet ill-explored subterranean labyrinth. Huge pillars of stone support the ceilings of this massive cave, where majestic relief carvings from the time of the empire still adorn the wall.

During monsoon rains the canyons divert floods into the underground labyrinth, sparing the main district. However, when Adin first led her followers to slay the great serpent Avrati, the city had been in an accursed, years-long drought, and the surrounding land was barren, yielding little to feed the residents.



But vital aid arrived in the form of the asocar **Sokana Rell**, who just a year after the gulmohar's return arrived with a group of Elfaivarans that had spent their entire lives in Risur. Sokana brought magical boons from the Unseen Court, and used some precious knowledge of the Dreaming to persuade the land to offer its bounty.

Ever since, Kirimpulang's exact location has remained somehow magically hidden from foreigners. Maps can only approximate it, as the Dreaming

bleeds into the Waking world around it and befuddles explorers. The closest landmarks are the Three Brothers, a collection of standing stones somewhere between the colonies of Kellandia and Rationalis, often visited by the three types of Elfaivaran fey. Visitors who arrive there will be vetted, and then escorted to the city by Adin's fiercely loyal soldiers.

What Can You Do For Your Captor

Aside from Adin Radhasi's anticolonial war, Kirimpulang's defining institution is slavery. Countless colonists have been kidnapped as part of her raids. They are forced into cooking, cleaning, building, and repairing, with some volunteering to serve in her army. For now, these enslaved people live in strangely pleasant conditions, filling rich rooms of some long-dead *raja*'s palace.

Adin ensures that the people she has enslaved want for no food or entertainment as long as they obey. Any who refuse to work are beaten, put in sweltering isolation cells, and starved until they apologize and agree to return to work. Many resist until death, and—in keeping with the old ways—their skulls are taken to secret shrines beneath the city.

Solace Petrov is the most notable prisoner, a Drakran economist reluctantly leading the others and conveying their interests. Petrov continually tries to persuade Adin of the unsustainability of slavery in a modern economy.

Engines of Empire

The head of the Dreaming shipyard is **Amanjeevan Babbar**, a handsome asocar who had worked in Rationalis building steamships before being inspired by stories of Adin and coming to serve her. The shipyard is a truly strange environment, with loops of wood and stone creating portals that link the fairly dirty and industrial docks in the Waking to a parallel Dreaming dock filled with lily pads and silks that drift on a singing breeze. Strange fey there assist Amanjeevan, led by the avian **Veer-Zaza** who swore he would build and maintain ships here until he fulfilled a debt to an elf who died before the pledge could be discharged. Most of the other fey workers are similarly bound by compulsions which Adin and her advisors only half-understand.

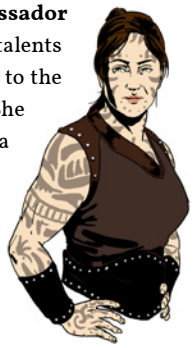
Many *shahi santaree* (imperial sentinels) jokingly speculate that the glamorous harbormaster and the beautiful Adin work so closely that they will end up a couple. However, Amanjeevan has so far disappointed his queen, for while he is learned in modern engineering and is quickly studying the arts of dreamcrafting, he has not yet been able to repair the damaged fleet of fire ships to the pristine condition they had before the Reclamation Crisis.

Politics

While Adin Radhasi relies on advisors, all authority is vested in her, and she takes responsibility for every misstep and bungle. She follows her ancient set of principles with absolute discipline. Within those principles, she can be surprisingly empathetic, compassionate, and kind. Many of her people find Adin's absolute lack of a sense of humor quite amusing itself.

One of her closest advisors is Sokana Rell, long ago an aid to a Risuri noblewoman and now something of a *persona non grata* after she published some scandalous information about the monarchy. Sokana's embittered knowledge of international politics meshes well with Adin's belief in the need for purity, and for action over capitulation or appeasement.

After Kellandia granted Adin's army sanctuary and defended them against pursuing Crisillyiri forces, Sokana advised her how best to exploit Risuri sentimentality to strengthen her military position. Adin makes regular trips to Kellandia to check on those *shahi santaree* who remained behind, and to perform various tasks and favors for **Governor Framenca**. The governor has offered to dispatch Risuri industrialists to construct a small technologist's workshop in Kirimpulang to produce tools and supplies. As well, Queen Iain has invited Adin to take part in planned naval races and Beran war games, although the Beran navy is still aggrieved over her Crisis exploits.



Not all Berans are hostile to Adin, however. **Ambassador Alonsa Frolian**, a middle-aged goliath famed for her talents at training warbeasts, serves as Ber's representative to the Ran, but spends most of her time in Kirimpulang. She hopes to parlay her shared warrior's mentality into a rapport with Adin, and she has had an unorthodox initial success in getting the warlord intrigued by the Beran team sport *cicada*.

War Grief

Thousands of Adin's soldiers put their hopes and dreams on their queen when they invaded Crisillyir and tried to reclaim the glory of Elfaivar. Their initial success led to months of nervous siege, then weeks of fearful flight, marching back to safety with nothing to show for their effort other than dead friends and war scars.

Adin sees the attempted reclamation as a success for Elfaivar's long-term prestige, but many common soldiers struggle. Kirimpulang is in many ways a utilitarian city; while there are entertainments and distractions, the returned soldiers feel they have no path ahead of them other than to remain warriors. Until Adin gives them orders, they are still officially tasked with defending the city and other lands she claims, so leaving would be desertion.

One of the great contrabands in the city are mobile ceraunic wave antennae, smuggled in by foreigners, which let disaffected veterans communicate via beeping code with others with similar experiences stationed around the region. Unexpectedly, these anonymous broadcasts have been picked up as far away as Ber and Crisillyir, and Adin's soldiers have discovered that they have more in common with the people they fought than they thought.

Other Places of Interest

- **Akravan** was a long-abandoned enclave. The gulmohar who resettled it formed close bonds with the flocks of giant fey birds that had made it their home. Now the small city is being pushed by Adin Radhasi to develop flying cavalry.
- **Bharat** is another former enclave, sacked by Danoran colonizers forty years ago. In the early days of resettlement, arcanoscientists from the Danoran colony Rationalis offered the gulmohar here generous aid in exchange for help studying the planar magic—thought long-lost—that connected the settlement to the Dreaming.

- **Denzil** was once the capital of the colony Tropaeum, but when Crisillyir ceded it after the Gulmohar Reclamation, Elfaivar renamed it. For Crisillyir the city was the center of a web of mines for gems and precious metals, and while most Elfaivarans are uncomfortable with this exploitation of natural resources, the residents of Denzil continue the practice, tempted by the wealth it lets them access in greater Lanjyr. Former colonials who offend the city's elf governor find themselves sentenced to perilous labor in the mines.
- **Gamana** was an enclave destroyed in the Great Eclipse, now gripped with strange magical flux that pulls it back and forth to the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate. It is said that a cell of Vekeshi mystics use its ruins as a place of penance and imprisonment for those who betray Elfaivar.
- **Gorov** is the capital of the Drakran colony Atto, which embraces a philosophy of making oneself useful and unobjectionable in order to avoid being harmed by those more powerful than you. Visitors report the atmosphere incredibly pleasant and agreeable, with a strange mix of the warmest elements of dwarven hospitality and Clericist work ethic, tinged by whimsy due to its alliance with the fey.
- **Macdam** lies on the massive isle of Titania, technically within the Risur colony of Kellandia. Founded during the Second Yerasol War when Risur was particularly hostile to the idea of technology and industry, the town became home for misfit technologists. Any research Risur wants to perform that the mainland residents might balk at is welcomed here.
- **Madhyasthata** is one name for the lands east beyond Shaha, filled with inhospitable steppes, and home to nomads who travel between ruined cities once controlled by old Elfaivar. It is said to be more than a thousand miles before the next true civilized nation.
- The **Perpetual City** is a grand oddity—an abandoned city east of Kanta Mahala, built downward into the earth and seething with wild magic—which not a single Elfaivaran, not even the oldest gulmohar, knows the history of. It contains ruins that seem to meld early Clergy and Elfaivaran architecture, adorned with iconography of truly immense beasts.
- **Port Perrault** was established as a Danoran base for pirate hunters, chosen for nearby hills that provide coal for refueling early steam engines. Its shipyard is negotiating to help the *Ran* build their own modern arctech navy.
- **Redenzion** in the colony Angelus was the first Crisillyiri city on the Elfaivaran subcontinent. Before the return of the gulmohar it only had about twenty-five thousand people, but it is growing rapidly, and Ottoplismists are flocking there, eager to build up its military defenses for an expected future war.
- **Sawyer** is capital of the Risuri colony Kellandia. It provides magically-resonant timber for shipbuilders, and is home to an orthodox druidic circle known as the Ford, which hopes to earn the trust and loyalty of the eladrin people.
- **Shaha** lies on the last fertile stretch of coast, just beyond the eastern border of Elfaivar's grand forest. Its elites live at the peak of pre-industrial splendor, wealthy from an extensive and magically bound slave trade. Residents almost never speak within earshot of outsiders.
- The **Sindu River** runs south from Rumah Terakir to the sea, passing through the ruins of Ravana.
- **Ushanti** is the only demiplane enclave other than Sentosa that survived the Great Eclipse. The entrance—an invisibile extradimensional portal, which requires an enchanted braid to see and enter—drifts all across Elfaivar in a monthly circuit. The pocket realm is scarcely two miles across, built along the banks of a river that flows in the shape of an infinity symbol.
- **Vai Dormir** was once the small capital city of the colony Vigilia. The gulmohar mockingly renamed it to be a command, "Go to sleep." Once little more than a forward operating base for hunting Elfaivarans in the remotest jungles, the city has become a place of study for mages seeking to craft saṃsāra-fey.
- **Valence**, the capital of Danor's colony Rationalis, is a technologist's paradise, standing out for its coastal skyscapers, several of which rise over two hundred feet tall, glowing with electric lights.
- **Vasundar** was a demiplane enclave devastated by the Great Eclipse. It housed many artistic treasures, and it is being rebuilt into a city of tranquil reflection, with museums and an academy for artists.

Risur

Name: Kingdom of Risur
Capital: Slate
Other Major Cities: Flint, Bole, Shale
Teleportation Beacons: All major cities, and various druidic holy sites
Government: Constitutional monarchy
Head of State: Skyseer-Queen Iain Waryeye
Official Language: Primordial
Common Heritages: Human 85%, elf 5%, halfling 5%, other 5%

Introduction

In Risur, lately everything has been going well. Inspiring leadership and heroic unity during the Great Eclipse sheltered the nation from disaster. Since then, devoted and wise governance brought prosperity to the people, protected vital alliances with fey in the Dreaming, and even fostered a mutual respect between the nobility and the commoners. Risur has shared its innovations and prosperity with other nations, making the country a model for others to aspire to. And though that success breeds some resentment, where Risur goes, the rest of the world follows.

Alas, Risur's victories are not something every nation can emulate. From the nation's founding, the monarch has derived supernatural power from both the assent of the landed nobility—descended from the rulers of various clans and small kingdoms nearly two thousand years ago—and the acceptance of the masses—an eclectic mix of peoples from diverse migrations over the centuries. The ruler can *feel* public disapproval, and so those prone to tyranny and indolence have never held power long enough to cause much damage.

But tension does exist. Risur's ancient alliance with the Unseen Court and deep druidic traditions have been strained by new



industry that tears up nature and supernaturally distresses the fey. Profits tempt factory owners to abuse their workers, and new fortunes fracture long-cemented social strata. The majestic might of the military has provided stability and safety that is breeding complacency, right as a new queen seeks to exert her power on an international stage, and the esteemed Royal Homeland Constabulary sees looming efforts to cut the nation's legs out at the knees, from groups who feel this colossus of a country is overdue for a humbling.

Grand History

Every Risuri child knows that before **King Kelland**, no nation had ever endured more than a few years in Lanjyr. Every land had its own great territorial monsters that would crush young kingdoms. The land that would become Risur was no exception. Many nomadic human tribes and isolated elven towns were terrorized by the five fey titans, and incursions by eerie beings from the Dreaming were common.

Then in roughly 1200 BOV, the hero Kelland subdued each of the fey titans in turn and forced them to slumber. He began to unite the scattered peoples of the land and promised that as their king, he and his successors would protect their shared nation from the titans. Kelland likewise forged an alliance with several lords of the Dreaming who would go on to become the Unseen Court. Their leader **Thisraldion** lives to this day, or at least someone who claims the same name.

With the riches of the land finally theirs for the taking, the people of Risur quickly grew into strength and wisdom. Soon all land north of the Anthras Mountains was pledged to Kelland, and the peoples wove their varied religions into what would become the Old Faith, guided by prophetic priests known as skyseers.

When Kelland was near death, he offered his crown to his daughter, but she was clever and advised him that his true legacy would not be his family, but a stable kingdom. So began the tradition of the monarchy passing to the most worthy, rather than to kin, though typically each monarch's family gain lands and join the nobility.

Over the centuries, intermittently the fey titans would awaken, and the monarch would fulfill the responsibility of Kelland, defending the nation and forcing the titan back into submission. But as other nations arose around the world, Risur was only rarely truly threatened.

Great Power

When the Demonocracy arose, Risur kept its corruption from crossing the Avery Sea, but after their defeat by Triegenes, Risur had no existential foes for centuries. Occasionally some hierarch in the Clergy or raja from Elfaivar would think to establish a foothold, and there were always raids and even occasional wars from Ber to the south, but historically Risur was more likely to be the *aggressor* than the target.

For instance, it was King Boyle in 300 AOV who purportedly slew the last dragon tyrant of Ber. But Risur's power comes from its land, and from its people's consent to their monarch. Short-lived attempts to annex parts of Ber or the Stena region of Drakr failed. The only expansion that ever had much success was the colony of Kellandia in Elfaivar after the Great Eclipse, and even today a sizeable number of elderly Elfaivaran men from the Diaspora still live in remote villages in the Antwalk Thicket.

Risur: Landscape and Cuisine

Risur is a subtropical country, with temperatures warm but comfortable year-round, though a rainy season strikes near the end of what the northern nations consider summer. Even the poorest Risuri can enjoy fresh fruit from its bounteous agriculture. Wealthy foreigners cherish Risur's pineapples, limes, bananas, and massive jackfruit, but most prized are its cocoa and sugarcane, and alcohols made of each.

A typical Risuri meal consists mostly of fruit, beans, bread, and fish, with occasional beef or pork. Manufactory workers in Flint seldom can afford quality meat, and instead make savory stews by soaking bones and sausages in dark beans. Holiday celebrations often include steaming milk flavored with either chocolate or honey.

See The Six Titans for more details on the landscape of Risur.

Risur at a Glance

These are the major figures, groups, and locations in Risur most foreigners have heard about.

- **Queen Iain Waryeye.** Recently-crowned monarch, the first gnome to rule Risur, thought to be globally ambitious to counter assumptions that her small size would make her timid.
- **Former King Baldrey Korrigan.** The ruler of Risur during the Great Eclipse, who earned near-universal respect for finding allies among all the great nations and spearheading efforts to restore the sun and stars.
- **Benedict Pemberton.** Founder of Pemberton Industries, advocate for unbridled corporatism, and informal ruler of the steelmarked gnolls in Ber.
- **Hana "Gale" Soligon.** Governor of Flint with a controversial past whose time in power may be near its end—and so too her role as an ally of the city's industrial workers.
- **Alienor Contessa Soliogn-Stark.** Tiefling from Danor who became a member of the Unseen Court, to the dismay of many who grew up seeing Danor as the enemy.
- **The Unseen Court.** Engimatic leaders of the fey who live in the Dreaming analogue to Risur.
- **The Fey Titans.** Five colossal entities that exist in both the Dreaming and the Waking, to whom Risur offers regular appeasement in exchange for wonderful blessings.
- **Skyseers.** Folk prophets tied to the druidic Old Faith who can predict the future by watching the stars.
- **Flint.** The most cosmopolitan and thriving city in the world, rich with industry but nestled amid natural splendor, welcoming to international visitors and immigrants, and bursting with artistic innovation.
- **Slate.** Official capital of Risur, a stately and conservative city that forbids industry.



However, while Risur may have controlled and exploited the Yerasol Archipelago for centuries, the people there never saw themselves as Risuri. Still, it shocked the nation when, in the 4th century AOV, Danor began to contest Risur for control of the islands. This sparked two centuries of bitter conflict: the four Yerasol Wars.

Bloody Archipelago

The First Yerasol War ended in 366 AOV in a stalemate, the Second ended in 399 AOV in Danor's favor, and the Third ceased in 460 AOV to Risur's benefit. The Fourth and final war formally concluded in 493 AOV, with Risur yielding a large amount of island territory to native and Danoran control.



Great fleet battles and bloody guerilla engagements stoked high tempers, and the few efforts to cool tensions—like when Danoran inventor **Amielle Latimer** visited Flint to assist with the defeat of the witches of the Hunchback in 400 AOV—were never parlayed into peace. Successive generations of Yerasol veterans were propagandized into heroes, and then the grunts from the last war became the leaders ordering troops to fight in the next.

Clouded Skies

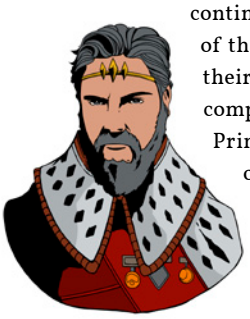
In 500 AOV, however, **King Aodhan Lesterman**, a former privateer whose theft of a Danoran warship forty years prior had helped kickstart Flint's industrial boom, sought to end the rivalry between the two nations by marrying **Lya Jierre**, daughter of Danor's sovereign. He faced great resistance, including an assassination attempt by his own sister and a rebel lord of the Unseen Court trying to provoke a war between the two realms.

He survived those, but his hope for peace seemed doomed. During the peace summit, a 300-foot-tall metal colossus exploded out of Flint's Cauldron Hill. After heroic efforts by the people of the city, Aodhan managed to banish the mysterious construct into the Dreaming, then addressed his cheering people to lay the blame for the disaster upon Danor and its sovereign.

Aodhan had decades earlier created the Royal Homeland Constabulary, and after the peace summit failed, he entrusted a group of elite constables led by **Baldrey Korrigan** to deal with the conspiracy that had created the colossus. In the year-long international mission of spycraft that followed, Baldrey would make many of the allies he would soon need. Hours before the stars fell from the sky, a coup overcame Aodhan, and in his last breaths he chose Baldrey as his successor.

The Great Eclipse

Each nation faced its own terrible trials during the Great Eclipse, and for Risur that struggle took the form of the fey titans. For the first time in seventeen centuries, all five had awoken at once. But this epic challenge ended up proving to the people of Risur that their new King Baldrey was worthy of his crown, as he outwitted or outfought each of the titans in turn. The king's swift victories staved off the despair that gripped the populations of other nations of Lanjyr.



More importantly, though, Baldrey had allies around the continent, and he was able to persuade his citizens of the need to help the rest of the world against their calamities. Either the king himself or his companions played pivotal roles in saving Alais Primos from a demonic lava dragon, Mirsk from obliteration by doomsday cultists, Ursaliña from otherworldly psychic invaders, and even Cherage from a hivemind that would have consumed the entire city. They destroyed the magical lighthouses that the Danoran sovereign had intended to use to control the entire world.

And then, in a moment that seems supernaturally obscured from the recollection of those who were not directly involved, the king and his allies engaged some foe at Axis Island in the Yerasol Archipelago, and during this conflict King Baldrey somehow triggered the return of the sun and stars. Before long, every person in the world knew that it was the monarch of Risur who had led the efforts to save them all.

A New World Order

Risur entered a golden age after the eclipse ended, and though many sought to exalt King Baldrey, he made concerted efforts to share the glory, raise the profiles of those who had helped him, and to use the immense support he had to get previously fractious groups in Risur to make concessions and shake hands in good spirits.

Internationally, Baldrey tried to do the same at the Orithean Concordat, but he lacked the same authority and the necessary familiarity with complex local disputes. Plus, the other nations had all suffered greater disasters than Risur. Though heartened by what progress he did see, Baldrey was repeatedly heard to say that, "It's chaos, but beautiful chaos, and it's probably for the best they don't all agree with me."

Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis

The details of this conflict are explained in more depth in the sections on Crisillyir and Elfaivar, but from Risur's perspective, it marked the end of the era of King Baldrey and convinced the broader public that the good times were here to stay. The local press had catapulted itself into a fit of doomsaying in the early weeks of the crisis, promising that Risur would be drawn in and that the golden age would end in fire. Papers proclaiming the king had nearly been assassinated sold so many copies that it's still possible to turn up discarded editions in the cities' gutters even three years later.

Writings of King Baldrey

Three years after the Great Eclipse, Baldrey Korrigan published *Dialogues by the Pyre*, a critique of the writings of William Miller (see page 119) and an attempt to move Millerism forward. It has become a seminal work of modern philosophy, but is also popular with the masses because it includes threads of the king's adventures saving the world from the Great Eclipse, and his wisdom from ruling afterward.

Dialogues begins with a list of his allies during the eclipse and how they variously disagreed with him. Then it shifts to vignettes from the past five centuries of how different groups had tried to enact Miller's teachings, using them to critique areas Miller had been overly simplistic or naïve.

The text's main thesis is to go beyond hypothesizing about "ideal societies," and to understand how to actually enact them. Whatever change you desire, Baldrey writes, will only extend as far as your power, and the range of power depends on the consent of others. Pushing for extreme upheaval leads to backlashes, like the fate Miller himself suffered.

Baldrey speaks of his own limits as king, and ultimately concludes that the world was saved from the Great Eclipse not because he had the *best idea* for how to guide the new age, but because he was open in his actions, and sought the honest opinions of allies from around Lanjyr. The "ideal society," ultimately, must change with the times, and so everyone should have a voice in its shape.

The king penned two other prominent texts. Early in the eclipse he circulated among his advisors Project Illumination, a discussion of possible ways to bring back the sun. Of the nine copies that survive, all of them have identical strange gaps regarding—

Toward the end of his reign, he wrote *Letters from Tomorrow*, an imagined epistolary discourse with a series of citizens from different possible future versions of Lanjyr. It is less popular since it lacks the hints of the king's dramatic adventures that drew many to *Dialogues*. Many readers find the prose dry, and the voices of the different "citizens" too uniform. The last section, however, is cherished for a tone that is more earnest and impassioned, where Baldrey outlines his vision for Risur's future.

King Baldrey had doubts about how he resolved the crisis, and abdicated so a new monarch could rule over a safe, prosperous Risur, but his citizens celebrated the king's successful reign. The new ruler, the gnome skyseer **Iain Waryeye**, was received with grand celebratory parties that ran deep into the night so revelers could look to the stars in her honor, and the nation had itself a hearty chuckle for overreacting about that whole "war" thing.

The Present

Risur has seen three main changes since Queen Iain was crowned.

First, technology has spread deeper into the countryside, with many scattered towns accepting investments of small factories. Baldrey had sought to keep industry concentrated in Flint and a few other cities to avoid angering the fey, but Iain believes it is necessary to acclimate the fey—especially those in the Dreaming—to technology. And if that fails, the more citizens who have gained wealth from the industrial revolution, the more minds will be at work trying to invent arctech that doesn't bother the fey.

The isolated factories and the jobs they create seem to be popular. However, efforts to connect the heartland with railroads and ceraunic wire communication are regularly disrupted by angry fey, who do not like straight lines cutting through their wilderness.

Second, in a reversal of seventeen centuries of tradition, rather than using her power to keep the fey titans subdued in slumber, Queen Iain has made them allies, employing the Titan Conclave rangers to satisfy their immense whims, which has yielded a grand bounty of magical boons. Fecund herds blessed by the Father of Thunder have let Risur export livestock. Charcoal from near the lair of the Ash Wolf can, when mixed with firegems, imbue the smoke from furnaces to disperse rather than linger over settlements, while many newlyweds or grieving widows and widowers take pilgrimages to shrines in the Antwalk Thicket, which has become a popular tourist area.

The gremlins of Granny Allswell craft charms to ward people against dark magic and machinery against wear and tear. And She Who Writhes has exerted her influence with the strange entities of the Avery Sea to uplift new barrier islands that host residences for the elite, while seaweed left at the site of her rare appearances has become cherished ingredients in aphrodisiacs. The boons of the Hollow Widow are more enigmatic, consisting of lost treasures or tomes of secrets mysteriously appearing in museums and libraries. However, High Bayou silk is popular in fashion and in bandages.

Third, hedonism and excess are becoming widely popular, with elites flaunting their wealth and the working class seeing such grandeur as attainable. Confidence that things are good and the lack of any clear danger to the country is turning the national mood celebratory, and people are less interested in the good stewardship King Baldrey modeled, which was the very cause of Risur's success.

The public is disinterested in politics, and few people give much mind to the new queen. Even her efforts to be seen as a serious international negotiator are often the target of friendly jests in newspaper cartoons or the graffiti of Flint's dockers.

As Lanjyr's superpower, Risur must preserve peace, and so Queen Iain is trying to launch the Concert of Nations. Every month that passes without a major conflict is a month in which Risur can secure its position and its influence on this new age. Peace allows for the spread of Risuri trade goods, Risuri culture, and Risuri naval power. Such reach can be a double-edged sword, though, for there is no conflict so remote that it does not impact upon Risuri interests. And for now at least, the people of Risur no longer keep a wary eye on the threats rising around them.

The Government and Its Leader

On paper, Risur is ruled by a parliament. Twenty-three governors direct the affairs of Risur's provinces and send representatives to Risur's national parliament, which consists of a mix of appointees who serve the nobility and elected representatives. Parliamentarians may override royal decrees with a supermajority, but this almost never occurs. In practice, Risur's parliament is a glorified bureaucracy, responsible for advising the monarch, refining decrees to balance the interests of various power groups, and coordinating a web of agencies, institutions, and ministries.

True power in Risur can be found in the crown, and in the House of Nobles.

The House of Nobles

Born from the chiefs and rulers who knelt to King Kelland, and from those who have performed great services to the crown, the House of Nobles is empowered by tradition and by rite. The monarch's power, the Rites of Rulership, depends on the accord of the nobles. Nobles are, by law, allotted a great range of powers, privileges, and powerful privileged positions in Risuri society and government. Many of Risur's twenty-three governors are of noble lineage, passing their role and their titles down family lines; a number of these governors are even descended from former kings and queens.

Opportunity



As Risur increases its power and reach, so too do its legions of knights, barons, viscounts, earls, marquesses, and dukes see opportunities of their own. Nobles such as **Reeve-Duchess Clare Romana**, not wanting to upset the apple cart of public approval at home, are exerting influence in Risur's overseas endeavors.

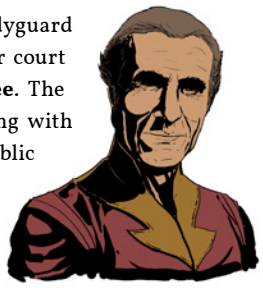
The news reports that Romana was on the outs with King Baldrey, who thought she was being bribed by industrialists to push for national investment in their companies. Under Queen Iain, however, Romana has reinvented herself as an advocate for Risuri integrity. She travels to other nations, accompanied by RHC agents who identify local corruption in industry, and then she makes the case for the local government to offer incentives to lure Risuri companies, with their more "honest" leadership.



Despite the end of the Yerasol Wars, Risur still maintains a military presence in the archipelago. Diplomacy with the locals is directed by **Thane-Duchess Murdok Westin**, a martial scientist who earned a noble title for deeds performed on Axis Island during the Great Eclipse. The rough-edged ex-soldier hopes to use the threat posed by monsters brought in on planar storms to bring the islanders into formal alliance with Risur, but she is stymied by her other efforts to crack down on piracy, as the people of the isles have long seen pirates as heroes bloodying the nose of an oppressive colonizer.

Lord of the Land, Monarch of the Masses

Skyseer-Queen Iain Waryeye the Twofold is neither the most imposing nor the most regal of queens. The short middle-aged gnome is unbothered by the size disparity between her and her regular attendants—her imposing bodyguard **Dame Jillian the Green Knight**, and her court wizard **Principal Minister Harkover Lee**. The normally reserved Lee is playfully obliging with his queen, though, and in some lighter public events he has demonstrated inexplicable strength to let the chatty monarch sit on his arm for hours at end, to better maintain eyelines with those around her.



The Twofold Skyseer

Iain is a powerful conjurer, adept in planar magic, and is only the third Risuri monarch to know the arts of the skyseers, but she possesses an even stranger power. In the hours before the Great Eclipse during the assassination attempt on King Aodhan, Iain attempted to *plane shift* to the Dreaming to enlist reinforcements. As the stars fell from the sky she thought her spell had failed, but when she next slept she dreamed of a version of herself stranded in the Dreaming, which had been cut off from the Waking.



These dreams continued until the end of the eclipse, when she realized that she had a second self, a mirror image who lived in the Dreaming and shared one soul with her. In time she learned to control both halves of herself at once, which made her an excellent ambassador to the Unseen Court. Once she took the throne, Iain made long-term relations with the Dreaming a priority, and announced a prize for innovations that would let Risur continue its technological progress without angering the fey.

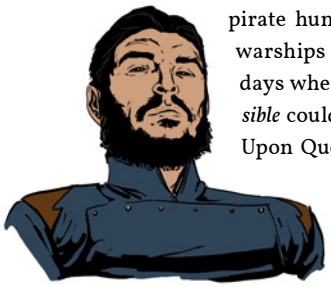
Militant Queen

Iain's critics accuse her of "gunboat diplomacy." She has been openly jingoistic about proclaiming Risur and its reflection to be the greatest nation in the world, and has presided over a massive military expansion including multiple new generations of warships. She sees her fleet as the core of a police force ensuring safe international trade, enforcing the Orithean Concordat, and deterring skirmishes between rival powers that might spiral into war.

Her expansion is embodied by the launch last year of two arctech wonders—the RNS *Lafferty* and *Wintry Song*—and the imminent launch of the flying battleship *Burning Sky*. More subtly, her investment in the nation's Gale Fleet—seven skyships that rely solely on magically-enhanced wind, not mechanical steam engines, is a seed that may soon bloom into all manner of fey-friendly arctech.

Military

Each province maintains its own small standing army, all loyal to the monarch. Soldiers typically serve a term of a few years in garrison at Flint, Shale, or in one of the numerous outposts along the Anthras Mountains. Afterward they have the option to return home or transfer to another province's ranks. While Risur's academies of martial science are prestigious, few soldiers have seen battle, and many wonder if in the future constructs like those of Pemberton Industries will replace the need for infantry.



The navy, by contrast, is active in peacekeeping and pirate hunting around Lanjyr, and technology for warships is always being challenged. Gone are the days where an extreme clipper like the RNS *Impossible* could make do with a single deck of cannons. Upon Queen Iain's ascent, the captain of that old ship, **Rutger Smith**, resigned in protest. He claims Risur's navy was becoming too caught up in technology and tactics, and that the leadership had a weak philosophical core which would lead them to sacrifice lives unnecessarily.

Indeed, many generals and admirals are thrilled at the possibility of Risur demonstrating its arcanotechnological prowess should a new conflict erupt. The head of Risur's military development, **Kaja "The Gun Summoner" Stewart**, discovered how to conjure shotguns, carbines, and cannons like traditional summoners can conjure beasts. More recently she has dazzled her queen with autonomous lantern blasters, teleporting mortars, and unsettling mechanical walking turrets that promise to be more efficient than the outlandish totemist inventions offered by Pemberton Industries.



Royal Homeland Constabulary

The Royal Homeland Constabulary (known outside of the kingdom as the Risuri Homeland Constabulary), is an elite investigation, intelligence, and covert operations agency. Charged with securing Risur against mundane and supernatural threats within its borders and beyond, exceptionally-talented RHC constables roam the kingdom, the world, and even the planes to procure information and items that might benefit the nation and to arrest or slay any dangerous elements.

The late King Aodhan Lesterman established the RHC in 470 AOV, inspired by the various "adventurer"s guilds' that once dotted the nation. The Constabulary has had its shortcomings, like its embarrassing failure to address the "Vekeshi" killings in Flint from 493 to 499 AOV, but its efficiency and authority have greatly expanded since then. Today, although the RHC is officially based in Slate, its Flint offices maintain all critical operations and oversight.

The Constabulary is one of the wealthiest, most well-staffed, and most powerful organizations in all the Waking. The organization as a whole answers directly to the queen, and wields considerable power over Risuri nobles, politicians, military personnel, and police officers. Even the lowliest of RHC constables might be assigned to directly influence a major international incident, and the most influential of operatives can boss around even Risuri dukes and duchesses, much to the aristocracy's chagrin.

Tactics and Recruitment

The RHC maintains informants and safehouses across Lanjyr. Through elaborate systems of cover identities, infiltration, and exfiltration, constables undertake covert operations that flagrantly flout local laws, jurisdictions, privacy, and sometimes, humanoid rights. But they are adept at plausibly denying their mistakes, while publicly acknowledging whenever one of their agents saves the day.

The constabulary recruits from everywhere: police, military organizations, temples, universities, the nobility, and, at times, even other nations and planes. While a baseline of noteworthy abilities is required for entry, a prospective constable's overall talents at the moment of recruitment matters less than their long-term growth potential and their moral backbone.

The RHC uses extensive, costly divination ceremonies to scan each prospective employee, whether for a prestigious position as a constable, or for a humbler role as a mere security guard or



secretary. The RHC is willing to overlook heavy loyalties elsewhere, even to dubious friends or family, or secret societies such as the Vekeshi mystics, so long as the safety of Risur is important to the candidate.

Leadership and Offices

In theory, the RHC is led by **Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill**, a seasoned veteran of the Third and Fourth Yerasol Wars, famed for arresting a cabal of radical eschatologists who nearly reanimated myriad dragon-fossils in the Anthras Mountains. In practice, Price-Hill is too old for much more than gladhanding with the nobility, and the real RHC leadership is concentrated in the Flint offices, run by the coldly calculating **Chief Inspector Bela Motofukar**.

The office in Shale has expertise in dealing with extraplanar threats, and often surveils vagabonds arriving from the Yerasol Archipelago. Bole's office is closely affiliated with the Titan Conclave rangers, as the city is a nexus of the territory of three of the fey titans. Slate's office, tasked with the protection of the queen, is also the seat of the obscure Ministry of Infilitration, which prepares for threats via plane travel and teleportation.

But Flint's office is seen as the source of the constabulary's most clever gadgets, overseen by **Director of Arctech Serena Castle**. She works in concert with the steelmarked gnoll **Gris Floresta**, a special liaison to Pemberton Industries, which has a close yet secretive relationship with the constabulary.

Internal Affairs

RHC members can rely on certain legal immunities overseas when acting in an official, acknowledged capacity; the potential launch of the Concert of Nations is likely to expand this. In Risur, constables are invested with the authority of the monarch and thus have flexibility in bending or outright ignoring the law. For example, while normal police must acquire warrants before they can search a building, RHC constables generally don't need one; they are trusted to not abuse their authority and so can act as swiftly as needed.

Nevertheless, for the sake of ethics, integrity, optics, and, as many overlook, pragmatism, the constabulary must abide by certain standards during open operations. They must type out proper paperwork, hand over photographic evidence, and verbally justify any questionable actions before internal affairs officials. Operatives must relinquish all mission-spoils, not keep trophies. A constable who uses their power for personal gain, or to harass a highly important politician without a very good reason, will rapidly find themselves penalized, demoted, and potentially imprisoned.

During interrogations, constables are forbidden from using force or torture, but can freely enlist office mages to employ *detect thoughts* and *zone of truth* spells. In the field, constables are expected to take suspects alive whenever possible. Everyone in Risur is still entitled to due process, at least in theory; and although spirit mediums can wring out information from a corpse, a living suspect can often proffer far more information.



The Six Titans

Each of the five fey titans is associated with a different region of Risur.

The northern Avery Coast is dominated by a mix of wooded beaches, where mountainous granite domes rise out of the sea and anchor dry lands; and forested swamps, often referred to by the native Elvish word "bayou," where the country's many rivers sweep soil out into broad floodlands. The seas along the coast are dominated by **She Who Writhes**.

The Weftlands of Risur are low plains covering most of the western two-thirds of the country, drawing their name from the countless rivers that weave toward the sea like yarn in a cloth. Most towns and *plant-growth*-supplemented farms lie here, though pockets of wild forests and rocky hills create uninhabitable divides between provinces. Here tromps **The Father of Thunder**.

The land rises to the south, and in the mid-altitude hills, an unusual swamp known as the High Bayou wriggles across the landscape. Though the hills are uneven, huge numbers of nesting beasts and giant insects have dammed swaths of the land, slowing the rivers that flow out of the mountains and ensuring a steady source for rivers year-round. Few Risuri live here aside from villages of elves who never integrated with the rest of the nation. The new and mysterious **Hollow Widow** hides here.

Beyond the High Bayou, the rain-carved Anthras Mountains forms a broad border with Ber. Forests cover most of these mountains, though mining in the east has stripped many peaks. Many decades ago, repeated attacks from Ber kept many towns from flourishing, but numerous old forts dot the King's Road, which runs from the richest mining lands and all the way north to the capital. The eerie **Granny Allswell** haunts the caves beneath these peaks.

The Antwalk Thicket is a great expanse of finely cultivated forest-gardens southeast of Slate. The woodland is the domain of the **Ash Wolf**.

The five are kept in check by the offerings and intercessions of the Titan Conclave rangers (see page 62). However, during the reign of King Baldrey, artists in Flint have begun to speak—ironically or not—of a *sixth* titan, the titan of civilization. Murals and folk songs depicted Baldrey as this titan, a figure greater than a mere man.

Upon his abdication, however, this same cult of personality did not transfer to his successor Queen Iain. Instead, the great colossus that burst forth from Cauldron Hill is increasingly being identified as this titan, with people who were too young to witness the actual construct's rampage being drawn to tales that the mighty machine was actually birthed from the Dreaming, conjured from the landscape of industry and urban sprawl.

Titanic Zealots

While the Titan Conclave rangers are supposed to be servants of Risur and merely emissaries to the titans, some extremist cults have arisen around the nation, seeking to gain personal favor, rather than blessings for the whole country.

Fanatical Ash votaries set blazes to forests, fields, and construct-bolstered manufactories alike, hoping to give their patron new opportunities to catch glimpses of his ghostly mate. Radical

The Sword of the Black Needles

Five centuries ago, as Lanjyr was reeling from the fall-out from the Great Malice, a fey titan known as the Voice of Rot rose up against Risur and cast a smoky pall across the sun. The king at the time, Dukain, was a mighty but aged wizard who wielded magic through his sword. He traveled to a mountain ridge overlooking the High Bayou, known as the Black Needles, and there he battled the fey titan, which had taken the form of a towering anaconda of smoke and peat.

The king battled the titan high into the Black Needles, and after three days neither side could force the other to surrender. Realizing he could not defeat the titan and thus was unworthy of his crown, Dukain cast aside his sword and abandoned the battle. The titan, in its fey logic, saw that it and the king were equally matched, so when Dukain ceased to fight, so did the titan. Dukain yielded his crown to his chosen successor, the titan returned to its slumber, and Risur was saved.

The Voice of Rot vanished during the Great Eclipse, and Risuri druids believe his domain has been claimed by a new titan, the Hollow Widow. To prevent conflicts with the titans, modern Risuri maintain regular offerings to the titans to appease them and gain their blessings, but the Hollow Widow keeps her distance, and it is possible that the current Risuri monarch will need to once again defeat a fey titan in battle to protect her nation.

Thunder priests drag beautiful women into drunken orgies, and sabotage electrical facilities, believing only their Father to be worthy of harnessing lightning.

Overzealous Allswell shamans kidnap naughty children and teens, and traumatize them with vile trials and dark magics, enacting a twisted form of Granny's justice; others use trickery and curses to enact criminal deeds, such as some mobsters in the Last Ravens of Flint. Extremist Writhe votaries scourge the seas for plunder and pretty lads and lasses, saving some for themselves and the rest to hurl towards the she-kraken.

The Hollow Widow has her curious blood cultists, who abduct wizards and slit their throats in the High Bayou, placing their spellbooks upon the corpse as an offering. And a group known as the White Tongue are still devoted to the absent or dead Voice of Rot, culling the living they deem unworthy, and offering one eye from each of their victims to raise up great masses of undead. When these maniacs die, a white serpent slithers from their mouths and burrows into the earth.

Bole

Once the capital of a militant elven nation, Bole today maintains the patient sensibilities of its elven founders, but has traded the pursuit of conquest for the pursuit of good times. A laid-back city at the confluence of four of Risur's geographic regions—the Anthras Mountains, Antwalk Thicket, the Weftlands, and the High Bayou—Bole is a national hub of ore, lumber, whiskey, and titanic worship.

History

The Great Delve River is named for the deep furrow it cuts in the land, running from the capital city Slate all the way to Shale at the coast, but upstream near Bole it flows wide and shallow, fed by irregular tributaries that weave through hilly forests. Tens of thousands of people live here in wooded villages, quaint and beautiful



communities that live at a graceful pace. Due to the long lifespans of the local elves, most of these villages have familial ties with the founders of Bole, the warlord **Cinder Queen Cantor** and her kin.

Bole started as a stronghold to defend against attacks by ancient tribes of nomadic humans, but after allying with Kelland the city grew rich by sharing its lumber and the produce of fertile forest gardens cultivated with the aid of fey. For centuries a region a hundred miles wide functioned like one sprawling family, with the wealth from the "big city" gladly shared with every village.

Fifty years ago, sleepy Bole was jolted awake when the railroad arrived, built in the run-up to the Fourth Yerasol War to link Flint's factories and mines in the Anthras Mountains. At the same time, the massive Barret Damworks built upstream controlled the flow of the Great Delve River, allowing smooth transport by steamship all the way west through Slate and Shale and on to the sea.

Whiskey and the Arts

A sudden population boom came with the railroad—mostly of humans from farms in the Weftlands—which led to a surge in crime, and the new wealth disrupted old rhythms of obligation and cooperation in the predominately elven community.

One of the biggest criminal enterprises were illegal distilleries, as smugglers took to hiding whiskey in flotillas of processed lumber to evade taxes in Slate. The national government—too busy with a war to let criminal gangs threaten its war materiel—offered amnesty, and the elven elders of Bole saw a chance to tuck the disruptive newcomers into their existing power structure. Three elven families—the Cantors, Bertrands, and Rayfields—funded the creation of a fancy arts district a short walk from the bustling logjam near the lumber mill, and partnered with the newly-legitimate distilleries to build them respectable storefronts and drinking houses.

While none of Bole's theaters or playhouses have reached international prestige, they are a popular place for playwrights and actors to get their start, with less competition than Flint and less nepotism than Slate. One infamous production in Bole kicked off something of an inter-city thespian rivalry by dramatizing a salacious rumor about two respected women—**Governor Hana "Gale" Soliogn** of Flint and **Alienor Contessa Soliogn-Stark** of the Unseen Court, often seen in Slate.

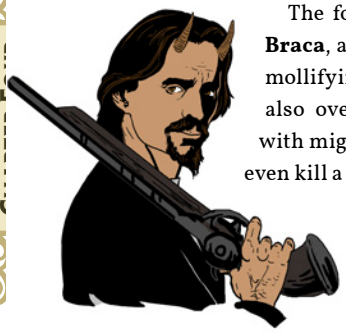
The show, *Wind Blows the Heart's Flame to Bloom*, is an outsized tale of forbidden love between an enslaved Elfaivaran woman and

a tiefling orphan adopted by the elf's enslavers. In it, the long-lived Hana raises Alienor as a nanny, then decades later accompanies the tiefling as a servant during a honeymoon voyage in the Yerasol Islands. When Hana leaves the then-dead-magic zone around Danor, she discovers the power to fly and control the winds, and when Alienor's new husband tries to stop Hana's escape, Alienor shoots and kills him. Years later the two meet again in Flint—Hana leading a rebel cell bent on murdering an evil industrialist, Alienor as a defector turned RHC constable tasked with stopping the "fey terrorist" known as Gale.

It has run for fifteen years, and had exactly the opposite intended effect. Instead of the two women being seen as a terrorist and a foreign intruder, they are lauded as national symbols of love and multiculturalism.

Politics

Bole's regional governor **Duchess Daffodil Ashfield** is a hierophant who reveres the Ash Wolf, and though a human she traces her family back to the city's original elf Cinder Queen. She petitioned hard to get Queen Iain's new Titan Conclave rangers to be based in Bole, where she affords them as much help as she can. So far, the people of Bole seem pleased to be the first to receive many of the boons the titans grant.



The formal head of the Titan Conclave is **Ludo Braca**, a satyr gunsmith who, despite his knack for mollifying the immense vanity of the fey titans, is also overseeing construction of **Fort Lundquist**, with mighty arctech batteries that could drive off or even kill a titan should the conclave's efforts fail.

One of Braca's allies in the conclave is **Draumey Hildigeirsdóttir**, an elf and penitent former member of the White Tongue. During the Great Eclipse, she helped sabotage King Baldrey's efforts to protect the city, believing she could survive the end of the world by appeasing the Voice of Rot. Today she recognizes her errors and is committed to deradicalizing those who were in the cult with her, fostering devotion to the Hollow Widow.

However, new shrines to the titans are springing up in the surrounding countryside, and worryingly, local political blocs are starting to align with some of the more radical titan cults.

Slate and Clover

Residence of monarchs and the descendants of past rulers, Slate concentrates all the history and nobility of Risur into a small city that may be the safest place to live in Lanjyr. Even the farmers and merchants of Slate take seriously their responsibility to protect the soul of their nation, acting with honor, if not a bit of prideful disdain for the rambunctious citizens elsewhere in the country.

Slate's reflection in the Dreaming is Clover, a city that shines with light, color, and joy, dominated by the games and fancies of the Unseen Court. For centuries it has existed just beyond reach, accessible only through rare celestial convergences, but the old oaths require regular invocation, and so loyal subjects of the queen may be tasked with stepping through the looking glass to treat with the fey, whose leaders are not as unified as the government of Risur.



History

Slate grew up from an ancient crossroad connecting the scattered nations that King Kelland united. Insulated by distance and blessed with fertile farmland, it has set deep roots, with some buildings dating back to even before the Demonocracy. Innovations are rare, and even the great idealist King Baldrey felt that after seventeen centuries of stability, it was not his place to try to fix what was not broken.

Today factories are not allowed within sight of the palace, so the nearest industry is over five miles downstream. Druids meet steamships upstream and provide controlled currents to carry vessels onward to minimize the need for them to run their engines. Not even the queen's flying flagship, the RNS *Coaltongue*, can come within five miles, though the wind-powered Gale Fleet are allowed to dock at the top of the new Bourne Tower, an elegant latticed spire that doubles as a ceraunic wave broadcaster. As a concession to tradition, the metallic frame of the tower is adorned with vibrant elevated garden plots.

Geography of Slate

For people used to living in the bustle of Flint, the city of Slate appear stately, calm, and perhaps a bit doddering. The Great Delve River, with its steep banks turning it almost into a man-made channel, generally separates the city into the noble west bank and the common east bank.

Six antique castles sit along the inside of a wide bend on the river's west bank, arranged in a pattern originally designed to defend against invasion. These castles act as nexuses of communities of



elite gated villas, and here live the nobles descended from the many kings and queens Risur has had throughout history. Today the district resembles an overly-manicured flower garden, more pretty than practical.

Across the shore lie dozens of less affluent neighborhoods surrounding the Grand Weft, a massive square where three highways intersect. Wealthy businesses clump along the Lowland Highway, which leads from the square to the docks along the river. The queen's residence, Torfeld Palace, sits atop a broad grassy hill a mile south of the weft. It is symbolic of the government of Risur that the monarch lives with the people, and only once they step down or die does their family move to the west bank.

Banhaman Academy, Slate's foremost martial school, straddles the river north of the city center. Military barracks and a small base of river warships protect the city, though aside from the assassination of King Aodhan in 501 AOV the city hasn't been threatened for over five centuries.

Geography of Clover

Clover is a mirror of Slate, flipped east by west, but this reflection has more whimsy and is suffused with an unsettling feeling of it paying attention to you. A sprawling chessboard of trees and lawn lies outside the city limits, a place for loyalists of the city's two factions to engage in sport and occasionally combat.

The Great Delve River, its steep banks adorned by flowers and dotted with windows of hillside burrows, separates the city into its own noble and common shores. Clover's six castles are home to lords of various regions of the continent who owe fealty to the Unseen Court, guarded by lithe warriors in nimble plate armor who hide beneath mats of grass and moss, ready to ambush intruders.

The fey lords look down on the more earthy and animal-aspected rabble on the east bank, who look to the splinter Hedgehog Court to be their voice. That side of the city is a chaotic mess of narrow winding streets and houses of all sorts—straw, wood, brick, some metal, and even one composed of stacked sheep. The locals trade oddities, treats, or songs, often conjuring petty goods from magic.

Visitors can find such curiosities as the flashdrought fountain, the mosscat mortuary, the three-sided Krog Tunnel, a library run by pixies called the Honorable Halls of Accumulated Wisdom, and of course Thistle Palace itself.

The Great Hunt

The mighty **Great Hunt** rides across Waking and Dreaming Risur every seventeen days, always returning to their home grounds in Clover. This order of silver-clad knights ride steeds sired by the Father of Thunder, and command packs of blue-furred hounds. Their resting grounds lie at the foot of an ancient weeping willow, a tree home to a family of fey thrushes which have provided domestic service to the Great Hunt for centuries.

The order is currently led by **Riffian, Archfey of the Hunt**. The horned Riffian and his Hunt are sworn to obey the commands of the Unseen Court. Unfortunately for the Court, the hunters take these orders very literally, and in perpetuity unless rescinded.

Politics

Slate hosts dignitaries from the great nations and numerous border states, and though the nobility here might be loyal to Risur, they're not above back door politicking or trying to play foreign powers against each other for their own financial interests. Some of this is innocent, like **Viscountess Lacey Ursdail** trying to build an Ottoplismist temple in Shale to entice more foreign trade with the far western port. Other schemes can be destabilizing, like an effort to unmask all Vekeshi mystics in Flint, nominally from a desire for transparency, but which could create misplaced panic and potentially defang the group whose threats tamp down corruption in that vital city.

Clover's current major political conflict revolves around the designs of the upstart Hedgehog Court. Led by Olazdor, Archfey of Winds, this collection of powerful beings each were hurt by the Unseen Court's capricious whims, and are perennially engaged in sedition and insurrection, to great dismay of the common fey of Clover, but with little long-lasting consequence to the balance of power.

The Gallery

Most protest movements in Risur gather in Flint, but Slate hosts a growing party skeptical of the monarchy. They gather around the Riven Gallery, a majestic new museum that King Baldrey had built to hold artwork related to the Great Eclipse. The museum, which has two main buildings on opposite sides of a bridge spanning the Great Delve River, filled its collection with pieces by dissidents who resisted Danor's effort to impose their order on Lanjyr.

But its most spectacular wing held a series of portal paintings that led to small demiplanes where the rules of reality were different. In one, anyone could fly; in another, plants grew in response to touch and will; and so on. Original exhibits attempted to explain how these paintings were connected to the changes that occurred after the Eclipse, but constant vandalism forced their removal. Now visitors are left to guess why the magical masterpieces were commissioned.



Five years ago, a controversial gala on the history of Risur's monarchs attracted huge crowds. The exhibit's curator, **Livia Hatsfield**, used an explanation of the Rites of Rulership to argue that the will of the people should not be focused into a single leader, nor even to the nobility, but that political power should be wielded through pure democracy.

To great amazement she unveiled a new portal painting that led to a small demiplane where written and axdopted legislation was wholly binding, overriding free will. The painting was titled *Manufactured Consent*.

RHC agents confiscated the painting, claiming it was a threat to public safety, but ever since Hatsfield has been gathering like-minded revolutionaries who want not merely economic reforms, but a fundamental change in the whole power structure of the nation. A soft-spoken follower of the muktist philosophy, Hatsfield has been accused of being an agent of the Drakran Kuchnost crime syndicate working to undermine faith in Risuri power, or even the so-called "Project Twin Sister," the Sestra Proyekta conspiracy some say is trying to alter the timeline to a world where the Great Eclipse turned out differently.

The Unseen Court

The Unseen Court is, by tradition, invisible, with only their masks and garments visible.

Monarch Thisraldion rules the court. Their mirrored mask always looks different in a way that observers can never describe. Thisraldion often changes their sex and personality with the seasons, or sometimes reflexively to match others' perceptions. Most ascribe this to caprice; in truth, Thisraldion is a skilled and subtle manipulator, deploying a "fey" demeanor to unbalance visitors.

Karrest the Fire has a charred stone mask with seams of golden lava. Flighty and warlike, he manic-depressively switches between aggression and abject sorrow, his heart broken from the Hedgehog defection of his frosty love Atsla.

Furg the Toadstool Sage presents as a mask of cracked turquoise, and a cloak full of electric blue frogs. He is a scholar of esoterica, and has begun courting the ettercaps of the High Bayou, to learn the secrets of their mysterious portal plane called the Webway.

Sallin the Dryad wears a tree-bark mask framed with feathers. She dotes on visitors in a grandmotherly fashion, always eager to hear new stories.

Alienor Contessa Soligon-Stark was a mortal tiefling from Danor who learned the ways of the fey in a bid to avenge the death of her son at the hands of her own countrymen. She brokered a temporary truce between the Unseen and Hedgehog Courts before the Great Eclipse, and was rewarded with the blessing of the Unseen. Since then she has worked paradoxically to both end conflicts and resolve vendettas. She wears a mask of leather and horns with goggles where its eyes would be.

The Book of Kelland

The rangers of the Titan Conclave have a small museum in Slate, the centerpiece of which is an ancient illuminated tome that tells the full story of how the foolishness of the fey titans created the first king of Risur.

Kelland and his wife and daughter were crossing the Avery Sea when She Who Writhes attacked their ship and claimed Kelland as a lover. His wife and daughter reached shore but his wife was taken as a hostage by the Voice of Rot, who demanded the daughter retrieve a book from Granny Allswell to steal trickery from the gremlins.

The daughter trekked across the Weftlands and got the Father of Thunder drunk, then hid on his back as he crossed through a lightning storm. She then snuck into the gremlin caves and danced like them to reach the book. She stole the book and fled into the forest of the Ash Wolf, who sniffed her and thought she was a wolf. The Ash Wolf defended the daughter from the angry gremlins.

She returned to the sea, but instead of giving the book to the Voice of Rot, she used the book's magic to grow scales and swim down to rescue her father Kelland. She Who Writhes saw them leave and chased them to the shore, where her domain of the seas met the low bayou.

The daughter claimed the Voice of Rot sent her on her mission. Though fey titans know when a lie is told, this was only a half-truth, and so She Who Writhes fought the Voice of Rot and banished him to the High Bayou. But the serpent slew the wife as retaliation.

Kelland and his daughter survived, and with the knowledge from his daughter's quest, he was able to eventually drive back the fey titans and claim the land of Risur for mortal races. The lesson of the book, allegedly, is that fools breaking things is sometimes necessary so that the wise and clever can achieve greatness.

The Winter Culling

The Unseen Court exult in the energy, creativity, beauty, and fun factor of their city, and maintain strict standards for such through the **Winter Culling**. Every winter, dozens of criminal, poor, mad, ugly, and boring fey are rounded up and thrust into **Larksong Stadium**, where they must earn their right to remain in the city through entertaining the hooting crowd. More martial of the condemned can take up weapons and attempt to win a duel. A masked archfey of the Unseen Court usually attends, and a treasured tradition is the intercession of third parties speaking dramatic and heart-warming defenses for the condemned.

The Winter Culling does not include the worst criminals and outcasts of the Risuri Dreaming; those are exiled to the Bleak Gate, joining the Bleak Court.

Flint

The city of Flint is the heart of Risur's industrial revolution, and many see it as the center of the modern world, where artists, inventors, and agitators from around Lanjyr collide to create tomorrow.

Dense districts churn with trade between grand subtropical beaches and the fey rainforests that drape the city's knifetooth mountains. Workers squeeze into subrail cars to their jobs in factories, steelmills, and shipyards, while belching steamships blare their horns upon the bay and magically-levitated dirigibles sweep between airship docks atop newly-erected skyscrapers. Each night these obelisks of modernity glow in elegant patterns of electric bulbs.

In the streets below, dockers cavort down gaslit lanes and police patrol gloomy alleys where the prayers of druids cannot keep at bay the darkness that sometimes seeps in from the Bleak Gate. Across the harbor, wood-planked avenues wander into the bayou, lined with arcane workshops, smuggling dens, and spy safehouses.

The arctech wonders of Karch might be a decade ahead of Flint's, and the architecture of Alais Primos might be more majestic, the protesters of Cherage more radical, the factories of Trekhom more productive, and the forest around Rumah Terakir more mystical, but nowhere but Flint brings them all together in so grand a concert.



History

Originally a modest port city famous only as a place to reprovision between more important destinations, Flint had the first inklings of its future importance in the year 400 AOV when **King Lorcan Finn** led a coalition of Risuri, Danoran, and Crisillyiri elites to defeat a coven of witches who had lain claim to the mountain in the center of the city. Then known as The Hunchback and sacred to the skyseers of the Old Faith, it was from the peak that the coven terrorized the city, kidnapping and sacrificing citizens in blood rituals. The locals came to call the mountain Cauldron Hill, a name that stuck even after the coven was slain.

During the Yerasol Wars, Flint was a secondary shipyard after the much more fortified Shale, but in 460 AOV the man who would become **King Aodhan** hijacked a steam-powered Danoran warship and steered it into Flint Bay. Shipwrights flocked to the city to reverse engineer the vehicle, and Flint was soon delegated as the hub of Risur's industrial development, since the more prominent cities did not want to upset their alliances with the fey.

By 500 AOV the city had grown to nearly a million people, often crowded into filthy tenements or even destitute slums on the perilous slopes of Cauldron Hill. But the city grew rich off its industry, and discontent of its workers—nearly one-in-ten of whom were international migrants—turned it into a hotbed of subversive art and radical revolution. Thousands protested the launch of the nation's first arctech flagship, the RNS *Coaltongue*. Thousands more came to hear the doomsaying of the revered skyseer **Nevard Sechim**, which today is known as the Prophecy of Three Ravens.

Those foretold dooms arrived in short order—a deadly industrial accident that spilled witchoil down the side of Cauldron Hill, then a colossal humanoid machine that burst forth from the mountainside, and finally the Great Eclipse, during which the peak of the mountain briefly became a portal to some dying world at the precipice of a devouring Gyre. But the recently-crowned **King Baldrey** rescued the city, slew a dragon in the skies above it, and then raised aloft the *Coaltongue* and flew west to Axis Island, where somehow he and his allies brought an end to the Eclipse.

Since then, the already cosmopolitan city has seen a renewed flood of migration, a baby boom, and the occasional attack by radicals who see Flint as all that is wrong with the world. A decade marked by a spirit of cooperation and empathy led to great strides for the worker quality of life, overseen by **Governor Hana Soliogn**, a friend of the fey who herself once coordinated efforts to sabotage the city's factories.

Lately, however, allies of the city's industrialists have swayed public opinion with the fear that they were abandoning the hard-nosed determination that had first brought Flint its prosperity. The pendulum of progress is once again swinging toward a time of turmoil.

Electrification

Most city districts still rely on gas-fed lamps to light the streets at night, but the towers of Central District, the Royal Docks in Bosum Strand, and some wealthy properties on North Shore use electric lights. These draw energy from firegem burning power plants. Numerous factories in Parity Lake are retrofitting for electricity, but Governor Soligon's hopes to give every household what she calls *petit éclair* ("little lightning") have been thwarted by fey sabotage of power plants, led by a figure known only as **Flare**.

Confections

Sugarcane grows well in farms nearby, and so Flint has a bit of a sweet tooth. The classic brigadeiro—a chocolatey ball of condensed milk rolled in chocolate flakes—has been surpassed by the delightful éclair, made of steam-puffed pastry filled with cream and topped with icing. The cream and icing vary in flavor—vanilla, coffee, fruit, or pistachio—but usually include chocolate either on top or within. The whole confection is often adorned with a decorative lightning bolt made of candy glass or baked meringue.

Travel

Flint is just starting to become too big to realistically walk across, but the streets are filled with pedestrians busy within their own district. Carriages serve the wealthy who want privacy, but most people in a hurry take a train.

King's Station in Central district is a bustling hub, connecting inter-city passenger rail to local light rail. Freight train depots have been built on landfill extensions in Bosum Strand and Parity Lake, and the miles-long Uru Tunnel cuts through a narrow waist of the Nettles. Train workers superstitiously sing songs of praise to the fey as they speed through the eerie darkness, and generally emerge un-accosted.

For passenger traffic, a few old surface rail lines still run, including to Pine Island, the Cloudwood, and the northeast farmlands (which technically aren't inside the city limits). Most residents use the subrail lines that spider-web beneath the city, linking the districts on the eastern side of the bay. A line even runs through Uru Tunnel, but children are forbidden on that route, as they attract gremlins and crueler entities that seek to kidnap innocents.

Stray River is navigable for small boats, though beyond the official borders of the city permits are required for any steam-powered ships. Ferries criss-cross Flint Bay all day, weaving around merchant vessels and the occasional naval gunboat on patrol. Private



yachts dock at the Ayres, while small runabouts bring servants back and forth to the mainland.

On clear days, forty-foot-long dirigibles drift from the roofs of towers in Central to the airdocks along Bosum Strand. Each district has at least one park converted to a landing field for dirigibles, though for now air travel remains mostly a novelty.

Built on steep hillsides, The Nettles remain poor and disconnected from the rest of the city's infrastructure. Only a few spots have gaslines or plumbing, and while the mayor's mansion halfway up Cauldron Hill receives regular dirigible traffic to cycle out troops guarding Blackfall Grotto—and while people love to joke about witches flitting about in flying cauldrons—most residents resign themselves to a lot of climbing.

City Districts

The nine districts of Flint each have their own mayor who handles local affairs. Districts also elect representatives to the city council, whose authority is balanced against that of the city governor, **Hana Soligon**. The governor reports to the queen and is responsible for the overall defense and long-term health of the city.

The governor and mayors are elected, except in The Nettles; the mayor there is tasked with ensuring old curses and other dangers do not afflict the city and so is appointed by the governor.

City Districts: Bosum Strand, Central District, Cloudwood, The Nettles, North Shore, Parity Lake, Pine Island, Stray River; also The Ayres (informal).

Bosum Strand

Depending on whom you ask, the name Bosum Strand comes either from the boatswains who frequented its taverns, or from the harbor's more traditional name, which translates to "bosom of the sea." In either case, the docks along the east shore of Flint Bay are the heart of the city's trade, culture, and crime.

Hundreds of warehouses serve Flint's merchant fleet, and dozens of taverns, gambling dens, and playhouses serve its dock workers. Craftsmen, artists, and money changers own shops surrounding several scattered public squares throughout the district, of which the most infamous is Dawn Square. Here did skyseer Nevard offer his prophecy of the Three Ravens, and during the Eclipse minions of Danor detained people here for reeducation.

Freight rail lines cut through the district, and dockers love to graffiti train cars, bridges, and even whole freight cranes at the port. Smart train companies curry favor from popular docker artists—hiring a friendly spokesperson is cheaper than offering higher wages.

Many of the district's middle class business owners all hail from the same school. Twenty-one years ago when a mechanical



colossus tromped through the city, its steps leveled homes and started fires that killed thousands. In the wake of that destruction, a gnome woman named **Flox Mimsy Bribsy Thistle** constructed an orphanage campus filled with brick-faced buildings. Their halls brimmed with light-hearted gadgetry and its roofs were topped with fanciful gardens meant to raise the spirits of hundreds of children who had no family to return to. Today the Flox School has expanded around the country, a model of tender and joyous education that produces graduates renowned for empathy and ingenuity.

Central District

The oldest and most developed district of Flint is home to its main government structures, including the city council, superior court, police headquarters, and the offices of various civil functionaries like tax collectors. Grand party halls, ornate druidic garden temples, and parks filled with monuments to old wars provide recreation and entertainment for the city's nobility and prospering middle class, while the Orange Street commodities market and the prestigious Pardwight University are the dual hearts of Flint's economic and academic cultures.

Throughout the district, new skyscrapers built of steel and clad with bricks and granite are rising, some over two hundred feet tall. Though not *quite* as high as some of the clan towers in Drakr's capital, Flint's skyscrapers have much wider footprints, making them ideal office buildings, and offering enough space on their roofs for small dirigibles to land.

As a concession to the city druids who appease nature spirits in the ground and sky, a law was passed requiring "visually exciting adornment" on all tall buildings. This has produced some truly striking façades, ranging from the stately Hotel Aurum with its twin towers linked by three golden bridges to the Ion Building and its small orbiting side tower held aloft by planarite. But most buildings are fairly squat rectangles, brought to life each night by regularly-changing patterns of electric lights. On Old Faith holy days, buildings will light up like constellations depicting figures of legend.

Just off the coast in Flint Bay, the new spire of the Governor's Tower is capped by a gleaming dome within which a huge telescope peers at the new stars above. The construction earned Governor Soligon the loyalty of the nation's skyseers, though a few traditionalists will not be satisfied until they can build an observatory atop Cauldron Hill.

In the tower's shadow sit the ruins of an old island fortress, which was bombarded by warships at the start of the Great Eclipse and then demolished by a falling star. The governor took a cue from the Elfaivaran capital of Rumah Terakir and ordered that the ruins remain as a contrast to the modern growth of a hopefully-peaceful Flint. The site has become a popular venue for formal celebrations, as well as a pilgrimage destination for Elfaivarans who admire the matriarch Dhebisu, renowned for slaying a rakshasa with a fallen star (see page 156).

The grandest new development in the district is the airship expansion of the Royal Docks. A small fortified island just off the main shore, the docks employ thousands in assembling ironclad and arctech equipped warships. The city has to date produced a handful of armed scout dirigibles, but the focus for the past year has been what will become the nation's next flagship, the RAS *Burning Sky*. Three hundred feet long, floating upon innovative planarite levitationals, and equipped with doors on its belly that can drop incendiary bombs, the flying battleship cuts a striking silhouette in the city skyline. The red and gold paint along its hull draws the eye from miles away, and the city is planning for huge crowds—both celebrants and protesters—when it launches.

Central district is home to the local (and for all practical purposes the national) headquarters of the Royal Homeland Constabulary.

Radical Raven Fountain

The city built Sechim Fountain at one end of Dawn Square to commemorate the skyseer who helped save so many lives with his vision. It became an attractive spot to some of the city's most radical elements, who derisively call police who come by "dog catchers," referencing the kennels Danor built during the Great Eclipse to detain people who managed to maintain their free will in the light of mind-numbing arctech lanterns.

Today that end of Dawn Square is almost always filled with shouting matches between extreme factions—scarred communists who demand control of factories that are maiming so many, swaggering nationalists who condemn the former king for allowing chaos to spread by *not* conquering the rest of the world, conspiracy-minded isolationists who blame their poverty on Risuri wealth flowing out of Flint's docks, and arch conservatives who want to tear down all industry and exalt the fey titans.

Numerous clashes between authorities and outspoken squatters began to turn public sentiment against the city police, so Governor Soliogn directed officers to keep a hands-off presence, and only respond to clear threats to surrounding businesses. The Last Ravens thieves' guild takes advantage of police hesitancy to peddle fey pepper, sell curses, and gather rumors about magic worth stealing.



Cloudwood

The eastern outskirts of Flint are dominated by towering mountains, their peaks constantly shrouded in clouds that feed lush rainforests and verdant streams. The steep highlands are sparsely populated, but numerous plantations and small farms fill the flatter terrain near the coast. Few city folk venture out to these lands, believing that here the veil between the real world and the Dreaming is thin. Local myths include countless tales of farmers, travelers, and juvenile miscreants who wander into the foggy woods and suffer wretched fates at the hands of capricious fey.

Once the famed skyseer Nevard Sechim attracted many devotees of the Old Faith to a humble henge far out in the Cloudwood. Today, his respectable followers have been scared away, replaced by titan-worshiping zealots. Their informal leader, **"Howling" Knapper Trowel**, attracts ne'er-do-wells to various bandit crews in the district by throwing grand parties, which often entail hunting live captives through the forest.

Though criminals in Flint tend to make the Nettles their first stop when on the run from the law, those who really need to lay low find the wild rainforests of Cloudwood ideal. The most rural areas of the district are practically independent thorps and hamlets, many of which are sympathetic to desperate outsiders. However, word in Flint's underworld is that more than one hunkering fugitive has found their way into the cauldrons of the Last Ravens. This guild of thieving and curse-flinging mages have eyes all throughout the Cloudwood, and trade stolen magic to dark fey.

Most who live in Cloudwood consider it common courtesy to share a bowl of milk or plates of sliced fruit with unseen nightly visitors, and that hospitality may be why the Unseen Court opened a consulate of sorts in this district. **Consular Squintling**, a vivacious pixie, meets visitors at the base of a collapsed old tree. She offers "visa services"—which entail finding escorts to protect travelers who need to cross into the Dreaming—can deliver messages across the two worlds, and often feeds information to the RHC about threats brewing among the fey in Flint's analogue.



In the Dreaming, the land west of the Cloudwood is called the Great Blight, a place for fey fugitives to hide, and an open-air prison of sorts where the Unseen Court sends those who offend it. Squintling will gleefully recount gruesome tales of madness she has witnessed in the Blight, but in return asks to hear festival songs played in a minor key.

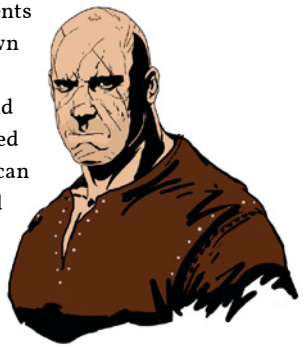
The Nettles

A small spur of the mountains of the Cloudwood cuts into the heart of Flint, and for most of the city's history these hills were home to druidic rituals, or allowed romantics witness wondrous vistas from on high. Their traditional name came from an old commander of the Flint fort, who saw them as a thorny barrier against attack from the north.

The district is thick with slum housing, many now holding their third generation of factory workers and their families. A highway passes through the district, but its broad switchbacks are cluttered with shacks. Poorly crafted houses cling to the sides of slopes, and they have become a nightmare for local police to patrol, giving a whole new connotation to the name "The Nettles."

Over time more and more misfortune has befallen the district. Ever since the defeat of a witch coven over a century ago, the most prominent peak, Cauldron Hill, has been rife with haunting and spirit activity, leading to more than one foolish explorer coming down possessed. Since the colossus burst free in 501 AOV, a huge chasm known as Blackfall Grotto has offered a whole new generation of fools the temptation of exploring the secret industrial laboratory that built the mechanical titan.

And even an effort to build a positive new future for the district turned sour. For a decade after the Great Eclipse, a school named the **Macbannin Lyceum for Impoverished Youths** provided primary education as well as training in rudimentary defensive magic, with a focus on avoiding curses. However it was some of the school's first graduates who would later descend upon it on a moonless night, kill its headmaster, and scrawl the walls with a mix of graffiti and hexes. These students gradually coalesced into what is today known as the Last Ravens guild.



The school today is a sort of neutral ground where those who want messages delivered to the mysterious leaders of the Ravens can speak with their representative. Burly and viciously scarred, a man who calls himself **Baron Calder Brant** spends most every night in the crumbling ruins, reading by

Blackfall Grotto

Titanist extremists who serve Granny Allswell managed over the years to slip through the cordon around the chasm on the side of Cauldron Hill from which the colossus emerged. The mysterious construction facility is now overrun by gremlins and trolls, and planar instability in the grotto means those who go in sometimes get stranded in the Bleak Gate. Even the Last Ravens are wary of going there, though rumors say that a so-called Bleak Court of maddened fey wants to make the ruin their palace.

candlelight and treating visitors with polite deference. He will discuss with casual indifference the most vile possible acts—murders, abductions, arson, human sacrifice—and professionally negotiate prices. On two occasions officers attempted to arrest him, but upon laying hands on him began to vomit centipedes and then died.

District Mayor Dale, a captain in the Risuri military with an upbeat expertise in staying calm in the face of darkness, oversees a small force of patrolling soldiers and druids who keep the monsters of the mountain from descending to the city. His mansion sits halfway up Cauldron Hill, and is one place at least that the Ravens don't dare come knocking, each side seemingly respecting that they'd both suffer if the wards around the mountain failed.

North Shore

The sun rises through the mists over Cloudwood. Fresh sea breezes sweep the gloomy haze of soot away from pristine beaches, letting golden daylight fall upon gently crashing waves. The day wanes, and the sky explodes with crimson and vermilion as the sun sets behind the twin peaks of Great Horned Mountain. Night drapes a starry curtain across the world, and still the waves gently lap upon the North Shore.

Home to the most beautiful urban beaches in all of Lanjyr, Flint's North Shore district prides itself on its appearance, despite being so close to polluted Parity Lake. Demand for beachside property has pushed out all but the wealthiest, those who can afford to hire druids to pray for favorable winds to keep the smoke at bay, and armies of cleaning crews to scrub walls and streets when the druids fail.

But with wealth comes corruption and temptation. Young girls end up dead in alleys. Criminals stage daring robberies of villas protected by curses. Destitute nobles, dragged from their towers by the machinations of rivals, stumble into strangely-scented shops they've never seen before and find offers they cannot refuse.

A hotbed of international politicking, here an afternoon stroll down Consulate Beach can simulate visiting every country in the world, great or small. The newest addition is Elfaivar's consulate, where visitors are required to pass through the **Museum of the Eladrin Diaspora** before they can undertake any formal business. Flint was always a beacon of safety in the Diaspora, and the city is one of the few places where vekeshi mystics are admired.

Other countries have begun to follow the same trend of opening their consulate grounds and presenting a positive face to Flint. The most popular of these is the **Moody Gardens**, a lavish creation of Beran philanthropy when the tropezaro movement had not yet fallen out of favor back home. Situated near the base of the lower Great Horned Mountain, this grand arboretum and zoo exhibits biomes from around the world, even including some of Ber's famous dinosaurs.

Parity Lake

Flint's first factories rose around this inland lake fed by run-off from the Nettles. The Stanfield Canal widened and deepened a natural river that ran from the lake to the harbor in Bosum Strand, providing easy transit of manufactured goods in and out of the district. Homes of fishermen on the lake were demolished, while new flophouses and stacked tenements were erected for the waves of people who came from around the country seeking work in the new factories. Wealth poured into the city's coffers, and into the pockets of those canny enough to become landlords.

Years of disorganized growth transformed Parity Lake from a booming collective of new businesses to a crowded, foul-smelling, soot-choked warren, surrounding a pool that every day more resembled sludge than water. After the Great Eclipse, Governor Soliogn made reclaiming the lake a priority, and today at least someone who falls into it won't have to worry about chemical burns.



After the Great Eclipse, living conditions improved and crime briefly abated, with a few factory owners like **Heward Sechim** (nephew of the famed skyseer Nevard Sechim) supporting safety reforms, higher wages, and new high-rise residences. The period of good feelings petered out, though, and while the reforms persist, the renovations only ever reached a few corners of the district, which has led to a growing class rift among the previously somewhat unified workers.

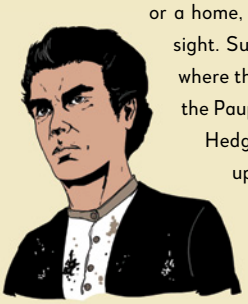
The mix of poverty and profit produces prodigious crime. The Family crime syndicate runs traditional protection rackets and smuggling, and also run the nearly-legal Red Rabbit Casino with the support of mages out of Nalaam. The Last Ravens distribute drugs and abduct people to abuse in truly horrifying slave sweatshops and brothels. The Ravens also run their own form of protection, etching hexes upon lampposts, luring shadowy monsters to terrorize whole neighborhoods if one business owner balks at the fees.

But an unorthodox group is inspiring a new sense of hope and heroism for residents. The Knights of Sangria, an order from the Malice Lands, first came to Flint to hunt down a malice beast that had escaped some smuggling shipment and grown immense off industrial effluvium in the lake. When the monster kept slipping out of traps and hiding in the sewers, the knights established a long-term presence in the district. For a low fee they can be hired to deal with Bleak Gate spirits that stalk the streets—and for a bit higher fee they'll even face down local criminals, who seem by far to be the more dangerous quarry.

Pine Island

Though the ground of most of Flint's coast is rocky and hilly, the western coast of the bay has a sprawling bayou surrounding dozens of short granite hill-islands. Pine Island takes its name from the aquatic pine trees that anchor the bits of dry land throughout the district, though the hills are mostly grassy ranchland. Not as well known or developed as the bustling east coast, this district nevertheless plays a significant role in the city's business.

The Pauper Archmage



Many become overwhelmed by the bustle of the larger city, or lose a job or a home, or grow ill and find themselves swept out of sight. Such unfortunates often end up in Pine Island, where they seek the help of **Hedger Isfeld**, known as the Pauper Archmage.

Hedger's sister had been a wealthy factory owner up until the Great Eclipse, when her abuse of her workers led to a riot, the formation of a psychic hivemind, and numerous deaths, including her own. Hedger—a war wizard who had hoped one day to serve at the king's right hand—inherited the factory and his sister's wealth, but was shaken by the loss her greed had provoked.

When the Eclipse ended, he resigned his commission and spent his sister's fortune trying to help the families of other exploited workers. Over time he sold his sister's mansion in The Ayres and moved to North Shore, then sold that home and moved to Stray River, and a year ago finally gave away the last of his wealth—selling even his spellbook of grand military evocations—then began to live in a humble apartment in Pine Island.

He hoped for a simple retirement, but people knew his name and still came to him in crisis. After a visit by the radical saboteur **Flare**, Hedger has entered a period of contemplation, and a few of his old friends who keep in touch suspect the mighty wizard intends to change his tactics. One man's fortune was not enough to lift up hundreds of thousands of the poor, but one mage's spells might be able to tear down the system that impoverished them.

While Bosum Strand handles industrial and textile trade, Pine Island services hundreds of plantations in its soggy lowlands and small ranches in its western hills. The main docks on Flint Bay are practically a floating city of wooden bridges and stone anchors, which has slowly grown away from the silt of the bayou to better serve deep-water merchant ships. Further inland, complicated avenues, connected by ferries and bridges, weave between islands ranging from the size of a single house to a small neighborhood.

When factories need to finish high-quality arctech, they typically end up transporting machinery from Parity Lake to Pine Island. There mages run wealthy enclaves, where they and their apprentices integrate planarite and instill enchantments, all with the privacy the bayou offers.

Criminals ply the waters of the bayous in shallow boats, often parking ships of smuggled drugs, magic, or women just off shore, then taking circuitous routes through the flooded forests in order to bypass dock authorities. While most dockside businesses are legitimate, deeper in the bayou you can find gambling houses, brothels, and fey pepper dens. Pacts with local fey who are angry with the spinning gears on the other side of the bay help these criminal establishments hide from law enforcement, all for the low price of just a few newborns a year.

Farther west, where there are no longer even the occasional outcroppings of hills, the Battalion academy trains elite soldiers and martial scientists in the ways of war, with an emphasis on wilderness survival and the best techniques of intimidation against an occupying force. Many of the Battalion's teachers served in the Yerasol Wars or at the garrison on Axis Island.

Despite the remote location, a light rail—regularly blessed by druids to deter fey sabotage—leads from Stray River to the Battalion. A fort at the school guards the city's teleportation beacon, and it won't do for rich visitors to have their first sight of Flint be an undeveloped swamp.

Stray River

The cluster of businesses and homes where Stray River empties into the bay is the closest thing to a typical Risuri city one can find in Flint. The Stray River district has well-tended streets, quaint two-story brick houses, and enjoys easy prosperity as the place most visitors to the city stay.

A new landmark is known as The Gates of Flint. Built on grounds once occupied by the city's very first mass-production textile mill, the name is quite literal. Two stylized doors made of carefully fitted shards of the actual stone flint rise forty feet over a lovely park. The doors, fitted into a minimalist wooden frame, are opened wide so that someone entering the park can see out across Flint Bay, past Governor's Island, all the way to the Great Horned Mountain at the edge of the sea. A train station was built nearby during the Great Eclipse to receive refugees from the countryside, and the man who built the monument, former RHC chief inspector **Stover Delft**, wanted future arrivals to have something cheerier to greet them.

It has become a popular annual tradition to walk through the gates on New Year's Day and spit chewing tobacco at the threshold. Tradition says that doing so wards off curses and liars (and mimics!) for the rest of the year.

The Ayres

North of the city lie a clear island chain and several satellite islands. Many of these are merely rocky sandbars with a few trees, but a few larger islands serve as remote villas for the city's wealthiest. Nobles hold many family estates here, though in recent years new-money industrialists have joined them.

Perhaps the wealthiest man in the city is the aged **Guy Goodson**, who swindled his initial wealth from a dozen naïve villages, and invested early in Flint's industrial boom. Today his family owns dozens of factories in Flint and more around Lanjyr. Once Guy was a gregarious target of celebrity gossip, but the public eye has shifted to his granddaughter **Galatea Goodson**. The rowdy playgirl singlehandedly kept many Flint tabloids in business, but recently her behavior underwent a complete shift, turning her into an obedient copy of her grandfather.



The vacuum of Goodson family scandal has turned tabloid attention to a newcomer in The Ayres, **Lovelace Rookwood**. The young and sardonic inventor originally gained fame for designing a small, flight-capable construct, then cleverly managed to parlay an investment in her patent by Pemberton Industries to acquire a few struggling businesses in Parity Lake. These she revived with arctech innovations, attracting another round of investors.



In the dark of night, black-sailed boats deliver visitors to her private island, and rumors fly that she could be working with the Risuri military, foreign spies, the infamous Benedict Pemberton, or even the rumored conspiracy L'église de Lisette, who intend to build a goddess out of arctech machinery.

Since technically The Ayres is considered part of North Shore, it does not have its own district mayor. In practice, law and government officials never bother the nobles on their islands unless an equally wealthy or powerful individual lodges a complaint.

The Family in Flint

While the Last Ravens are the bogeymen for many Flinters, the most *effective* criminals are surely the Family, a criminal organization with deep ties to the Clergy in Crisillyir. Head of the Flint branch is **Morgan Cippiano**, a soft-spoken and honorable man who straddles many different worlds. Opinions of Cippiano are mixed in Flint: even though he is a crook, his organization helped defeat the city's prior syndicate, the bloodthirsty Kell Guild, and during the Great Eclipse his leadership kept the city's criminal element somewhat in line, for the sake of the greater good.

After the Eclipse, Cippiano was quite the public figure, admired for trend-setting fashion shows he hosted and for his role in getting local newspapers to review restaurants, which led to the launch of many of the city's current fine-dining hotspots. Everyone knew, though, where he got his money. He always had a chilly relationship with Governor Soliogn, but he had enough influential friends (or blackmailed victims) to avoid punishment, at least so long as his family business never got too violent.

Lately, however, Cippiano is struggling to maintain decorum among all his followers. His attention has been drawn away by the troubles the homeland is facing (see page 114), and he has taken numerous trips to Alais Primos. In his absence, his lieutenants squabble, his street-level capos are provoked by the Last Ravens, and his powerful allies among the nobles and industrialists are being targeted for all-new blackmail by the Kuchnost crime syndicate in Drakr.

Politics



The many clashing interests of Flint are kept in balance by **Governor Hana Soliogn**, an Elfaivaran who escaped enslavement in Danor three decades ago, discovered a magical ability to fly and control the winds, and settled in Flint in 499 AOV.

Though initially something of a celebrity for her outspoken opposition to Danor, she soon withdrew into the Cloudwood and began recruiting followers among those opposed to the influx of industry. Hoping to punish Danor by proxy, she and her followers sabotaged factories and steamships, and were even implicated in attempted assassinations—though she denies the latter. These attacks earned her the moniker "Gale."

She first started to rehabilitate her image when the colossus erupted from Cauldron Hill. Gale swooped around the titan's face, hundreds of feet in the air, and lured the machine away from population centers and down Stanfield Canal, then to the bay where King Aodhan was able to banish it. Later, Gale helped drive off a Danoran naval attack, and during the Eclipse she is believed to have helped slay a dragon that was setting fire to Central district.

When she ran for the governorship, King Baldrey praised her service and endorsed her. She won on promises to use the rebuilding of the city as an opportunity to fix inequities that plagued many workers and poorer districts. Early progress on these earned her a great deal of respect, but now the political winds are starting to turn.

Soliogn has for years directed local police to work with dockers and allow protests, but rising Last Ravens violence has made her vulnerable to **Rosa Gohins**, former district mayor of Parity Lake who was infamous for her heavy-handed crackdowns. Gohins campaigns on the idea that the safety and stability of the factories are more important than the morale of factory workers, and that overseas industrial cities are outstripping Flint's growth. She calls for a return to the old ways, where people were expected to work hard. The last generation was made strong by their toil, strong enough to save the world from the Great Eclipse.

Fey Terrorism

One underhanded line of attack Gohins uses against Gale is her loose connection to the current generation of anti-industry sabotage—which she labels "fey terrorism." While Gale realized she could effect more change as a figurehead than an agent provocateur, the movement she galvanized didn't end when she became governor.

After years of being rudderless, a new leader has taken over. Known as **Flare**, the man claims to be an efreet from the planet Jiese, who saw first hand what civilization turns into with widespread technology. Dangerously charismatic, he has launched a new wave of sabotage. The signature attack has druids conjure entangling roots or even growing whole trees into the machinery of factories, and once people gather to see the spectacle, a delayed glyph sets the plants ablaze. In addition to causing massive damage, these attacks have killed dozens and caused multiple nights of panic in Parity Lake over the past year.





No one knows what Flare's base of operations are within the city, and somehow he has evaded RHC investigations. The urgency rose when, in a recent interview with the Flint Tribune, Flare warned no one to attend the launch of Risur's next flagship the RAS *Burning Sky*, promising that it would go down in flames.

Other Places of Interest

- **Axis Island** constantly changed hands during the Yerasol Wars, but after some epic event occurred there to end the Great Eclipse, Risur and Danor maintain a joint military presence, with naval patrols turning back anyone that tries to approach.
- **Favela** is a thriving mining town south of Bole, once the site of mass child abductions by Granny Allswell. Parents often threaten disobedient children that they'll send them to favela.
- **Granite** was the small farming town that was so boring it made young Aodhan Lesterman and his sister Ethelyn run off to become privateers. They'd end up hijacking a Danoran warship, kicking off Flint's industrial boom, and become a King and Duchess respectively.
- **Manhill** is a Risuri town on the north shore of the Marrajado del Oro, formerly a defensive fort. Today it's a tourist destination for many Berans and Risuri, and excavations are under way to possibly build a tunnel under the sea to Citado Cavallo, connecting the two nations.
- **McDruid Island** lies off Risur's northeast shore, and was a minor shipbuilding hub. Its modern claim to fame is being birthplace of pirate Commodore Bruce McDruid.
- **Shale** is a heavily-fortified coastal city that endured regular assault during the Yerasol Wars. The city is believed to be favored by She Who Writhes.
- **Stormset Coast** runs along the southwest, famed for its megafauna like giant pumas. It traditionally has closer ties to Beran culture.
- **Ya-Topec** is an Ancient city being excavated on an island near the Stormset Coast. Long-buried pictograms hint at a mythology of primordial heroes forgotten to time.

CHAPTER FIVE
OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

The planets that roam among the stars subtly alter the nature of the world.

The Planetary System

Most action in the Zeitgeist setting happens on the continent Lanjyr, one of several continents on the same world. Different cultures and traditions have their own names for the world. Risur's skyseers use **Amsywr**, but those who don't speak Primordial have trouble pronouncing that. A common term is the Waking (to contrast with the parallel realms of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate).

The Waking is the third of seven planets that orbit a bright yellow sun (**Vona**). Each other world has an effect on the nature of reality, which applies throughout the planetary system, and several of these have special rules mechanics.

In order from the central star, they are:

- **Jiese, the Fire of Industry.** Close to the sun, this burnt rock is riven with seams of red. Jiese's influence makes advanced technology possible. Outside this planar system, the innate fluctuations of magic in the rest of the multiverse makes most industry unreliable. Existing technology won't stop working, but the engineering needed for mass production breaks down at scale. A tinkerer might craft their own personal devices, but on those distant worlds, society will never have industrial revolutions.
- **Caeloon, the Paper Wind.** Caeloon was a world nearly destroyed in fire, rescued and reborn in the Great Eclipse. A soothing green planet, its presence is ineffable, but lends people inner strength in times of despair. Suicide rates have declined since before the Eclipse.
- **The Waking.** The main world of the Zeitgeist setting is sustained and enriched by the energies of other worlds. It is orbited by **Av, the Plane of Mirrors**, a pale white moon that in rare conjunctions appears to be translucent like glass. Scholars believe its presence causes the Waking to be mirrored into the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate.
- **Ostea, the Beating Heart.** A planet the color of dark wine strengthens resistance to infections, and also enhances divinations fueled by blood. Deaths by infection are down from before the Eclipse.
- **Urim, the Shattered Golden Chains.** Flecks of gold glint along one stretch of the starry night, revealed by telescopes to be a string of asteroids. Urim's presence causes gold to impede teleportation and extraplanar travel. One otherwise nondescript boulder amid the tumbling debris of Urim, **Teykfa the Ticking Pendulum**, produces a subtle regular chime, faintly audible across the vast gulf of space to those who watch the heavens. Awareness of it helps track the passage of moments, and instills a clearer sense of the grand scale of time.
- **Mavisha, the Mysterious Deep.** A watery blue orb, Mavisha causes divination about islands to be unreliable. A small green moon orbits it, **Ascetia, the Hidden Jungle**, and though little is known of the world, scholars tie its presence to how since the Eclipse interest in history has increased.
- **Amrou, the Salt Waste.** A pale orb that flickers on the darkest nights, Amrou empowers nonmagical defenses against the supernatural. Acts that were once mere superstitions—like pouring a line of salt to fend off fiends—now actually have some effect, however temporary. Knowledge of these apotropaic techniques are taught to everyone in Crisillyir, to help survive the various evils that escaped during the Eclipse.

Planar Mechanics

Skyseers know that fate itself is influenced by the planets in ways hard to perceive, but several of the worlds have more tangible effects.



Blood of Ostea

Though mundane infections rarely come into play for heroic adventurers, throughout history disease has always killed more people than war. Since the Great Eclipse, people have found themselves far more resistant to nonmagical infections, which has led to a small population boom. Additionally, Ostea's influence also gives spellcasters special powers related to blood. Most people are unsettled by this blood magic

Bloodletting and Divination

Any character with Constitution 13+ and Intelligence 5+ can cut themselves, bleed a copious amount, and meditate on their blood for ten minutes in order to cast a small selection of ritual spells. When doing this, the character expends any number of Hit Dice, to a maximum of their proficiency bonus. More powerful spells require a payment of more Hit Dice, and the spells still require any other material components.

For two Hit Dice, they can cast *augury*.

For four Hit Dice, they can cast *divination*.

For five Hit Dice, they can cast *contact other plane*.

Sanguine Senses

If a character with Constitution 13+ and Intelligence 5+ has access to at least a few drops of another creature's blood, they can spend an hour preparing a potion or face paint with that blood. Doing so requires expending one Hit Die through bloodletting, which is mixed with the quarry's blood. Consuming the potion or applying the paint takes an action; for the next hour the character can sense the direction to that creature within one mile and unerringly sense its location if it is within 30 feet, ignoring concealment. However, the quarry likewise has the same awareness of the tracker's location.

Bonds of Urim

Gold impedes planar travel and teleportation. You can teleport freely while *carrying* gold, but you cannot teleport through an opening framed in gold. Similarly, if you're wearing a gold ring—or bracelet, or even a thin thread of gold wire woven into a circle around a finger, wrist, or other body part—you cannot teleport or be teleported. This same restriction applies to any sort of extraplanar travel.

Critical buildings often have thin strips of gold inlaid around doors and windows, concealed by additional masonry. Prison cells for Elfaivarans and mages are often surrounded by rings of gold. However, even full circles of gold can be bypassed by simply removing part of the ring. This, combined with the temptation for thieves, keeps gold warding circles from being in common use.

Light of Ascetia

Through a telescope, Mavisha's jungle-green moon Ascetia appears to strobe with light twice a minute, like some distant lighthouse.

When a creature makes a History check, if it first spends one hour roaming a woodland while pondering a historical topic, it can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the check. Such walks have the strange effect of jogging a creature's memory. On rare occasions, creatures will brush against a tree and have a flash of someone also touching a tree (but perhaps not the same one), and they'll come away with a memory of history that they know isn't theirs.

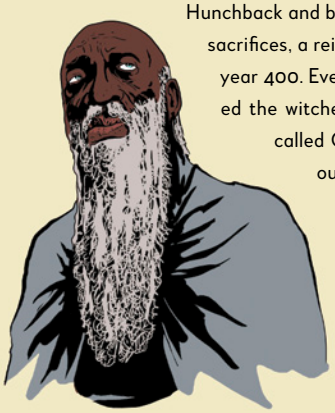
Mysteries of Mavisha

Divination magic used to learn about islands have a high likelihood of failing. If the caster is not on the same island, they must succeed an Intelligence (Arcana) check (DC 20) or else the divination yields no information. Even on a success, the information gleaned will never be particularly clear. Scrying, for instance, will perceive creatures from a distance or with staccato switching to viewing other beings.

Skyseers Against Industry

In Risur's early days, the druids, used to thinking in long terms of seasons, years, and the lifespan of trees, came to understand the power the stars held.

After Danor began to build coal-burning factories in the 4th century AOV, the visions of the skyseers gradually became less reliable. The druids blamed the spreading haze of soot obscuring their vision, and so many of them climbed a mountain called the Hunchback in what was then a modest port town called Flint. From its high peak they could still see the stars clearly enough to advise Risur's rulers, though the less prestigious and less skilled skyseers who served the common folk slowly lost their place of respect.



Then in 346 AOV, a coven of witches claimed the Hunchback and began to abduct people for blood sacrifices, a reign of terror that lasted until the year 400. Even after King Lorcan Finn defeated the witches, the peak—which came to be called Cauldron Hill—remained dangerously haunted. The skyseers' last clear vantage was lost to them.

A hundred years later, **Nevard Sechim** ascended Cauldron Hill, and after surviving a night of horrors returned with what came to be known as the **Prophecy of the Three Ravens**.

Many believe that before Sechim died, he gave a secret final message to Baldrey Korrigan, the man who would later go on to become king of Risur, and whose leadership guided the world to safety and brought back the stars. The royal palace in Risur's capital Slate maintains a court skyseer, but plans to build a telescope observatory atop Cauldron Hill were scrapped mysteriously. Today the smoke of Flint still hinders skyseer visions, and any who wish clarity must brave the haunted hill.

The same effect applies to divinations about things under the sea, unless the caster is also underwater and within about three miles of the target.

Timeliness of Teykfa

If one watches the glimmering chain of Urim with enough patience, they'll feel a weighty awareness of the progress of time into the future. Once per hour, they'll feel their eyes drawn skyward and they'll hear an intermittent, softly audible chime that lets them keep track of time precisely. For the next day that person is more aware of the scale of time, particularly with regards to how long people are likely to live.

This has no game mechanic effect.

However, this improved sense of time has slightly cut down on violence in the world, as people are marginally more hesitant to risk years of their lives, and more aware of how much harm they'd cause by killing someone. But people living in cities often can't see the stars. And sometimes an awareness of time leaves people indifferent to what likely will be transient misfortune of those around them.

Wards of Amrou

Nonmagical defenses against the supernatural, collectively known as apotropaics, actually have some real benefit. See Apotropaics (page 82).

Winds of Caeloon

Caeloon's effect is subtle, almost ineffable: it buoys spirits in times of despair and helps people find resilience in the face of tragedy.

A character with Intelligence 5+ that has no remaining Hit Dice can spend an action to buoy its spirits and heal 1 hit point. If one of its allies in the encounter is dead, the character also can ignore charmed and frightened conditions until the end of its next turn. After it does this, it cannot do it again until it completes a long rest.

Calendar

Lanjyran nations generally use a simple calendar devised over a millennium ago by the skyseers of Risur, though it was reset and adjusted after the Great Eclipse reset the orbits of the planets. This calendar divides the year into four 91-day seasons, each starting on an equinox or solstice. After the 91st of Winter, one extra day is used to celebrate the new year.

The most common celestial rhythm is the cycle of the moon over 29½ days. People might say something happened "a month ago," but individual months are not named. Instead dates are referenced in the format "17 Spring 473 AOV."

In the year 522 AOV, the first first-quarter moon of each season occurs on 20 Spring, 17 Summer, 13 Autumn, and 10 Winter. Festivals of the Old Faith typically fall on these nights. More colloquially, there are names for each prominent moon phase throughout the year. These terms have fallen out of favor except in poetry, academia, and mysticism.

Planetary Gazetteer

A few explorers have managed to travel to other worlds and return with stories of what they found. Perhaps those worlds are as vast and diverse as the Waking, but these are the places on those planets that are most well known in the popular consciousness.

The Bleak Gate

This benighted realm can be entered through certain trails on moonless nights, or still pools in lightless caves, or burnt out train cars derailed in cursed forests, or similar places of emptiness.

The Bleak Gate is where the spirits of the dead linger before passing on, drifting silently between buildings that are hollow, like the shells of dead sea creatures. Gloomy clouds block out both sun and stars, and it's almost impossible to keep track of time. Neither wind nor wave stir. There are no birds or insects, and most sounds echo dully, except for howls and moans of monsters and the dead, which carry for miles in the windless air.

Common lore of the Clergy calls this realm Purgatory, and envisions it as a hollow copy of this world lying just underground, where the dead linger to await judgment. Drakr's clans know better, and believe that it is a vision of the distant future, of what the world will look like when everyone has died. Berans believe it lies on the

dark side of the moon. Danoran arcanoscientists say it is actually a manifestation *within* the crystalline sphere of the moon—the Bleak Gate on the interior surface, and the Dreaming on the exterior.

Here, Risuri fey of the exiled Bleak Court hunt hapless travelers, obscure conspiracies hide, and echoes of old wars and horrors recreate themselves in grisly spectacles of unearthly stillness. Some Elfaivaran gulmohar who regret their resurrection choose to live here, following annual caravan trails on a grieving pilgrimage.

But not all is horror. Somewhere, along the banks of a river with an ever-shifting path, endures a city named **Iratha Ket**, where a civilization of animated skeletons known as the Midnight Revel tends to the last survivors of a dead world, trying to restore them safely to the land of the living. If you find yourself in peril in the Bleak Gate, seek running water, and your calls for help might be answered with the song of a savior.

Differing Dreams

The Dreaming is a verdant, shifting mirror of the Waking. Terrain and buildings and even cultural trends often match those in the real world, but beings native to there follow their own odd logic. Both time and distance seem to conspire for the sake of dramatic events rather than emperical truth. Depending on a traveler's mood or their interactions with fey they meet along the way, the same journey on two different occasions might take a different number of days, perhaps with the sun stubbornly hanging in the same spot of the sky for an interminable time, or with the road impossibly bypassing difficult terrain.

Each country in the Waking is matched by an analogue in the Dreaming that reflects the beliefs of the inhabitants.

Ber

***Lua Espelyada*, *Oblicua*, Mirror of Forgotten Things**

Called Reliqq by its residents, Ber's Dreaming is a land shrouded beneath a seemingly endless forest, with close-set, titanic trees draped with and choked by great thorn-barbed vines. This verdure is not entirely natural; the landscaping magics of the local dragons have in many places smothered the physical reflection of Ber, which lies hidden between the great trees and vines. Golden light filters through scant cracks of the forest's canopy, but a sun can never be seen. When night arrives, the forest floor becomes illuminated by dazzling illuminated fungi and flora that glow like crystal sconces. Glowing seeds flutter down from above, like sparks moving in slow motion.

As the vines retreat from the constricted trees, they leave gouge marks the size of shallow caves in the bark. These wounds are then filled with various junk that finds itself in Reliqq: bent spoons, shattered brooms, untuned guitars, jammed firearms, dirty boots, ragged coats, breach-pocked boats, and so on. The blood-like sap of the trees then seeps into the discarded objects and imbues them with powerful magic, granting them sophont life.

Any freedom after awakening is short-lived in Reliqq, as these sophont animated objects, or **izprits**, are immediately collected and pressed into the service of Reliqq's resident fey court, dragons known as the **Maitagaria**. The izprits must obey their draconic masters and tend their every need. As izprit grows older, many transform into slightly more humanoid shapes, with faces, limbs, or even hands, and with minor magical powers to help them fulfill their assigned role. A few who anger their masters are cursed to have a fully humanoid body, and are then exiled as they are no longer of use.

"A cup is a cup," the dragons say; a cup is meant to serve drinks and must not perform any other service. Any dissent is ruthlessly punished, but nevertheless a revolt brews. The **Tresna Liga** recruits escaped or curse-exiled izprits who plot to assassinate and overthrow their tyrants. They hope some day to rescue the legendary izprit-sword **Asturanne**, imprisoned in a stone, who once released will surely lead their kind to freedom.

The Maitagaria have other servants, though, such as the **malahathra**, kobold-like fairies whose job it is to collect all stray objects that fall into Reliqq, place them into sap to bring them to life, then gather the izprits and determine which Maitagarian dragon is in need of the tool the most. The malahathra are anxious procrastinators, perpetually afraid of receiving bad news that might suggest they have disappointed their dragon lord, and many malahathran camps have a cage which holds animated letters that were sent with messages that will never be read.

Halos

Should a traveler come upon a conspicuous ring of vegetation in the Crisillyiri wilds, they may have discovered a *pittura* circle, also called a halo. More specifically, the halo is the outer ring, sometimes a mile wide, which holds fiends at bay or weakens their magic, while the *pittura* circle is a smaller ring in the center, usually about 20 feet across, which leads to the Dreaming.

Crisillyiri

The Green Temptress, *Gran Mostra*, Hell's Gallery

Before the Great Eclipse, the Clergy saw the Dreaming as a garden whose delights were meant to tempt people to sin and indolence. And while Crisillyir produced many great artists, there has long been a belief that artists are prone to vanity, and so many tales of "Hell's Garden" told of artists who became trapped there when their pride exceeded their piety.

After the God Trials unleashed a tide of demons in the Waking, the Dreaming reflection of Crisillyir was threatened with corruption. Seeing her subjects being warped into horrors, **Belluccia the Nymph Queen** enacted a great ritual to reshape her land around reflections of art, transforming her subjects and trapping them in literal paintings.

Gran Mostra, as it is known today, is a pantagruelian web of galleries, too vast and labyrinthine for outsiders to ever navigate, and perhaps even shifting over time. Its rare calm points are maintained only by fey will, some under roofs of wood or stone, some under open sky.

It is said every one of Crisillyir's millions of paintings was conjured into the *Gran Mostra*, each becoming a small world unto itself. One can enter and find the artist's vision brought truly to life, with fey forced into shapes that match the figures painted therein. Most are beautiful, but many are monstrous, and nearly all have lost their own willpower, simply playing out the role some artist thoughtlessly gave them.

Only those painting-fey whose forms were laid down in a work



of a true master are genuinely self-aware and able to leave their painted frames to mingle. The prevalence of divine themes in such masterpieces has created a parliament of Triegenes-copies and other deity doppelgangers.

The knights of Queen Belluccia survive, clad in body-hugging mithral plate armor, their helms locked with a keyhole over the mouth which only their ruler holds the key to. They work tirelessly to find ways to free her former subjects, awakening them to their lost selves. Their search is never-ending and tragic, for subjects frequently lapse back into painting-roles and flee back to their frames. The knights believe that, if only they can find their lost queen, they might heal their realm.

Cherub-curators and artistic fairies called *notturni* try to examine and understand the paintings, going on missions to the Waking to learn about artists and their inspirations. Eight-limbed *vitruvians* patrol the gallery for fey corrupted by their own foul painting-roles, such as living depictions of Demonocratic debauchery, or Elfaivarans portrayed as cannibalistic savages.

Danoran

***Erréij*, Demesne of the Unobtainable**

For five centuries between the Great Malice and the Great Eclipse, if there was any Dreaming analogue of Danor, it was inacessible.

With its magic now restored, today the Danoran Dreaming is wholly bereft of native inhabitants, but inventors and scientists gripped in fits of ingenuity have sometimes see doors open to a world of wonders. These pathways—always marked by perfect polygonal portals (equilateral triangles, squares, pentagons, etc.)—lead to a realm where science and technology works as people wish it would. Rational scholars have found themselves drawn by a yearning temptation to see all their efforts succeed with implausible ease.

This is a realm of self-perpetuating denial and delusion.

The landscape of the Danoran Dreaming is verdant yet ordered, with neatly rowed orchards of fruit trees bearing plentiful fruit and lush bushes hiding caches of metal ingots and other raw materials. Technologists find a haven for "scientific" miracles and one-off breakthroughs, where they can produce inventions after mere hours of work. Astronomers gaze skyward and glimpse the unlikeliest of celestial convergences, suggesting beautifully elegant theorems of the cosmos. Mathematical riddles that should be daunting are solved with ease. Architects find stones that fit perfectly, and their most immense buildings stand without worry of needing supports.

Yet every morning, when the sun rises, people find themselves shunted back to the Waking. Their inventions turn to junk. Memories of observations turn hazy. Mathematical theorems are revealed to be nonsense. And should they find their way back again, anything they built has collapsed or shrunk or otherwise transformed to mock their hopes and dreams.

However, as in many places in the Dreaming, time here moves at its own idiosyncratic pace, and the farther one travels away from population centers in the Waking, the longer the sun in the Danoran Dreaming will wait before it rises. It is said that deep in the wild, in lands analogous to the edge of Methia or the Shawl Mountains, inventors toil away, having gone mad when they couldn't accept that the wonders they produced were just illusions. Mobile manufactories stalk a landscape forever in twilight, their needlessly complex limbs ripping never before seen planarite from rich veins, while titanic war constructs crackle with elecricity, guarding the subterranean bunker of a cabal of lunatics, who hope to build a dome large enough to block the sun out from entirely, so their dreams never have to end.



Drakran

***Lovushka*, *Chtotobyl*, Something That Was**

Unlike in most lands, where pathways between Waking and Dreaming tend to be in remote wilderness, fey of the *Lovushka* are territorial. This is a realm where the very concept of an area or building is charged with a profound magic. Landforms have spirits here, as does any bounded property or residence. And upon entering an area in the Waking, a visitor should be careful not to give offense to the associated spirit in the Dreaming, lest it find a way to torment them, or perhaps cause them to stumble across a threshold or other liminal space, and into the spirit's home.

The old name conveys a sense of the Dreaming as a trap, as a place that reflects the real world and seeks to snag people's souls after death, tempting them to stay in familiar environs instead of going to an afterlife. But long-held traditions in Drakr made it second nature to keep the place-spirits appeased with temporary offerings, tiny songs of praise, or carvings depicting them. Burial practices helped ensure the dead would not be accosted, and the cruelest insult one could offer would be to leave a body unburied.

The spirits have been less appeased of late, a combination of thousands dying in the Great Eclipse and the philosophy of Delkovitch Nihisol making people turn away from tradition. And so now these spirits take offense more easily.

Sometimes a looming hill might manifest a rugged moss-cloaked figure who speaks for it, and sometimes the hill itself will peel off the landscape and shamble about on rocky limbs to chase down someone who spoke ill of its slopes. Houses that mirror those in actual Drakr are tiny fiefdoms of fey called domovoi, who rule ranks of tiny spirits, and should the house's residents treat it well, the domovoi might send house spirits to the Waking, where they cheerfully repay the residents' kindness.

Elfaivaran

***Khet Masaal*, The Yielding**

The Dreaming analogue to Elfaivar is like a palatial garden left untended for five centuries. The old empire had learned to create and secure pathways between Waking and Dreaming, so that their cities could straddle both worlds. Often the Dreaming side was used to raise crops that tended themselves, spin spices out of thin air, enchant items, and conjure saṃsāra-fey to act as servants, steeds, or warbeasts. Strict rules kept the morphic realm under their control, even as the empire came to rely more and more on foreign fey—yazata, apsara, naga, garuda, yaksha, and yakshini—to maintain a sprawling magical economic system.

Most of the old pathways were severed, and the Dreaming here has returned to a more wild and natural state. Scattered points of control are held by survivors of the empire and their descendants, but between them is a playground of peril and plenty. Travelers find the landscape yielding to their fears and desires, conjuring beasts to hunt the cautious and spawning verdant bounty to feed the bold.

Peace and tranquility can be found by those with calm minds, but fey armies battle in the east, holding at bay the conquerors of Sha'a.

The city state that most Lanjyrans know as Shaha is just an outpost of conquering fey warlords, who understand how their realm is

shaped by beliefs in the Waking. So they enslave and torment people in the Waking, psychologically convincing them that the whispering warlords are full of unstoppable magic. And it becomes true, at least in the Dreaming. The armies of Sha'a were long stymied by how few people there were in Elfaivar after the empire collapsed: woefully insufficient to give the warlords the power they needed. But with the return of the gulmohar, Sha'a has a new power source.

Risuri

Domain of the Unseen Court

The pact between Risur's monarchs and the fey titans—five immense beings that exist in both Waking and Dreaming at once—has ensured this fey realm grew in parallel to the might and culture of the Kingdom of Risur. Every Risuri city is mirrored with a boisterous city ruled by its own strange logic.

Risur's lumber industry is reliant on the sprawling Antwalk Thicket near the city of Bole, whereas in the Dreaming, the city of Weevil welcomes great fey scholars from the Big Thicket, who somehow know the text of all the books printed on paper harvested in the Waking. The naval might of the militarized Shale is paralleled by the grand parades of giant trained turtles, nautiluses, and other sea creatures in Conch. Where Flint is a whirring factory of industrial might, the Great Blight is a grim open-air asylum of fey criminals who took refuge in the only place they would not be pursued, only to then go mad amid the inaudible grinding of gears and churning of machines.

And where Risur's capital Slate stands, the stately city of Clover sits amid a chessboard forest. The Unseen Court rule from Thistle Palace, a startling replica of Risur's Torfeld Palace. The rulers of the court are themselves invisible, but their clothes and masks are of the highest finery. The fey monarch **Thisraldion** is adored for their unpredictability and restraint.

Even the Unseen Court's greatest critics, the proudly rebellious Hedgehog Court—led by **Beshela, Archfey of the Sea** and **Olazdor, Archfey of Winds**—are allowed to carry out their affairs in public, in the opposite wing of the palace from Thisraldion's throne room.

Yerasol and the Seas

The Dreaming analogue of these places has had little written of it, though Risur's sailors have long maintained good relations with the mer-fey along their shores, who can emerge from portals in kelp forests or in rings of shipwrecks. They claim to be part of a nation at war with a people called tritons, and Queen Iain has named her nation's first ambassador to the mer-fey to learn more of their benthic politics.

Recently, a Crisillyiri penitent named **Lota Marbella** claimed to have spent forty years in exile on the Dreaming version of the Yerasol Archipelago. She tells of beings of cloud and surf vying for supremacy across tropical jungle-islands through cutthroat intrigue, forbidden romances, elementally-explosive wars, and strange sports. To return to the Waking she had to brave lullaby-singing hail, intelligent lightning strikes, and the pursuit of a cruel three-eyed whale who knew every desire in her heart and assailed her with tempting visions if only she would marry it and free it from some ancient bondage.



Meanwhile, rangers of the titan conclave who serve She Who Writhes have gleaned some secrets of the Dreaming deep, where they claim the resonance of ceraunic wave transmissions are being heard by the sea itself, creating thoughtform krakens from the communications of surface civilization.

Vona, Light of Inspiration

The sun is a scintillating sphere that casts her luminance upon the local planar system. In classic Clergy texts it was sometimes known by the name Vona, the name of a being who claimed false divinity when the world was first created, but in his quest for worship nevertheless became a great hero.

The sun vanished for a time during the Great Eclipse, and though there is much fascination with its immense power, little of it is understood. Skyseers claim its light is the source of fate itself, and that when it reflects off other worlds and lands upon people, it transfers some of those worlds' influence to Lanjyr. Danoran astronomers posit that despite the heat it sheds, its surface is in fact a vast, gleaming ocean of a curious liquid known as solaris aqua, composed of compressed psychic energies.

An Elfaivaran poet named **Yuva Baloot** claims to have sent her consciousness to that luminous sea, and visited a floating city, where people dredged emotions from the solaris aqua like fishermen gather their catch.

Jiese, the Fires of Industry

Jiese is the plane of fire: blisteringly hot by day, a tolerable arid broil at night, consisting of countless dense archipelagoes surrounding massive volcanoes, all adrift atop a sea of tangible, roiling flames.

Despite the deathly temperatures, these archipelagos are lush with their own sort of foliage. Their volcanic soil is extraordinarily fertile, allowing for vast jungles crowned by orange-red-purple trees. The heat-immune vegetation allows life to flourish beneath the canopy, where fire-aspected beasts of all sizes and strangenesses roam.

Jiese has been slightly explored through a portal that exits in Risur's Antwalk Thicket. But few are able to travel through, both because some inherent trait of Jiese causes magical resistance to heat and fire to provide little protection, and because the passage is heavily garrisoned, as Risur already faced one small incursion by the beings from the searing planet.

The predominant population are hardy salamanders—red-scaled beings with humanoid arms, serpentine tails, and blood as hot as lava. Their ancestors were enslaved, sent to toil in an outpost of what they call "the Efreeti Empire." These rulers were beings of living flame that could take any shape and grant any wish. For the efreet, the salamanders of Jiese mined, built glorious brass war machines, and gathered decadent harvests. But eventually, in a bid for increased productivity, the factories were handed over to automatons, and the now-idle salamanders were corralled to be slaughtered. Before the execution could be completed, the salamanders seized an arctech weapons factory and launched a revolution.

The salamanders slew or bound their old enslavers, but then, without any sense of what a culture could be like without perpetual work and what order could look like without tyrannical overseers, they simply recreated the same cruelties of the efreet. Some time in the past two centuries, if their stories are to be believed, several salamander nations collapsed to terribly destructive in-fighting. Now Jiese is littered with palatial remnants and relics, and most of the survivors are hunter-gatherers who don't know how to use the old technology.

Yet still the manufactories churn on, producing piles of chemicals and machinery that lie unassembled, serving no one.

Disregarded Rulers

While most of the salamanders and other ignan folk of Jiese live in rustic outlands, old lineages of sultans and sultanas endure around the great volcanoes, often in-bred and kept in power by their control of magically compelled efreet minions. Additionally, two foreigners have laid claim to Jiesian clay.

A Risuri fey duchess of the name **Temerity** found herself cast to Jiese through a planar storm, but thought to find her way back through the portal to Risur. Her pride got the better of her, however, as she misunderstood the politics of the region, declared herself a noble efreeti returned to claim her domain, and ended up trapped in a prison palace whose walls shift on gears like brass petals of a flower that blooms and shuts with the sun.

The **Golden Artificer**, meanwhile, is a figure who wears full plate armor that looks like it was welded out of golden chains. Orderly, militaristic, and possessing immense engineering skills, he has gathered a small legion of salamanders and taught them to repair any arctech devices brought to them in exchange for tributes of gold. This has led to a marked increase of warfare between different salamander families. The artificer's stronghold lies on a distant island, too far for Risuri scouts to have seen it up close, but through telescopes they have spotted his loyalists laying the gold in an immense ring surrounding the caldera of one of the archipelago's volcanos, as if he intends to prevent something truly massive from teleporting.

Caeloon, the Paper Wind

Caeloon is the plane of air: storm-clad, wind-swept, and mist-laden, a realm of floating islands cloaked with evergreen forests, and of impossibly tall stone plinths carved with the key to translate every language, between which fly massive origami-beasts.

Beyond this, Caeloon is also the physical embodiment of mental and spiritual resilience. Presiding over the plane are the monks of the Reborn Nomadic Monastery, who attest to witnessing the end of their world, but speak little on this apocalypse and the world's subsequent rebirth. They occupy themselves with shepherding their new gardens of plenty, which they see as the reward for their refusal to surrender their hope.

The Demon of the Low Wind

Alas, peace is a distant prospect in Caeloon, as with their world's resurrection, many peoples who did not endure the end times and do not remember them have been restored to life. These diverse cultures, deprived of the cities and kingdoms they remember, have misgivings toward the ascetic and communal lifestyle the monks advocate.

A rebellion is gathering power, and has withdrawn to the fog-shrouded lower layers of the world, their business one of greed and toil. The "Undestined" lead these rebels, half-devils that the monks had saved as an act of mercy from the end of the world. The monks decry them as selfish and materialistic, but the half-devils assert that every man has the right to earn and own property, and that only in personal prosperity is there freedom. Thousands have joined their cause, and wear their golden chains of freedom proudly.

The young rebel leader has named herself **The Demon of the Low Wind**, an epithet that harkens back to the scourge that eradicated their forebears from the original Caeloon: no literal demon, but the sum of all calamitous wars born from avarice and vengeance.

First Contact

While other planets that orbit the sun receive the rare scout from the great nations, Caeloon is the only one being regularly visited by people of Lanjyr. A portal on a floating island above the city Karch (see page 104) leads to a verdant field surrounded by towering pines, above which floats the grand paper monastery.



Young explorer **Terri Pemberton** organizes expeditions to the serene plane, and is studying techniques of aerobatic combat from a wizened monk named **Calily Buen**, but her primary goal is mercantile. This is stymied by the monks' lack of trade goods, and so Terri is considering searching out and allying with the Undestined.

Ostea, the Beating Heart

Ostea is the plane of water, but less an ocean and more a world-spanning circulatory system, with continents of regularly-pulsing muscle, and rivers of blood. This alien realm has been visited in person by only a handful of scouts from Ber. Gripped with a bubbly extroversion and an unsettling enthusiasm to tattoo themselves, these explorers spoke of half-glimpsed beings able to reshape their limbs with biokinesis. They also told of blood-drenched leviathans as large as frigates, perhaps wild beasts, or perhaps unstoppable creations of the natives.

Ostea is said by skyseers to influence physical ailments, family bloodlines, and conflicts between predator and prey, traced in bloody tooth and claw.

Urim, the Shattered Golden Chain

Urim is the plane of earth: a tightly-spaced field of asteroids flecked with gold, at once representing the concepts of separation and restraint. It is believed Urim's magic causes rings of gold to disrupt teleportation.

Geomancers of the city Nalaam claim that whenever someone is disintegrated or petrified by magic, their soul is held on one of Urim's asteroids, given a new body of stone, where they live out strange lives with ageless beings from across millennia. Should they return to their original bodies, they retain only faint memories of their sojourn. A decade ago, one wizard willingly petrified himself, and returned claiming that a war for control of the chains of asteroids wages between two forces—or perhaps two demigod-like entities—known as **Camaraderie** and **Rectification of Names**. After delivering the warning, the wizard insisted he be petrified again, and that his stone body be destroyed.

Scholars of noetic entities say Urim is the source of the phenomenon known as egregoric columns (see page 246), which lends credence to tales of two *ideas* waging war there.

One Drakran PRK space agency operative has suggested that, before they expend vast resources to fly to the planets, an array of mages should use telekinesis to target a small Urimite asteroid and crash it into the glaciers near Knütpara to study its contents. In a rare statement after his retirement as king of Risur, Baldrey Korrigan sent a letter entreating them that, if they do this, to first prepare a means to provide air to whoemver visits the crash site. His letter warned of a variety of gargantuan spider-like husks called vaknids, whose webs open portals to the vacuum of deep space.

Av, Plane of Reflections

Av is the moon, a pale orb that in the right phase can seem translucent like glass. Telescopes see it as just a barren rock pocked with craters, but many a dozing astronomer has looked at the moon and briefly glimpsed a view like seeing their own city or village viewed from above. But after a quick double-take, the mirage passes.

Skyseers say that Av is the hardest celestial entity to understand. Visions they receive after observing it are influenced by the collective thoughts, memories, and dreams of those nearby. In the past few years, this has led to attempts to use the moon as a therapy tool. Skyseer and patient lie out under a moon, and together they interpret any visions they share, and how they apply to the patient's internal mind, rather than external fate.

The Space Race

Since the Great Eclipse, the planes of the local planar system have never before been metaphysically closer, and the sharply increased frequency of planar portals, tides, and storms has opened up the potential to reliably travel between the planes.

Two competing organizations have arisen with similar overall missions: chart out unknown extraplanar lands, make peaceful contact and alliances with extraplanar sophont life, preemptively neutralize any extraplanar threats, gather extraplanar magic items and resources (planarite especially), and prepare other planes for colonization.

All three factions are always recruiting brave and elite explorers. They take a special interest in skyseers for their planar knowledge, Wayfarer cirquelistes for their mastery over travel magic, and planar vagabonds for lore of their homeworlds.

Planar Gate-Alpha Squad's headquarters are situated on an island that floats above the city of Karch, just outside of an Ancient ziggurat that links to Caeloon. A branch of Pemberton Industries, they are trying to secure permission to use other Ancient ziggurats to access new worlds, but want to show a strong success on Caeloon first to assure wary nations there will be no negative repercussions.

The **Planarnaya Razvedyvatel'naya Kompaniya** (PRK) is based out of a massive concrete cube in Trekhom. Where the Pemberton effort focuses on existing portals, the PRK pursue technological innovations to create new planar pathways. In their heaquarter's foyer hangs a prized oil painting by the late Crisilliyir master Neige Guertena, serving as a one-of-a-kind portal to the Crisillyiri Dreaming.

The PRK have had some success creating their own pocket dimensions for test travel, and they have made a few short forays to other worlds using wayfarer lanterns, though they've kept the details of these jaunts secret. Their engineers hope, however, to produce a rocketry system capable of launching a vehicle between worlds. Due to certain physical constraints, they're negotiating with the colony of Atto to set up a launch test facility there, closer to the equator.

Finally, Risur's **Impossible Initiative** operates out of the shipyards of Shale, with a focus on understanding, predicting, and harnessing the planar passages that open during some storms over the Yerasol Archipelago. They recruit old sailors, soldiers, and scientists looking for one last hurrah, and then send them steaming into the largest stormfronts, equipped with arctech instruments and orrery-compasses that, with luck, will let them navigate their way home.

Lunar Myth

Poets have long noted that the "eastern" side of the moon (the edge that crests the horizon first) seems to have the shape of a man with his arms extended to the west, while the west side has the image of a woman facing away from the man. This gave rise to a shared myth of the moon.

In this tale, an orphan boy meets a girl whose mother is dying beneath a cypress tree. The girl is taken away to be trained as a mage (or an artist, a princess, or a scholar depending on the version), and the orphan boy joins a band of hunters (or rogues, brigands, or rebels). They cross paths, fall in love through their trials, wed, and become heroes. But he dies, and she lives on to raise their child.

Though different seasons can have more specific names, generally the first quarter moon—when only the "man" is visible—is called

Hunter's moon. The full moon is Lovers' moon—when both man and woman are present. The third quarter is Maiden's moon—with the woman alone. And the new moon is Dreamer's moon.

Much of the nuance of skyseer prophecy depends on which moon rises first in a season, and which stars if any are in conjunction with it. The specialized names typically start with the first Hunter's moon each season; phases before those are just called by the generic terms of "early Lovers, early Maiden, or early Dreamer moon.

The more flavorful names (in order of first-quarter, full, third-quarter, new, then repeating) are below:

- **Spring**
  - Hart moon, Plow moon, Thunder moon, Dreamer's moon
  - Stranger's moon, Forest moon, Mage's moon, Dancer's moon
  - Hero's moon, High Spring moon, Legend's moon, Dreamer's moon
- **Summer**
  - Husband's moon, Marriage moon, Bride's moon, Dreamer's moon
  - Dragon moon, Honey moon, Kraken moon, Sleeper's moon
  - Hero's moon, High Summer moon, Legend's moon, Dreamer's moon
- **Autumn**
  - Serpent moon, Harvest moon, Mother moon, Dreamer's moon
  - Martyr's moon, Pyre moon, Widow moon, Black moon
  - Hero's moon, High Autumn moon, Legend's moon, Dreamer's moon
- **Winter**
  - Hunger moon, Snow moon, Wolf moon, Dreamer's moon
  - Orphan's moon, Cypress moon, Daughter's moon, Hope moon
  - Hunter's moon, High Winter moon. Maiden's moon. Dreamer's moon

Teykfa, the Ticking Pendulum

A dwarf planet adrift in the asteroids of Urim, Teykfa stands out as the source of an enigmatic chime, which can be heard by those who watch the night sky long enough. The noise is slow but regular, like the tolling of a clock; spending time listening to it evokes thoughts of the vast scope of time both forward and back, and ultimately to the impermanence of the present.

The bellringers' guild of Alais Primos has made it their commitment to always have at least three of their members listen to each of Teykfa's chimes. They claim to have witnessed all manner of mathematical miracles, and that through revelations they have learned Teykfa's secrets. They say that among all the stars of the distant heavens, many have civilizations, but Teykfa was the first, and it was doomed to die in solitude before any others arose.

The ancient Drakran warlord Tzertze (see page 143) is famous for his boisterous yet unlikely tales. He once claimed to have spoken with an immense white serpent which had coiled around a towering stone clock that rose like a monolith above a desert of quartz. Tzertze pointed to the sky—directly to Teykfa—and said that on that world, he and his fellow vsadni watched the Voice of Rot subdue spacetime-warping sphinxes, and then peer with its one reptilian eye into dark pasts, parallel presents, and dire futures. Tzertze asserts that the Voice of Rot is not dead, but rather traveled to the dawn of time of the last age, a serpent condemned to endlessly consume its own temporal tail.

Mavisha, the Mysterious Deep

Mavisha once held the same orbit that Ostea does today, but after the Great Eclipse it had moved, and as such it seems to hold sway over distance, space, and absence.

Primitive tribes of aquatic species swim across the endless Mavishan ocean. Space twists unsteadily around the world, rendering its myriad and multifarious islands seemingly uncountable and unnavigable. Most islands are uninhabited save for a handful of beasts, but every island holds a secret.

Perhaps many nations exist in this world, but the people of Lanjyr know of only one—the felid-aspected undines of the undersea kingdom of Yarna—and what little they have heard comes from a single source: Lady Kotele of the Dun God (see page 245).

Ascetia, the Hidden Jungle

Many of the resurrected gulmohar share the same faint memory—of a patient vigil in a jungle clearing, while the crown of a lighthouse towered visibly in the distance over the canopy. Their return to this world concided with the arrival of Ascetia as a moon around distant Mavisha, and with the appearance of mystical trees in deep woodlands scattered across Lanjyr. These trees resemble dwarf kapok trees—a species native to Elfaivar, squat and broad with gnarled buttress roots that hide many nooks and crannies—but with stories carved from different languages into the bark. The text is lit from within by a slow strobe, like the tree is itself a lighthouse.

Deep in hollows within these trees' roots are paths to Ascetia, but to open the way, one must offer a memory of one's own, and then experience a memory someone else left to the tree. A person who finds one of these trees senses vaguely what beings left memories and when, though all these memories were deposited at some point after the Great Eclipse.

If someone undertakes this passage, they live through an experience ranging from minutes to weeks, all in an instant. Sometimes people, confronted by memories of trauma or peril, turn back, but if they finish the memory they arrive on a distant world.

Ascetia is a paradise of rest, relaxation, and nature pristine and bountiful. The jungle is threaded with trails that pass other memory trees, as well as monuments and graves and ruins. And at the edge of a cliffside coast, a weathered stone lighthouse rises a hundred feet above the treetops, and sometimes in the sky will hang the blue orb of Mavisha, appearing as large as the moon.

Within the lighthouse there is no sign of habitation, but also no decay or overgrowth. The purpose of the structure is an enigma, or perhaps a gift for travelers, so that they can assign it their own impressions.

Amrou, the Salt Waste

An organization calling itself the Clear Waters published a document they claim was stolen from Risur's little-known Ministry of Infiltration, which detailed a field report from one "Director Lauryn Cyneburg."



Within, she claimed Amrou is a desert inhabited by undead halflings, their souls kept pure as long as certain blessed treasures remain in their burial chambers within pyramids made of immense salt crystals. These wee wardens are charged with fending off evil from their domain. At least some of them are able to command elementals of jade, burning oil, clockwork, and ringing bells.

Cyneburg claimed she saw spirits, having lingered for a time in the Bleak Gate, undertaking an exodus through this lifeless land, a task which the undead halflings assisted by maintaining clear pathways through drifting dunes of dessicating salt. But whenever one of these spirits would find itself trapped, it would transform into a maddened and violent monster, somehow empowered by a greater power buried somewhere beneath the desert. The arrangement of pyramids, set in alignment with distant stars, formed a trap.

This trap, it seems, snares beings from farflung planes. Much the way teleportation beacons will deposit travelers to a specific location, Amrou will capture celestials, fiends, gidim, and other outsiders that try to plane shift into the local planar system. Cyneburg claims to have spoken with a floating wheel ringed with fiery eyes, which warned that the wastes of Amrou would some day be overrun if the halfling guardians were not replenished from time to time.

Cyneburg ended her report by suggesting that King Baldrey expand the role of the Ministry of Infiltration, so that whenever any person in the Waking or Dreaming demonstrated sufficiently uncanny combat prowess, they be recruited to defend the planar system from such "infiltrators." Recruitment, she clarified, could occur post-mortem, since their spirits would end up going to Amrou anyway.

Travel Between Worlds

All the worlds above—the Waking, Bleak Gate, and Dreaming, plus Jiese, Caeloon, Av, Ostea, Urim, Teykfa, Mavisha, Ascetia, and Amrou—are physically present in orbit around the same star, and so for the purpose of most magic, creatures from any of those worlds are considered native to all those worlds. Thus it is not possible to use effects like *banishment* or *dispel evil and good* to send a creature from Mavisha back there.

Travel between worlds is possible with *plane shift* or *gate*, or by as-yet-theoretical vehicles capable of flying between planets. Other natural pathways exist, though these are often limited by region or time, such as the unpredictable planar storms of the Yerasol Archipelago, conjunctions between the Dreaming and the Waking in specific places on certain nights, or forest fires that create a bridge to Jiese.

Plane Shift

A handful of metallic planarite and several hours in an arcanosmithing workshop can produce the proper 250 gp tuning fork necessary for such magic. However, discovering the formulae and specifications necessary to craft a plane shift rod for a specific plane can be an arduous adventure in and of itself. Furthermore, magicians capable of casting *plane shift* are exceedingly rare and hard to recruit.

Planar Portals

A planar portal is any stationary terrain feature or structure that connects two planes, though most such pathways are ephemeral, and cannot be relied on to still be there for a return trip. Many appear and vanish without discovery, brought forth by little-understood

conjunctions of place and planar energy. And those that are discovered often provoke fear, rather than exploratory fervor. For instance, one butcher shop in Reo Pedresco was believed haunted when people heard heartbeats in the walls and glimpsed scab-like blood crawl across the floor in the shape of a lizard. It was only after the building was razed that the portal to Ostea was discovered in the sewers, kept alive somehow by the constant feed of entrails dumped by the shop's owner.

Ancient Ziggurats

Lanjyr's most famous portals are the seven Ancient ziggurats spread throughout the continent. Archaeologists say that the ziggurats linked this world to others in the system, and they theorize that another event similar to the Great Eclipse might have happened at the dawn of civilization.

- **Ziggurat of Jiese.** In the heart of Risur's Antwalk Thicket, this step pyramid was somehow transmuted from stone to metal, mostly brass. The area around it is guarded by rangers of the titan conclave who serve the Ash Wolf, and that fey titan's smoldering wolf-pups treat the ziggurat as their den, devouring any salamanders who try to slip past.
- **Ziggurat of Caeloon.** On a floating island above Islas dolas Focas, near the steelmarked gnoll city of Karch, within a silent storm, entry to this ruin is controlled by Pemberton Industries. The portal used to connect to the windless, murmuring plane Avilona, which vanished during the Great Eclipse.
- **Ziggurat of Av.** Evidence archaeologists have collected from other ziggurats suggest the Ancients also built a ziggurat to Av, but its location is unknown. The most popular guess is that it was built over by the Clergy when they founded their capital Methia, and that it still lies beneath the ruined spire of Triegenes.
- **Ziggurat of Ostea.** Off the coast of Ber's capital Seobriga, this ruin lies at the bottom of the sea, while the surface above is patrolled by the Beran navy, which sometimes must slay bloody leviathans that squeeze through the portal. It used to connect to the plane Mavisha, which moved during the Great Eclipse.
- **Ziggurat of Urim.** This ziggurat stands in a massive cave beneath the city-state of Nalaam, underneath the Falling Star Casino. Entry is controlled by the Crystal Houses, who use the plane's energies as fuel for their magic and to strengthen their stone architecture.
- **Ziggurat of Mavisha.** In the heart of Risur's High Bayou, this remote ruin was once guarded by the serpentine Voice of Rot. Now the webs of the arachnid Hollow Widow catch any undines who might come through. The portal used to link to the dust-shrouded, distant plane Apet, which disappeared during the Great Eclipse.
- **Ziggurat of Amrou.** In the Senesi desert of Crisillyir, this structure is buried under the sands, bustling like an ant hill filled with demons. Namtar-Shamash, once a mighty servant of the Demonocracy, has made this his new palace, and when his unholy minions have been captured and tortured, they revealed that their demon lord hopes to use the portal to make his way to the realm of his birth, a chaotic maelstrom called The Tanari Abyss. Fortunately, he has been stymied by whatever beings defend the salt wastes of Amrou. This portal once connected to the mournful, ruined plane Nem, which vanished in the Great Eclipse.

Zones of Confluence

Some connections between planes are not clearly-bounded portals, but rather areas where two worlds seem to overlap, and it is possible to inadvertently step into another plane. One well-known confluence zone is the Elfaivaran city Rumah Terakir, which exists in both the Dreaming and the Waking, and certain well-guarded roads lead between the two worlds. Equally infamous, if much smaller, is the peak of Cauldron Hill in the city of Flint, where the veil to the Bleak Gate is thin, and beings often pour forth from that world at night.

Confluence zones to planes other than the Dreaming and Bleak Gate are rare, but not unknown. In 509 AOV, fog banks rolled over Danoran research stations in the Piscine Mountains, and the scientists briefly were assaulted by Undestined raiders from the plane Caeloon. And precisely ten years after the end of the Great Eclipse, a symphony in Alais Primos meant to commemorate those who died in the God Trials was overtaken by a deafening ticking, and people swore they saw an immense stone tower looming above the venue—matching descriptions of Teykfa—while around them they could see again the volcanic eruption that nearly destroyed the city a decade earlier.

This same phenomenon is believed to be the cause of planar tides and storms in the Yerasol Archipelago. Tides simply suffuse the sea with magical energy from another world, and might cause a ship to glimpse the shores of another world. But planar storms are usually filled with alien monsters: Caeloonian origami-rocs that snatch victims with great talons, Jiesian arctech warships that attack with no crew, Ostean oozes floating like aerial jellyfish, and so on.

These tides and storms often leave behind planarite, a precious flotsam that can make survivors of this supernatural weather rich, or lure greedy fools to brave storms that will almost surely sink them. One of those fools is **Bruce McDruid**, commodore of a pirate fleet, which he commands from aboard the *Hastings*, whose crew is made up of many a would-be hero who decided to give up on their quest and instead chase fortune on the seven seas of the solar system—the Waking, the Dreaming, the Bleak Gate, the fire sea of Jiese, the sky sea of Caeloon, the blood sea of Ostea, and the unchartable sea of Mavisha.



CHAPTER SIX
A PARADE OF CURIOSITIES

Herein find some of the more prominent magical novelties, martial theses, and mysterious boons of the modern day, as well as prestige classes characters can pursue at higher level.

Magic Items

While adventurers may stumble upon rare treasures in their travels, modern principles of mass production have rendered a few magic items common enough that any small town might have one or two. Often nations have invested in expanding access to these items to help foster their people's prosperity.

Items listed as uncommon are conversation pieces and head-turners, but still seen less as treasures than as valuable tools. Rarer items tend to be older relics of preindustrial times, or custom designs by inspired arctech inventors.

Crafting Components

Many items in this chapter can be created solely with magical industrial methods, using planarite refined in large batches. A crafter with their own workshop could acquire sufficient planarite and other base materials for three-quarters the item's normal market cost. However, crafters can often derive the necessary magic from other sources at the low cost of a bit of peril and adventure. If they can acquire the listed component, they only need spend half the item's normal market cost for base materials.

See *Trials & Treasures* page 348 for more information on crafting magic items.

Absurdist Web

Wondrous item, legendary (cost 88,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Eighty-eight spider webs collected from within three miles of the corpse of a huge creature that died while entangled and poisoned.

This knot of fey spider silk unfolds into a ten-foot square, occasionally unearthing a long-dead sparrow or a cricket that waves thanks before hopping away.

This web functions similar to a *portable hole*, and can contain material that would fit in a 10-ft. cube. However, the user cannot see what is in the extradimensional space, and can only extract things they know are inside. Those attempting to divine the contents of the web via magic must succeed on a DC 28 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a failure, the spell or effect is wasted, and the creature cannot attempt to divinatorily discover the contents of the web again until 24 hours have passed.

A creature placed into the extradimensional space is placed into stasis for up to a month, needing neither food nor water, but still healing at a natural pace. If a living creature is not freed within a month, the creature is shunted from the *absurdist web* and appears beneath a large spider web 1d6 miles away.

Planarite

As mentioned in Chapter Two, **planarite** is a physical embodiment of a raw elemental energy or of the traits of a particular plane, usually taking the form of a crystal, fluid, or mineral, but sometimes having shapes more like biological matter. Planarite has always been a part of the crafting of magic items, but scientists today can better understand and codify it, and so magic items that in the past could only be designed after much trial and error by powerful spellcasters can be matched and mass produced by modern industry. It's still not cheap, though.

In the world of ZEITGEIST, there is an order to planarite just as with the protons, electrons, and molecular bonds of traditional chemistry.

Basic planarite holds the power of one of eight core elements: earth, air, fire, water, life, death, space, and time. Complex planarite represents a mix of two elemental energies, and usually have shapes and effects more idiosyncratic to the specific plane they come from.

The different types of planarite are mostly aesthetic flair, with no mechanical specifics. But throughout this chapter, sidebars present different types of planarite. This is not a comprehensive list, and not all magic items involve obvious planarite components, but these descriptions might spark inspiration for inventions or memorable visuals.

Food, drink, and unintelligent creatures placed in the web are consumed immediately by unseen entities, but dead sapient creatures are left alone and do not decay for up to one month. After that point, whatever etiquette fey spiders abide by treats them as fair game, and they are quickly devoured. Moving the web does not count as moving the body for the normal limit of three miles on resurrections and speaking with spirits.

Word has it that this web has a profound connection to the Webway, a series of space-folding tunnels crafted and frequently used by the arachnids of the Dreaming. The new fey titan known as the Hollow Widow would doubtlessly know more of these webs and the Webway.

Example Planarite—Air

Basic air planarite called **galeite** is a howling wind refined into a white crystal. Galeite can attract winds for a sailing ship akin to how a magnet attracts metal.

Driftblooms are plants that grow around portals to Caeloon, producing lighter-than-air puffs that look like clouds and feel like cotton that is always stirred with a breeze. Driftblooms combine both air and life energy. They can be threaded into tremulous strings that remember music, or stuffed as filler into clothes to let the wearer manipulate wind with their thoughts, or even processed into paper that can fold over heavy objects to render them weightless in an extradimensional space.

Aeriad Bracers

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 300 gp) or rare (cost 3,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Driftbloom (Caeloon planarite) from the lair of an air elemental.

Leather cuffs padded with driftbloom tufts are kept stiff with shafts and fletching of arrows, all wound with driftbloom strands. This grants the wearer a measure of control over objects in flight.

While you are wearing the bracers, you descend 60 feet per round and take no damage from falling. While falling, you can also glide 5 feet horizontally without provoking opportunity attacks for every 10 feet you descend.

Additionally, the rare version of this item grants you a +2 bonus to damage rolls with ranged weapons.

Alacritous Camera

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 500 gp)

Crafting Components: A crystalog, a clear crystalline planarite made by directing the light from a telescope pointed at the planet Ascetia into a heated pressurized vessel filled with a solution of dissolved quartz.

This resembles a photochemical camera with a large alchemical flash hood, save that the interior contains a crystalog amid a complex assortment of arcanotechnological clockwork gears, wires, and spark plugs.

As an action, you can loudly snap a high-resolution, full-color photograph with this camera. It comes with an alchemical light bulb for flash photography, which the item's magic replenishes after a minute. This is not a subtle process, due to the loud sounds of the machinery within that imprint the image into the crystalog.

This camera uses no plates. Rather, by concentrating on the crystalog you can see with your mind's eye the images it has taken. It can store up to eight images at a time.

Over the course of 1 hour, which can be performed as part of a short rest, you can magically transfer and ink a photograph onto a suitably large sheet of paper, canvas, or similar surface. The input can also be copied into an *asomatous canvas projector*. If a *light* cantrip is targeted on the crystalog, that washes out the existing images, clearing it to take more pictures after one minute.

Though expensive and loud, these cameras are finding immense interest among the fields of entertainment, journalism, crime scene investigation, and espionage.

Amulet of the Impeccable Spy

Wondrous item, rare (cost 700 gp)

Crafting Components: A large malice beast eye, and a mirror that showed the beast its reflection before it died.

The side of this amulet that faces outward is just mirror, often a copper disk with silver studs. On the reverse is a preserved malice beast eye facing the wearer.

While you are wearing the amulet:

You are aware whenever you fail a Deception or Stealth check.

You can use a bonus action to instantly stow away your clothes and put on a mundane non-armor outfit within 5 feet of you, which temporarily transmutes into a perfect fit while you are wearing it. This allows you to remove clothes from a helpless or unconscious person and don them instantly. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

You can cast *true seeing* without verbal or somatic components, but you must rub the material component (a 25 gp ointment) onto the malice beast eye using both hands. Once the amulet has generated this effect, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Ancient Orcs' Amulet

Wondrous item, very rare (cost 25,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Gold worn by a chain devil.

This stone amulet is engraved with pictograms of a tree surrounded by archaic planarite of distant worlds, all depicting the four tangible elements: air, earth, fire, and water.

While you are wearing the amulet, you gain resistance to your choice of acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage. Whenever you end a long rest attuned to this amulet, its stone briefly transmutes to gold, and you can change the resistance.

Ancient Orcs' Blade, +1, +2, or +3

Weapon (glaive, greatsword, longsword, or scimitar), rare (+1; cost 5,000 gp), very rare (+2; cost 25,000 gp), or legendary (+3; cost 100,000 gp) (requires attunement)

Crafting Components: A golden weapon wielded by a bearded devil (+1), chain devil (+2) or erinyes (+3).

This *macuahuitl* resembles a typical Ancient weapon, with obsidian shards held in a long wooden frame, almost like a double-sided saw.

When you deal damage with this weapon, you can choose to deal your choice of acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage instead of slashing damage; if you do so, the *macuahuitl*'s wood briefly



transmutes into gold, and the obsidian is revealed as archaic planarite of distant worlds, crackling with myriad planar energies

You have a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus is determined by the weapon's rarity.

After you make an attack against a creature with this weapon, you can spatially anchor the creature until the end of your next turn. The creature cannot move or teleport except to come closer to you, nor can it become ethereal or travel to another plane. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

Ancient Orcs' Staff

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement; cost 5,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Four golden stakes driven through the hearts of four imps.

This wooden staff is covered in a spiral of archaic planarite from distant worlds, shaped into symbols, denoting the four tangible elements: air, earth, fire, and water.

While you are attuned to the staff, you have resistance to psychic damage.

This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff. As an action, you can thrust the staff dramatically; the staff's wood briefly turns to gold, and you immediately cast *fireball* without components (save DC 15), dealing your choice of acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.

Once the staff has unleashed elemental power this way, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Asomatous Canvas Projector

Wondrous item, common (wall; cost 30 gp) or uncommon (stage; cost 200 gp)

Crafting Components: Tinker's supplies, clockwork, gears, wires, and spark plugs.

This inches-wide, rounded cube packs in an incredible amount of arcanotechnological components. A nozzle on one side can project a vibrant, animated illusion.

Asomatous canvas projectors have become popular across Lanjyr for civic color, theatrical entertainment, animated artwork and advertisements, and more. While the figment sheds light, it is nowhere as luminous as that of arctech everbright lamps and actual electric incandescent filament bulbs.

Some talented artists have experimented with sets of multiple cubes intended to be played in sequence, creating an animated and audible story in five-minute segments; these exhibits have been called kinetograms.

By touching the cube as an action and thinking upon a desired figment (or transferring an image from an *alacritous camera*), the user can set the cube to memorize the figment and then project it when the desired conditions are met, just as if casting a *programmed illusion* spell. The common wall projector can produce a 5-foot cube of image out to a range of 10 feet, while the uncommon stage projector can fill a 30-foot cube out to a range of 120 feet. This functions in many respects as a *programmed illusion*. However, the figment lasts indefinitely, sheds light as bright as a torch, and has a distinctly washed out, somewhat grainy and flickering character (similar to what we'd recognize as early silent films) that makes it completely obvious to even a common lizard that it's an illusion.

Since anyone can adjust the cube's programming, *asomatous canvas projectors* are normally kept under literal lock and key, often in bronze filigreed boxes with a gap just large enough to allow the invisible strands of illusory magic to pour through. Unsurprisingly, these cubes are prime targets for pranksters and protestors.

Automatic Arithmetic Analyzer

Wondrous item, common (cost 20 gp)

Crafting Components: Tinker's supplies.

This metallic array of arctech clockwork tumblers and wires is arranged into a thin, angled rectangle that neatly fits in the palm of the hand.

Also known as the autosum, this advanced abacus finds use in many fields, from money-counting accountants, to trajectory-calculating artillerists; arcanoscientific alchemists who must calculate precise measurements, to occult ritualists who need to get the geometry of a magic circle just right.

By pushing the neatly-labeled buttons on this apparatus, the user can perform arithmetic functions: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, exponential functions, trigonometry, and more. The apparatus can also instantaneously divine the current time and date as per Teykfa's objective readings, and with the flip of a few fine switches, the rotary tumblers can switch from solving equations to displaying the time and date. Some slightly bulkier models even include a bell and clacker, and can be set with an alarm.

The temple of Ingatan in the Elfaivaran settlemenet Rumah Terakir has the peculiar distinction of being the largest buyer of these devices, and aficionados of the nascent field of 'computational research' are flocking there, hoping to develop analyzers of far greater capability.



Autonomous Mechanical Carriage

Wondrous item, rare (cost 4,999 gp)

Crafting Components: Adamant flakes collected from an earth elemental in a *silence* spell.

Adamant and aether are wrought into a two-inch-diameter arctech disc reminiscent of a carriage's wheel. The wealthy and the powerful use this bauble for intracity transportation when they worry of bullets flying from dangerous streets.

As an action, you can throw this disc onto the ground. It instantaneously and spectacularly assembles itself into a horseless carriage of darkwood, steel plate armor, magically hardened glass windows, and fine leather upholstery. Some versions of this figurine build complex arcanotechnological wheels, while others construct mechanical equine legs, which are just as effective.

The carriage can accommodate up to nine Medium passengers inside. While its windows are closed, creatures entirely inside the carriage have total cover. Outside of a combat encounter, the carriage can travel at up to 20 miles per hour, though the general lack of paved roadways outside of cities limits its range. The carriage navigates autonomously; it stops or swerves to avoid hazards, and follows simple telepathic directions.

One creature in the driver's seat can use its action to manually direct the carriage, or to make it attack. The carriage appears at full hit points and acts as a Huge animated object with AC 18, but will not attack unless directed by a driver.

If no creatures or foreign objects are inside the carriage, any creature can use an action to touch the carriage and transform it back into a disc.

Example Planarite—Death

Witchoil is a basic death planarite, often found in pools near pathways to the Bleak Gate. It burns like normal oil, and immersing someone in it does necrotic damage.

If someone dies near witchoil, the viscous black fluid gains a subtle glinting twinkle. Nearby spirit mediums will hear muffled cries for help. If that witchoil is burned, screams are audible, and the substance burns more intensely than normal oil could, and for far longer. Mainstream sensibility is that this destroys a soul trapped within the oil, and so every major nation has banned witchoil research. Risur even trains abjurers for the express purpose of locating this "ensouled" witchoil and cleansing it with *remove curse*. This causes the twinkle to vanish and the psychic cries to end.

Danoran courseurs believe talk of souls is just superstition, however, and they happily purchase supplies of witchoil from the Malice Lands

Desiccum is exceedingly rare Amrou planarite that has only been recovered by use of mighty *plane shift* spells. Made of preserved flesh that has transformed into a black salt, it combines death and earth energy but otherwise is little understood. When ground to powder it seems to interfere with non-physical magic, such as illusions and charms, and it erratically shortens the range of all magic. Sadly, there simply isn't enough of this substance for proper experimentation.

Badger Weapon

Weapon (any), uncommon (requires attunement; cost 500 gp)

Crafting Components: A weapon crafted by someone who dreamed about badgers in the past month.

Despite its ordinary appearance, this weapon is subtly crafted from Dreaming planarite.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

After you hit a Large or smaller target with this weapon, you can immediately conjure a badger from the Dreaming. The rancorous critter appears within 5 feet of the target and is already grappling the target (escape DC 11). It takes its turn immediately after the turn of the creature it is or was attached to. The badger's furry fury is beyond your ability to command; it will use its actions only on hostilities towards whichever creature it was attached to. The badger vanishes only when it is reduced to 0 hit points. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

Dreaming Badger Challenge ⅛
Medium fey (25 XP)

Armor Class 13
HP 11 (2d8+2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	4 (–3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages understands Sylvan

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage and the target is grabbed (Escape DC 11).

Teleport. The badger teleports up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Before or after teleporting it can make one bite attack.

Blood of the Hollow Widow

Wondrous item, rare (cost 8,888 gp)

Crafting Components: Blood shed from eight different creatures that have shared a meal, including at least one ettercap, one librarian, one giant spider, and the crafter themselves.

Those whom the new fey titan of the High Bayou known as the Hollow Widow recognizes as friends or family might be gifted with this beautiful pendant of durable glass. Encased within is a tiny quantity of blood, a living icon of the titaness and a conduit of her power, however humble.

While you are wearing the pendant:

- Arachnids default to being friendly to you unless given a reason to feel otherwise.
- While in contact with a web, you know the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.
- As a bonus action, you can extrude and detach from your wrist a thick web strand that functions as a *rope of climbing*. If you use this bonus action again, the previous rope disappears.
- Librarians presume you and those you travel with have permission to access library facilities, even subscription libraries, as long as you're not disruptive.
- You know the exact distance, direction, name, and rough description of the nearest library, be it public, subscription, or even ruined and abandoned.
- Additionally, during a long rest, you can meditate on objects or locations in your vicinity. You drift into sleep and dream, and when you awake you recall vivid visions about history. You can choose from the two following options up to eight times during each long rest.
- You learn how an object's owner acquired and lost the object, as well as the most recent significant event involving the object and that owner. If the object was owned by another creature in the past week, you can select this option again to learn the same information about that creature.
- You see visions of recent events in your immediate vicinity (a room, street, tunnel, clearing, or the like, up to a 50-foot cube), going back up to a week. For each time you select this option, you learn about one significant event, beginning with the most recent. Significant events typically involve powerful emotions, such as battles and betrayals, marriages and murders, births and funerals. However, they might also include more mundane events that are nevertheless important in your current situation.

Bracer of Liberty

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 417 gp)

Crafting Components: Links that formerly chained enslaved people, and blood of their enslaver.

Dozens of links from the chains of slaves were shattered apart and half-melted into this bracelet, which pulses with potent psychic energies. If the wearer loses control of their will, the links sear with retaliatory heat and bring the wearer to their senses, as designed by the original creator, the late gnoll *executore* Glaucia Evora. *Executore* heralds prefer to lend these items to their comrades, as such heralds prefer to confront challenges of willpower on their own merits.

Example Planarite—Earth

One basic earth planarite is **adamant**, a dark rock that can be worked into metal to create adamantine.

Urim is most renowned for its gold, but **meteoric astrium** is a metal infused with earth and space energy, which floats in tandem with other metal at distances from a quarter inch to up to a yard, allowing for novel gear patterns that won't collide as easily.

While you are wearing the bracer, whenever you start your turn charmed you may choose to take 1d6 fire damage. If you do, you can act until the start of your next turn as if you are not charmed. If you have immunity to fire damage, the bracer provides no protection.

Butcher's Corset

Wondrous item, very rare (cost 11,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Scabs from wounds on a hydra that did not regenerate, but lived long enough to heal naturally.

Strung tightly against the spine, this corset composed of stiff Ostean planarite allows for control over one's own severed limbs.

While you are wearing the corset:

- No parts of your body can be individually severed unless you allow such. Any 'debilitation' of a body part such as from a savant's *surgical flourish* goes away at the end of your turn.
- During your turn, without an action, you can harmlessly detach one or both of your arms, or reattach any number of your body parts sharing your space if they were severed while you were wearing this corset. As an action, you can teleport any number of your severed body parts back onto your body if they are within three miles. Any clothing, armor, and accessories are detached or reattached with the limbs.
- During your turn, if you are not incapacitated and both of your arms are severed, they are entitled to their own movement. Both of your arms function as a single unit, and they have a sympathetic link to you. For most mechanical purposes, you occupy both your actual space and the Tiny space of the arms. Your arms typically have the same AC as you, and only your arms benefit from a shield. You and your arms share temporary effects, and your arms have a fly (hover) speed equal to your highest speed. Your arms ignore the prone condition. Your arms can lift, carry, and otherwise manipulate the environment as you normally would. You can use your arms to take actions and reactions as normal, though if you're unable to see your target you still suffer disadvantage on your attacks.

Countermagical Handcuffs

Wondrous item, common (cuffs; cost 20 gp) or uncommon (vest; cost 300 gp)

Crafting Components: Meteoric iron, gold thread.

Colloquially called 'mage cuffs,' these steel handcuffs let law enforcement agencies, criminal groups, rebels, conspirators, and others restrain prisoners who might otherwise use magic to slip away. When they were first mass produced in 517 AOV, incarceration reformists breathed collective sighs of relief as the need for stringent and often cruel countermagical security features was greatly reduced. Engraved runes and mystical geometries create

Example Planarite—Fire

One of the most basic planarites is phlogiston: fire in liquid form. It has a paradoxical ability to be vaporized at high pressure, then used as fuel for a steady flame, almost like lantern oil. Somehow phlogiston in this state can transfer so much heat to the flame that it becomes colder than the surrounding environment. In the right conditions this can transmute it into frostburn—liquid cold.

Alchemical refineries can take large flames and condense them into firegems—a uniquely Jiesian fire planarite, warm to the touch, which release their stored energy once raised to a sufficient heat, like coal, or when struck with sufficient force.

planar conduits to Urim, selected for its enhancement of the metaphysical concept of barriers. Urim's planar energies pour into the steel, reinforcing it under certain conditions.

Normally, these act as nothing more than regular manacles. If placed upon either a willing creature, or a creature at 0 hit points, a soft and aureate light begins to limn the handcuffs, signifying that they have been magically reinforced until the next time they are removed. While so magically reinforced, all DCs associated with circumventing the manacles increase to 30.

Additionally, whenever the wearer uses any non-permanent magical effects (including but not limited to spells, charming gazes, frightening auras, invisibility, shapechanging, telepathy, teleportation, the Incorporeal Movement trait, legendary actions, or lair actions), they take 4d6 psychic damage and must make a Constitution saving throw or else the magic they attempted fails to happen. Similar to concentration, the DC is 10 or half the damage the wearer takes, whichever is higher.

If someone attempts to break the cuffs, the wielder takes damage as if they tried to use magic. The cuffs have 30 hit points, and either resistance or immunity to most types of damage.

The cuffs' damage is nonlethal, and cannot kill the wearer. The cuffs, however, only have three charges each hour, so a very committed prisoner might manage to power through an escape attempt.

For the most magically powerful foes, greater bindings that use similar principles might be employed. The uncommon 'magebinding jacket' deals 10d6 psychic damage to a wearer who uses magic, and also keeps them restrained. It too only has three charges per hour, but as yet no prisoner has ever been known to fight past more than two. Courtesy of Urim's aureate energy, the jacket has 50 hit points.

Some devoted incarceration facilities have countermagic cells, which function as magebinding jackets for anyone inside, but have no limit to the number of charges.

Demonic Weapon, +2, +3, or +4

Weapon (any), uncommon (+2; cost 101 gp), rare (+3; cost 501 gp), or very rare (+4; cost 5,001 gp)

Crafting Components: The heart of a sapient being you ritually sacrificed and fed a bite of with a horde demon (+2), vrock (+3), or glabrezu (+4).

Though no visual trait betrays its nature, this weapon of unassuming materials is frighteningly warm to your skin. As you touch it, for a moment, you feel like your hand is submerged in fresh blood. The sensation passes, but you cannot help but long to feel it again. Sadly, the release of demons onto Crisillyiri soil also spread many of these weapons throughout the nation.

You have a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus is determined by the weapon's rarity.

As an action, you can touch the *demonic weapon* to another weapon, and as long as the other weapon remains on your person (or in an extradimensional space on your person), the demonic weapon is transmuted to match the shape and mundane qualities of the other weapon.

Curse. This weapon is cursed. If nobody else is cursed by it, and your hand (gloved or otherwise) ever touches the weapon while it is in a shape you are proficient in, you become cursed by it. All damage inflicted onto the weapon is instead redirected to you. Once before the next dawn, you must personally kill a humanoid and smear the weapon with its blood or equivalent substance. If you fail to do so, you suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma ability checks for each unfulfilled dawn, as the weapon whispers into your mind and castigates you. The penalty resets if you finally feed it. If this penalty equals or exceeds your Wisdom score, you are driven mad and kill yourself with the weapon.

The curse can be removed by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic, so long as the weapon is used to kill a goat submerged in holy water during the casting.

Diamond-Encrusted Piece, +1, +2, or +3

Ranged weapon (target pistol), uncommon (+1; cost 500 gp), rare (+2; cost 5,000 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 50,000 gp) (requires attunement)

Crafting Components: You must defeat a fey (dryad for +1, fey knight for +2, or archfey for +3) in three challenges: wordplay, marksmanship, and some sort of contact sport.

Enemies are dumbstruck at the sight of your solid-gold, diamond-encrusted gun. Every one of its 24 karat bold bullets is worth a month's food for an entire middle-class family. Who but an unrepentant jackass would own such a thing? In truth, this firearm made of cacheum from Urim simply temporarily transmutes bullets into gold, which turns back into lead after an hour.

You have a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus is determined by the weapon's rarity.

After you attack a creature with this weapon, if the target can see you, you can twirl around the pistol to infuriate it, without an action. Until the end of your next turn, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you, and creatures other than you have advantage on saving throws that the target prompts. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

Diplomatic Firearm, +1, +2, or +3

Ranged weapon (any firearm with an ammunition clip), uncommon (+1; cost 250 gp), rare (+2; cost 2,500 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 25,000 gp) (requires attunement)

Crafting Components: Bones of a malice beast you managed to capture and domesticate (Medium size for +1, Large for +2, Huge for +3).

This firearm was first crafted by the Drakran gunsmith, eschatologist, and assassin Kvarti Gorbatiy. Ornate but not ostentatious, powerful but not gratuitous, it is, in all ways, quite reasonable. Its stock is malice beast bone, and its barrel is simple steel.

You have a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus is determined by the weapon's rarity.

As a bonus action, you can fire a bullet into empty air, startling enemies that are actively combating you and your allies, provided that the enemies can hear the gunshot. All startled enemies must collectively and subconsciously nominate a leader among them. If the leader fails a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13 uncommon, 15 rare, 17 very rare), you create a detente for 1 minute, which you can use to speak, initiate diplomatic action, tend to the wounded, or perform some other activity. Depending on the circumstances, it is possible that hostilities may simply resume after the minute.

During this detente, if a creature that is part of the detente, even an ally, takes a hostile action, the bullet returns and strikes that creature. After the hostile action, the creature takes piercing damage (5d10 uncommon, 10d10 rare, 12d10 very rare).

Once you have attempted to quell hostilities using this weapon, you cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Distinguished Top Hat

Wondrous item, rare (cost 1,099 gp)

Crafting Components: Leather of a malice beast that you defeated without taking any damage.

This fine top hat of malice beast leather invigorates you whenever you would falter against something that would jeopardize your dignity.

While you are wearing the hat:

This self-repairing hat shifts its size, design, coloration, cleanliness, and position on your head according to your precise thoughts and wishes. The hat can never fall off or be knocked off unless otherwise noted. Even if the hat is a comically miniature top hat resting precariously on the side of your head during a gale, it will not fall off.

When you would fail a saving throw, you can have the top hat fall to the ground, landing at your feet. If you do so, you can reroll the saving throw, and you never have disadvantage on this saving throw. Once the top hat has been displaced this way, it cannot be displaced again until the next dawn.

Eldritch Fusil, Ostean

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement; cost 500 gp)

Crafting Components: Your own blood shed when you were reduced to 0 hit points by a construct, undead, or inanimate object.

This arcane fusil was crafted with blood magic drawn from the plane Ostea. Carved from bone, the weapon has a scabrous crust clotting the interior of the barrel. It is a one-handed ranged weapon that deals 1d10 piercing damage, and range 20/60. The weapon deals an extra 1d6 damage against nonliving things like constructs, undead, and inanimate objects.

Similar to a traditional arcane fusil, this weapon requires no ammunition. However instead of evoking bolts of elemental energy, it creates and fires a bullet of blood drawn from the wielder. It does not require a trigger charge, nor any sort of action to reload, and so can fire multiple shots in the same turn if the wielder is capable of making multiple attacks.

An attuned wielder can fire a number of shots equal to 1 + their Constitution modifier (minimum 1). These shots recharge after the wielder completes a short or long rest. Any shots beyond these, as well as any shots fired by a wielder who isn't attuned, also deal 10 damage to the wielder. This damage cannot be reduced. It is possible for a wielder to exsanguinate themselves into unconsciousness by overusing an Ostean fusil.

A creature that has no blood cannot use this fusil.

Example Planarite—Life

Some pretentious scholars argue that any biological matter is basically a form of life planarite, so one could ostensibly claim a pointy stick is arctech. For most magical researchers, though, life planarite is something closer to "thought" or "dream." Objects of these sort are ephemeral, and grow or change.

Certainly, though, dead creatures and plants collected from the Dreaming can create strange magic. **Serpent's loop**, for instance, is made from scales of snakes that devoured themselves, boiled in venom, and when used as fuel for a fire, it can burn anything as if it were flesh, consuming even stone.

Gulmohar weavers from Elfaivar have reintroduced a forgotten type of Dreaming planarite, called **cintamani**—a stone found embedded in wood or flesh that can be rubbed to conjure whatever you desire, but only an illusion. Over time, obsessive or desperate dreamers will rub these stones to a smooth polish, and eventually erode them to nothing. This *absence* of illusion finally draws the dream into reality, and an object crafted by someone who rubs away a cintamani stone can shift its shape based on one's desire.

Expanding Exosuit

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement; cost 2,750 gp)

Crafting Components: A suit of animated armor destroyed while it was under the effects of the *enlarge* spell.

Various efforts have been made to produce powered armor in the age of revolution. First was the clunky design of the Risuri halfling Alloquicious in 500 AOV, presented in the Kaybeau Arms Fair. Next came the extravagantly expensive hulk of the infamous Risuri gnome Tinker Oddcog used during Ber's Steel Rebellion, and then there were the Danoran wayfarer's engine walkers fielded by Sovereign Han Jierre to invade Flint near the start of the Great Eclipse. Since then, several other steamsuit pilots have crafted their own personal frames.

The Risuri colony of Kellandia's very own arcanotechnological design as of 522 AOV, however, promises to be the most reliable and affordable. While it will still take years for more than a tiny handful of soldiers to be outfitted with these exosuits, the colonial governor and the Risuri top brass are quite satisfied by their performance.

This device is an extradimensional backpack full of arcanotechnological clockwork gears, wires, and hydraulic and pneumatic motors, crafted primarily of adamant and aether. The backpack can be placed within another extradimensional space without issue, and it can be used in conjunction with any other form of powered armor or steamsuit.

As a bonus action, you can push a button on the side of the backpack to deploy an exosuit of modular metallic plates around yourself and your weapons. You gain the 'enlarge' effect of an *enlarge/reduce* spell (no concentration required). Your body and your weapons do not physically expand, and your effective weight with



the exosuit increases only moderately. The exosuit's frame cannot be separately targeted. As a bonus action, you can push the button again to squeeze the exosuit back into the backpack.

The suit can remain expanded indefinitely outside of combat, but each round of combat in which the wielder attacks or is attacked depletes the exosuit's energy. After the wielder has spent ten rounds enlarged during combat, the suit automatically reverts and cannot be activated again for 8 hours.

Gatecrasher Charm

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 200 gp) or rare (cost 600 gp)

Crafting Components: Bind a ghost in salt, then release it (uncommon) or destroy it (rare). Collect the salt afterward.

This delicate arrangement of arctech clockwork gears of rusted iron is assembled from the reflection of real-world metals found in the Bleak Gate. Its gears constantly, silently spin despite their corrosion.

While the charm is on your person and you are on the Waking or in the Dreaming, as a bonus action, you can mentally will this charm to irreparably break itself apart. After a screech of rusted iron, the gears shatter and slice open planar fabrics like a can opener. This functions as a *plane shift* spell for the Bleak Gate, except that this magic affects only you, and you arrive in the exact spot that is an analog for your current location. When you enter the Bleak Gate, the magic of the charm continues to resonate in your mind and soul for the next 10 minutes. At any point during this time, as a bonus action, you can focus on the fleeting remnant of magic and return to the plane where you used this charm, appearing in a spot analogous to your current location.

The Navras Opera House

Navras, an eladrin who fled Elfaivar after the Great Malice, designed an opera house for what today is the Central district of Flint, laying a brick he had brought from his homeland as the cornerstone.

He spent nearly two hundred years personally overseeing its construction, and was aided by no less than eight Risuri kings. When he completed the building, incongruously huge for what was at the time just a small coastal fort city, Navras gave the first performance by singing the dirge of Vekesh. As the audience cheered and wept at his performance, he walked off the stage and disappeared forever.

The acoustic design of the performance hall somehow captures magical power from song, or from the emotional reactions of the audience. Impresarios who coordinate performance almost always hire spellcasting bards to harness this energy and craft a magic item as a memento of the show. In the three hundred years since the Navras Opera House opened, most of these items have found their ways into private collections, but a rare few have become famous, such as the Hurricane Violin, which commemorated the Fable of Seaquen and later banished a sea monster that threatened Flint Harbor in 417 AOV.

Rare versions of this charm are contingent. When you finish a short or long rest with the charm on your person, you can define or redefine a circumstance which triggers the charm. The charm breaks itself apart immediately after the circumstance is met for the first time, whether you want it to or not. This functions as the conventional activation above, and indeed, you can still break the charm normally if necessary.

Golden Wand of Egal the Shimmering

Wondrous item, rare (cost 5,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Ten pounds of gold given to you by a charmed devil.

A foot and a half of simple, pristine gold, this wand is eerily warm to the touch. It bears the profile of an aged man on its handle, his identity unknown. Crisillyiri demonologists claim that the represented figure is Lord Egal the Shimmering, the archduke of the Golden Legion, one of the great ruling houses of the tyrannical star-empire known as Hell. Those same demonologists look suspiciously upon anyone carrying one of these wands, yet reluctantly acknowledge that the devil-crafted relics prove valuable in demon-hunting.

Originally it was thought only one wand of this sort existed, but the monks of the plane Caeloon traded several to Terri Pemberton's Planar Gate-α Squad.

Aureate Anchor. While you're holding this wand, if a creature attempts to teleport within sight of you, you are aware. You can spend a reaction to point the wand at the creature and conjure golden chains around it for a split second. This stops the teleportation. Once the wand has invoked this conjuration, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Loyalty is Prosperity. While you hold the wand, you can use an action cast *modify memory* (save DC 17) on a creature. While the creature's memory is modified this way, it is significantly more materialistic and receptive to bribery, but also shrewder in confirming payments. Fiends other than devils do not apply their Magic Resistance trait against this. Once the wand has invoked this enchantment, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Great Nock Gun

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 499 gp)

Crafting Components: A gun used to fight off a group of at least seven foes.

This seven-barreled, thirteen-pound, magic carbine is of such hyper-specialized construction that it cannot actually be used as a regular firearm, particularly given its single trigger. Arctech enhancements vastly improve the *great Nock gun*'s range, spread, penetration, and reliability, and only slightly mitigate the deleterious effects of its recoil.

As an action, you can use two hands to aim and fire the *great Nock gun*. Choose a point you can see within 150 feet, and more than 20 feet away from yourself. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 8d6 piercing damage. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage.

After taking this action, you take 2d6 bludgeoning damage and fall prone unless you succeed a DC 15 Strength saving throw, and you are deafened and stunned until the end of your next turn unless you succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw.

You cannot use the *great Nock gun* again until you spend a total of seven actions and/or bonus actions reloading its barrels; no special abilities can speed this process. Luminous glyphs conveniently notify you which barrels are in need of reloading.

Gremlin Gloves

Wondrous item, rare (cost 789 gp)

Crafting Components: A curse laid by a fey creature.

These patchwork gloves quiver slightly in the presence of machines; some pairs are big and rugged, while others are thin and satin-like. They are always clean. If left alone at night, they sometimes scamper about moving small objects or terrorizing children and pets.

While you are wearing the gloves:

- Crossbows, firearms, and similar weapons held in one or two hands do not function while you hold them. Attacks made against you with such weapons have disadvantage, as they visibly wobble when aimed at you.
- As an action, you can cast the *mage hand* spell without components. You can make the hand invisible. In addition to its normal abilities, you can use the hand to stow one object the hand is holding in a container worn or carried by another creature, retrieve an object in a container worn or carried by another creature, or pick locks and disarm traps at range using a set of thieves' tools. You can perform one of these tasks without being noticed by a creature if you succeed on a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check contested by the creature's Wisdom (Perception) check.
- If you eat a meal after midnight and before dawn, you receive indigestion and gain a level of fatigue.
- If you criticize the fey titan Granny Allswell, the gloves cause your hands to slap your face, then they go inert for one hour.

Example Planarite—Space

Aether is that which fills vacuum, but when magically bound it can be captured in a sealed vessel or held adjacent to an object. Wholly weightless and lacking in texture, the normal person can only sense it by how it seems to clarify light, making objects beyond it appear more crisp and perceptible, regardless of distance. It is used in the construction of teleportation beacons and in enchanted explosives that burn over a great volume.

By contrast, meteorites from Urim can be smelted to produce **cacheum**, a gold that is as strong as steel which possesses earth and space energy. When placed in various arrangements it creates effects to inhibit flows of energies or even deter certain actions.

Hat of Hats

Wondrous item, common (cost 49 gp)

Crafting Components: Haberdasher's tools crafted while looking in a mirror.

This fine top hat is stitched with Dreaming planarite, and produces dreamlike duplicates of apparel and critters.

While you are wearing the hat:

- This self-repairing hat shifts its size, design, coloration, cleanliness, and position on your head according to your precise thoughts and wishes. If you daydream, the hat might also shift to match your drifting thoughts. The hat can never fall off or be knocked off unless otherwise noted. Even if the hat is a comically miniature top hat resting precariously on the side of your head during a gale, it will not fall off.
- As an action, you can pull a mundane set of clothing and accessories from the hat, sized perfectly for you. The outfit cannot be worth more than 30 gp, and it cannot include accessories as precise as an identifying medal or badge. The outfit lasts until another set is pulled from the hat.
- As an action, you can pull a Tiny creature of bestial intellect from the hat. It obeys your telepathic commands, but will never fight for you. The creature vanishes after 1 minute or when it is reduced to 0 hit points. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

Hurricane Violin

Wondrous item, very rare (cost 9,280 gp)

Crafting Components: A song sung in the eye of a hurricane.

This violin's wooden body has a streak of white, reminiscent of a lightning bolt, and a skilled musician can control the wind with a pull of the instrument's bow. While this was originally a unique relic, since the Great Eclipse, Governor Hana 'Gale' Soliogn has commissioned an arctech replica of this violin.

The replica's body is carved from remains of ships wrecked in Yerasol storms, but has gaps of empty space held in place by frames of metallic astrium, and floating fan blades inside the frame spin and amplify sounds as the performance grows. Strings of driftbloom strands from Caeloon let a single performer play the parts of multiple violinists.

Example Planarite—Water

One basic water planarite is **alkahest**, a universal solvent that melts anything it touches. But Ostean water planarite that takes the form of pulsing red jelly called **scabosine** also has elemental life energy, and fosters healing. If dried streaked in lines it can channel the concept of wounds, causing damage without requiring any physical contact. If whipped into a foam and baked, it maintains a stiff shape that can keep body parts alive while separated.

Meanwhile, crystalline Mavishan planarite called **tideglass** is suffused with water and space energy. Normally it produces currents in a fluid, and if enough is aligned along a ship's hull it can eventually carry a vessel by controlling the water around it. However if melted and blown like glass so it holds the shape of a creature or place, it can become the embodiment of a journey, producing all manner of magical effects that relate to that journey.

You can use the violin as a spellcasting focus and a holy symbol.

You can use an action to play the violin and immediately cast *control weather* or *banishment* (save DC 18), neither needing components. To maintain concentration on either spell cast this way, you must continue playing the violin with both hands without releasing it. You can still cast another spell as long as it requires no material components, weaving the somatic and verbal components into your performance. Once the violin has invoked *control weather* this way, it cannot do so again until the next dawn. The violin can invoke *banishment* this way no more than once per hour.

Malice Focus, +1, +2, or +3

Wondrous item, uncommon (+1; cost 500 gp), rare (+2; cost 3,500 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 8,000 gp) (attunement optional)

Crafting Components: Sinews of a malice beast (medium size for +1, large for +2, huge for +3).

This tiny talisman rapidly infuses the psychic energies of your own thoughts and emotions into your body, letting you wield such power to augment your attacks.

While the talisman is on your person, you gain a bonus to the attack rolls and the damage rolls you make with unarmed strikes and natural weapons. The bonus is determined by the focus's rarity. Such attacks gain all of the benefits of using magic weapons.

If you attune with this talisman, you gain an additional benefit, with an attendant drawback. You gain the malice beast Executive Overload Aura (see page @@), as well as the Mental Vulnerability trait. The saving throw DC for your aura is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma bonus.

Malice Ring of Couture, +1, +2, or +3

Ring, rare (+1; cost 1,500 gp), very rare (+2; cost 6,000 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 24,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Bone of a malice beast (medium size for +1, large for +2, huge for +3) carved into a ring.

This ring of Malice beast bone manifests your vanity as an actual physical defense, letting fine clothes be as resilient as armor.

While you are wearing the ring, you gain access to the Sartorial Defense variant rule, even if the campaign is not normally using it. You also have a bonus to AC. The bonus is determined by its rarity, and it does not stack with any bonus to AC from magic armor.

Mavishan Cube

Wondrous item, very rare (cost 50,000 gp)

Crafting Components: A shipwreck where at least seven crew members drowned and sank to the bottom of the ocean.

This radiant, azure cube crafted of planarite of space-aspected Mavisha can be consumed as part of a one-hour ritual to create a ship-spirit, which usually is as powerful as a Challenge 10 creature. Please see the bestiary entry on ship-spirits for more details.

Netherkinetic Orb, +1, +2, or +3

Wondrous item, uncommon (+1; cost 300 gp), rare (+2; cost 1,500 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 7,500 gp) (requires attunement by a sorcerer or warlock)

Crafting Components: A sphere over which has fallen the shadow of a nightmare (+1), a night hag (+2), or fallen angel (+3).

This orb of planarite of the Bleak Gate is so pitch-black that it resembles a two-dimensional hole in the world, save for wispy shadows around its edges.

To everyone else, the sphere is intangible darkness, but once you attune to it, the globe is akin to a light and bouncy athletic ball. The sphere takes on an appearance of your choosing, and orbits you in whatever pattern you please. You can instead sheathe the orb within your shadow, where it is undetectable by mundane and magical means until you are reduced to 0 hit points.

While the *netherkinetic orb* is in orbit, you can use it as a spellcasting focus and a holy symbol, and you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and to the saving throw DCs of your spells. The bonus is determined by the orb's rarity.

As an action, you can direct the orbiting globe to smash into the shadow of a creature within 5 feet of you, so long as it has a shadow or is made of darkness. The creature must make a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC. If it succeeds, it falls prone. If it fails, it falls prone, and is incapacitated until the end of your next turn. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

Personal Revision Hourglass

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 202 gp)

Crafting Components: Sand collected near a mirage monster – a type of huge mimic native to the Senesi Desert of Crisillyir.

A person's past can bring many benefits: connections, knowledge, insights. This arcanotechnological hourglass's array of glyph-engraved gears ensure that it always rotates in such a way as to keep accurate track of time by the minute. Its sands are filled with relicite planarite from Teykfa and a drop of witchoil, and they let the bearer briefly call forth a version of themselves that might have been.

As an action, you can activate this geared hourglass, causing it to oscillate rapidly. You think of a background, such as criminal or folk hero. You temporarily acquire some benefits of that background other than ability score increases. For instance, you might gain a proficiency, a criminal connection or the local fame of a folk hero. You specify the broad strokes, but the Narrator fills in any finer details.

You keep your original real background, but also exist somehow simultaneously as this other version of yourself. This benefit lasts until you sleep.

If you desire, this may also slightly alter your appearance, matching your new background. You're still identifiable as you, but might

acquire a scar or remove one, change hairstyle or become slightly more attractive.

You are instinctively aware of the alterations that were necessary to complete this change, and they are usually unobtrusive. You acquire nothing else; for instance, gaining the noble's background does not give you any more wealth or properties than you originally had. However, people are subtly affected by this alternate reality and will treat you in keeping with your new background.

After this action, the hourglass's clockwork screeches to a halt, but returns to its normal function at the start of the next new moon.

After an aggressive campaign by an alliance of arcanoscience scholars of Pardwight University, folk skyseers, Beran philosophers, and Drakran economists, the nations of Risur, Ber, and Drakr all banned this device, warning of perilous consequences. However, followers of the Clergy – especially Ottoplismists – see it as an ideal representation of perfecting oneself, albeit temporarily. Elsewhere they are seen as curiosities only.

Portable Wayfarer's Lantern

Wondrous item, very rare (cost 25,000 gp)

Crafting Components: Lenses of polished moon glass.

This arcanotechnological lantern of adamantine and bulletproof glass is a smaller refinement of the first design of a wayfarer's engine, which inspired all manner of planarite alchemy.

The lantern's arcanotechnological stabilizers allow you to hang it on your hip. The lantern functions as a regular lantern, but it sheds bright light out to 15 feet and dim light out to 30 feet.

As a bonus action, you can use one hand to manipulate the lantern in one of the following ways:

- Push a button to adjust a shutter over the lantern. This can cause it to shed light in all directions (bright to 15 feet, dim to 30 feet), to function as a bullseye lantern (bright in a 60-foot cone, dim another 60 feet), or to block all light. While the lantern's magical effects normally go through obstacles, the lantern's shutter does block or aim the light's effect.
- Push a button to set the lantern to indiscriminate mode, glyph-only mode, or no-glyph-only mode.
- Draw a writing implement and use it to scribe a glyph onto a small sketching surface embedded atop the lantern.

As an action, you can use one hand to draw one ounce of planarite worth 25 gp that has been processed into oil form (such as unensouled witchoil), pour it into the lantern's special reservoir, and then push a button to activate the lantern's most powerful function. The lantern immediately burns up the planarite, and you choose one of the following:

- Using Dreaming or Bleak Gate planarite, you form a link to that plane. The oil burns for up to five minutes, during which time the brightly-lit area overlaps with an equivalent space on the destination plane. Each creature that is illuminated by the lamp gradually transitions to the destination plane, seeing the original plane become less solid as the destination becomes more real. Once a creature has spent at least 1 continuous minute in the illuminated area, it fully transitions, and it receives no saving throw to resist this.
- The lantern burns for five minutes, and creatures and objects undergo a magical effect based on the planarite's plane for as long as they are in the area. Certain combinations of planarite might produce particularly exotic effects. Depending on the lantern's settings, this can affect either all creatures in the path of the light, creatures carrying a specific glyph, or creatures not carrying a specific glyph. If it affects only creatures carrying a specific glyph, while this planar light shines, only those creatures can see the lantern and its illumination. The effect varies based on the source of the planarite oil.



- **The Dreaming:** Vibrant, varicolored incandescence distorts memories. When the five minutes of light end, creatures that were in the light at any point must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, a creature forgets everything it had witnessed while within the light.
- **The Bleak Gate:** Like the "sun" of the Bleak Gate, this is not so much light as it is an eerie-looking devouring of darkness. If a creature that has a shadow or is made of darkness ends its turn in the light, the creature spawns a **shadow** that single-mindedly attacks the creature. The shadow lacks Sunlight Weakness, and has advantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. The shadow cannot exist outside of the radius of the lantern's light, and disappears once the five minutes of oil finishes burning. Once a creature has spawned a shadow this way, it cannot spawn another shadow from the same lantern for 5 minutes.
- **Vona, the Sun:** Helical rays expose all that is true and suppress invisibility and illusion. Creatures and objects in the light can be observed by viewers, even viewers outside of the light, as if the viewers had *true seeing* with indefinite range. This light does not count as true sunlight.
- **Caeloon, the Paper Wind:** Soothing green shine grants hope in the hour of need. If a creature is actively participating in combat and at half of its hit points (rounded up) or fewer, it can gain a powerful d10 expertise die on one roll. After doing so, it cannot gain the benefit again for five minutes.
- **Urim, the Shattered Golden Chain:** An aureate glow enforces a stalwart barrier of inertia. Creatures cannot teleport into, out of, or within the light. Creatures must spend twice as much movement as they otherwise would in order to move into, out of, or within the light.
- **Jiese, the Fires of Industry:** Red lantern flame bolsters cunning in all forms. Creatures gain an expertise die (1d4) on Intelligence, Wisdom, Deception, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks.

- **Ostea, the Beating Heart:** Blood-red brilliance bolsters vitality. Creatures have advantage on Constitution saving throws, and they cannot fail death saving throws. When damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the creature can choose to go to 1 hit point; once a creature avails of this, it cannot do so again from the same lantern for 5 minutes.
- **Av, the Planes of Dreams and Reflections:** Pale, white refulgence grants ingress into dreamscapes. As an action, a creature can cause themselves to fall asleep, and then cast their mind into the dreamscape of a naturally-slumbering creature also within the light. This journey only lasts so long as the lantern light glow, and the nature of the dreamscape is up to the Narrator. A creature that "dies" in the dreamscape wakes up; they suffer a level of strife, but all the damage they suffered in the dreamscape goes away unless it was psychic damage. If the dreamer awakens, those inside the dreamscape "die" this same way.
- **Amrou, the Salt Waste:** Pallid light transmutes subjects into pillars of salt. If a creature ends its turn in the light, it must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be petrified while it remains in the light. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. Once a creature succeeds on this saving throw, it is immune to the same effect from the same lantern for 5 minutes.
- **Iratha Ket, the Graveyard Revel:** Bone-white refulgence inspires subjects to perform and dance. Creatures gain an expertise die (d4) on Performance checks. If a creature sings, its lyrics, however contrived, can be universally understood by any creature with a language, even if the listener is outside of the light. Creatures never provoke opportunity attacks, as they dance out of the way.
- **Mavisha, the Mysterious Deep:** An ocean-blue glow disrupts divinations and shrouds subjects. Creatures are under the effects of *mind blank* and *nondetection*. As an action, a creature can magically turn invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell); any equipment the creature wears or carries is invisible with it. This protection, however, feels like being deep underwater, and when the five minutes end, any creature that spent at least one round in it gains one level of fatigue.
- **Ascetia, the Hidden Jungle:** Lush green illumination brings history to the fore. Each creature can touch another creature's head and share a vivid memory one time during the five minutes of light.
- **Teykfa, the Ticking Pendulum:** A dun radiance grants an awareness of time, yet physically stretches out the seconds. Creatures know the exact time of day, down to the second. A creature that ends its turn in the light must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of *slow* while it remains in the light. Once a creature succeeds on this saving throw, it is immune to the same effect from the same lantern for 5 minutes.

Once the lantern has consumed planarite this way, it takes 8 hours for the light's energy to fully fade. Buring planarite oil from a different plane during this time produces no magical effect.



Razorburst Weapon, +1, +2, or +3

Weapon (battleaxe, dagger, glaive, greataxe, greatsword, halberd, handaxe, longsword, rapier, or scimitar), uncommon (+1; cost 900 gp), rare (+2; cost 3,900 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 8,400 gp) (requires attunement)

Crafting Components: Hook of a pirate captain (+1), three hands from the same troll (+2), or ten heads from the same hydra (+3).

Combining Drakran magic, Danoran arcanoscience, and the metallic Urim planarite called astrium, the striking surface of this arcanotechnological weapon is actually a band of jagged steel teeth that float in a silent rotation. After a solid blow, the user can push a button near the hilt to instigate a cascade of earth-elemental magic, increasing the rotation speed to a keening whirr, making it more likely to sever something vital.

You have a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus is determined by the weapon's rarity. If this weapon is a dagger or a rapier, it can deal slashing or piercing damage.

When you score a critical hit with this weapon, you can choose to have it affect the creature you hit as if you had used the savant trick *surgical flourish* (DC 15 uncommon, 17 rare, 18 very rare). Once the weapon has done this, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Sending Wind

Wondrous item, uncommon (cost 370 gp)

Crafting Components: A message that was attached to an arrow, fired to a foe, and then returned by that the recipient or one of their allies.

This invisible orb is woven of Caeloon planarite in windy, gaseous form. The sphere can be carried in your palm, or it can be left to float at any location, invisible except to those who know to look for it. Each orb is attuned to up to five tokens, which usually take the form of metal or wooden feathers.

While holding one of these tokens, you can cast *sending* without components to one or more creatures carrying another token, as long as both you and your recipients are within thirty miles of the orb. The message takes time to be delivered, carried by an unseen breeze that travels at twenty miles an hour. The recipient can choose to send a reply, which also takes time to fly back.

Each token can cast *sending* this way no more than once per hour.

Shoes of Reliable Style

Wondrous item, rare (cost 2,200 gp)

Crafting Components: A dance performed by a revenant.

In a pocket of the Bleak Gate known as Iratha Ket, the dolorous gloom gives way to boisterous song. Where the Dreaming creates magic in response to idle fancy or general contrariness, it is said that in Iratha Ket you can find anything you want, but only in the service of showmanship and heightened emotion.

A rare few who managed to impress the skeletal court of that musical realm found themselves walking back to the Waking in fine footwear that gave them a dancer's grace and vim.

While you are wearing the shoes:

- The shoes magically repair themselves if damaged.
- You can change the shoes' size, design, coloration, and cleanliness according to your thoughts and wishes. No matter how ridiculous, the shoes prove oddly practical, though heel height is a maximum of seven inches for Medium creatures.
- You are proficient in Performance. If you are already proficient in Performance, you instead gain an expertise die (d4).
- You never trigger floor-based pit traps and pressure plates, and the shoes magically repel caltrops and bear traps.
- As an action, you can caper and dance to draw out the shoes' enchanting magic. You cast *irresistible dance* (save DC 17), except while concentrating you must use your movement to dance in your space, and you cannot use movement to leave your space. The target's dance matches yours, but you do not suffer any of the negative effects of the spell. Once the shoes have cast *irresistible dance* this way, they cannot be used to do so again until the next dawn.

Six-Loa Saber

Weapon (scimitar), legendary (requires attunement; cost 433,334 gp)

Crafting Components: Six weapons of a marilith.

This famed blade served a Risuri named Aodhan Lesterman from his time as a privateer up through his reign as king. You have a +3 bonus on attack and damage rolls with this weapon. The item is sentient, with Intelligence 14, Wisdom 14, and Charisma 16. Six spirits reside within, and each must be appeased with some mayhem of its preferred variety at least once a month.

Each loa can be called upon once between short rests for a magical ability. The effect is determined by the loa you call upon.

Brawler Loa. You cause a creature you can see within 60 feet to make a Charisma saving throw (DC 19). If it succeeds, it takes 20 psychic damage as it fights off possession. If it fails and has more than 40 hit points, it takes 40 psychic damage. If it fails and has 40 or fewer hit points, you control it for one minute, as *dominate monster*, though the only commands you can give it are to attack. During this time the creature laughs raucously. When the domination ends, the creature takes 40 psychic damage. This psychic damage cannot kill a living creature.

Burner Loa. Without spending an action, you set fire to each creature you hit with the sword this turn. This deals 2d10 fire damage at the start of each of the creature's turns until it spends an action to put the fire out.

Butcher Loa. When you score a critical hit with this weapon, you can choose to affect the creature you hit as if you had used the savant trick *surgical flourish* (DC 19).

Cheater Loa. As a reaction when a melee weapon attack misses you, the attacker must make a Strength saving through (DC 19) or be disarmed.

Dancer Loa. As a bonus action, either teleport the sword to your hand, or you to the sword, across any distance.

Drinker Loa. If you killed a living creature this turn, as a bonus action you can spend any number of hit dice to heal.

Skulduggery Ring

Ring, common (requires attunement; cost 49 gp)

Crafting Components: A stolen key to a jail cell, treasure chest, or bank box that you did not bother to open.

This unassuming ring's inner lining is engraved with runes keyed to Urim.

While you are wearing the ring, you can press the ring against a seal and have the bezel of the ring change to match it. As an action, you can extrude from the ring a miniature lockpick that magically adjusts to the size of whatever lock you insert it into. If the lockpick is damaged or broken, a *mending* spell restores its function, as does submerging the ring in a short-lived alchemical solution worth 10 gp for 1 hour.

You gain an expertise die (d4) on any checks made to overcome mundane locks.

Smuggling Ring

Ring, uncommon (cost 100 gp)

Crafting Components: A smuggler's confession that leads to an arrest.

Whether it is a musket into a posh soirée, or some ensouled witchoil or malice beast organs across a border, operators must inevitably bring things where they are not supposed to. This thin ring of aether (nigh-invisible space-aspected planarite) enables such.

While you are wearing the ring, it never detects as magical, even if it contains magic items, until you are reduced to 0 hit points. You can push items directly into the ring, even liquids and gases. It operates as an extradimensional space, holding 20 pounds or 2 cubic feet. The ring meets an insurmountable resistance if it would enter a similar extradimensional space.

Symbol of Sanguine Alleviation

Wondrous item, rare (cost 3,000 gp)

Crafting Components: The healing touch of a celestial.

This crimson crystalline fish hook of Ostean planarite was first crafted by hierarchs of the Clergy, renowned for their restorative magics. Non-Clericist symbols are simply medallions of three concentric rings; the inner rings float in place, unconnected to the rest of the symbol.

While you are wearing the symbol, as an action, you can choose one living creature within 5 feet. You must spend 1 Hit Die to no effect, causing blood to arc from your pores and orifices and into those of the selected creature; if you chose yourself, the blood recirculates around your body externally. The recipient gains the benefits of a fifth level *cure wounds* spell and a *lesser restoration* spell. Once the symbol has conferred healing, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

The Humble Hook

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Crafting Components: Unique (uncraftable)

When Triegenes passed on from his mortal shell and allegedly ascended to godhood, the prelates of the early Clergy cremated his remains in a grand state funeral. As they gathered his ashes to spread across the nation's soil, they found a small harpoon hook, of the kind used by some fishers. It had somehow been caught in the living god's body since before he achieved divinity. The priests crafted the hook into a pendant, and for centuries, it had been worn by the Prime Cardinal of the faith, as a reminder that everyone has humble origins.

The hook's purpose is to cultivate the divine that lies in every creature. It guides the righteous on their path to apotheosis and inspires them to take the high road of empathy and understanding. The hook allows the wearer to learn the history and background of anyone they meet, which, in turn, once let the Clergy's leaders deal with overly prideful enemies and national rulers.

In 260 AOV, a Vekeshi assassin slew the Prime Cardinal at the time and stole the pendant. Critics of the Clergy claim that its loss was part of a plan to steer the religion away from its humble core, so that hierarchs could better profit from their stations. Who knows when, where, and how the relic will resurface again, and around whose neck?

While you are wearing the relic:

- The *Humble Hook* expects you to abide by the path of righteousness. If you boast excessively or act with extreme selfishness, the following powers are suppressed until you take a short rest. If you kill a sapient being without first attempting dialogue to avoid violence, the following powers are suppressed until you take a long rest.
- If ever you knowingly and willingly act in a way that inflicts cruelty or injustice upon an innocent when there is a productive alternative to do otherwise, the pendant will fall from your neck in search of a more compassionate wearer worthy of its power. You do not notice its departure, nor do any of your allies who approved or assisted your action, and you only realize it when some outside party informs you.
- You can gain advantage on a Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion, or Religion check. After you do, you cannot use this ability again until you complete a short rest.
- You have resistance to psychic damage.
- You gain an expertise die (d4) on saves against fear.
- Any food you personally donate to others is always free of curses, diseases, and poisons. It tastes and feels like the pinnacle of gastronomy, and no matter how small the morsel, it provides enough nourishment to sustain a creature for one day, allowing you to feed a multitude.

Enlightened Discernment. Though the *Humble Hook* shares many boons with most creatures, its divinatory powers must be earned. So long as you have earnestly reconciled with or redeemed an enemy within the past year and day without the use of deception, intimidation, or magical charm or compulsion, the *Humble Hook* confers the following additional properties while you wear it:

- You are proficient in Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion, and Religion. If you are already proficient in one of those skills, you instead gain an expertise die (d4) with it.
- You are immune to fear and to psychic damage.
- You automatically know the name and the general details of the lives of any creature you interact with, including the greatest moment of virtue in its past. A *mind blank* can protect against this.

Undestined Stormcaster

Weapon (any bow, crossbow, or non-fusil firearm), uncommon (requires attunement; cost 480 gp)

Crafting Components: The death scream of a creature killed by lightning.

Reverse engineered by winged arcanosmith **Terri Pemberton**, this arctech armament allows a shootist to rain forth wind, thunder, and lightning. Similar to an arcane fusil and filled with shining fulgurites (air-aspected planarite), it uses electromagnetic engineering and a series of coils to generate a powerful ceraunic current.

Whenever you would deal damage with this magic weapon, you must instead deal your choice of lightning or thunder damage. When you hit a creature with this weapon, you can push it up 5 feet away from you in a straight line.

As an action, you can use this weapon to cast *lightning bolt* (save DC 15) without components. Once the weapon has launched such a bolt, it cannot do so again until the next dawn.

Vekeshi Blade, +0, +1, +2, or +3

Wondrous item, uncommon (+0; cost 500 gp), rare (+1; cost 3,500 gp), very rare (+2; cost 8,000 gp), or very rare (+3; cost 17,000 gp) (requires attunement)

Crafting Components: Understand the true nature of the Great Malice. Additionally, slay an enslaver of Elfaivarans (+1), an enemy actively warring with the Elfaivaran nation (+2), or someone who fought in the Clergy's holy war against Elfaivar that led to the Great Malice (+3).

During the utter chaos of the Great Malice, Srasama's six bright blades were mostly lost to history. Mostly. The Clergy retrieved and confiscated the *First* and *Second Blades of Srasama*, the pair representing her first aspect, the warrior-maiden; one famously lay in the Crypta Hereticarum, while the other is in the hands of **Arch Secula Tiesa Machulas** of the Ottoplismists. Eladrin soldiers likewise spirited away the *Fifth Blade of Srasama*, belonging to the pair symbolizing her third aspect, the crone of endings.

The vengeful crone-blade eventually made its way to the hands of the Vekeshi preservers, and from there, the Vekeshi mystics and who splintered away. The mystics remolded the artifact into a number of lesser weapons, with which they took up arms against the Elfaivaran slave trade. Later, the Vekeshi assassins claimed several of these weapons for their own fanatical missions against the Clergy's hierarchs. The great oni slaver **Hyakki Kijin** of Shaha owns a few of these as trophies; Dhebisu, who commands many Vekeshi assassins as part of her *cakar malam*, is quite interested in killing the oni and recovering them.

Composed of deific fire that has been kindled for five centuries since the death of Srasama, this is a weapon of old grudges and assassination. You cannot attune to this item if you are an an unremorseful client or supporter of the Elfaivaran slave trade, or an earnest worshiper of any Clericist gods.

While you are attuned to it, the *Vekeshi blade* never detects as magical until you are reduced to 0 hit points. You can choose two melee weapons whenever you complete a long rest, and you can freely shift the weapon between those forms without spending an action. When you sheath the weapon, you can instead transform it into a minute pin or other piece of jewelry. You can restore the weapon by touching the pin.

You have a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus is determined by the weapon's rarity. The bonus increases by 2 when you use the weapon to attack an unremorseful client or supporter of the Elfaivaran slave trade, an earnest worshiper of any Clericist gods, or a surprised creature.

While transformed into a melee weapon, the *Vekeshi blade* resembles an amorphous mass of red and gold flame. Each time you deal any bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage with this weapon, you can replace that damage with your choice of either fire or radiant damage.

Vendetta Ammunition

Weapon (arrow, bolt, or bullet), rare (cost 2,020 gp)

Crafting Components: A personal vendetta.

This piece of ammunition is a psychic reservoir of rage, directed towards a single creature. Being left for dead, witnessing loved ones slain, suffering under the oppressive yoke of a tyrant: there are many ways through which someone might cultivate the vengeance necessary to imbue an arrow, bolt, or bullet with psychic currents of their own righteous indignation and resentful desires. Records claim that such ammunition first appeared among Vekeshi mystics and assassins, as arrows meant for the hearts of Clericist hierarchs and the clients and supporters of the Elfaivaran slave trade.

It is possible for a creature, driven by vengeance toward a specific perpetrator, to instinctively realize how to transfer their psychic reservoirs of rage onto a piece of ammunition, which they mark with the name of the target of their enmity. Such a creature can also teach the formula to others. No spellcasting ability, skill proficiency, or tool proficiency is ever required to craft *vendetta ammunition*.

Once a crafter makes a piece of *vendetta ammunition*, the same crafter can never again make a second piece of *vendetta ammunition* keyed to the same creature, and it is rare they will ever feel the necessary emotion to craft one for any different creature.

Vendetta ammunition acts as an *arrow of slaying* which only works for the person who crafted it, against the person whose name is on the bullet or arrow.

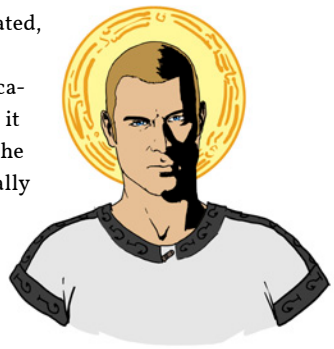
Training and Mastery

Martial scientists can learn new fighting techniques similar to how wizards learn spells, and with the proper training and sacred trial, characters can earn the title of godhand of the Clergy.

Godhands

A member of the Clergy who undergoes the proper monastic training and ordeal can be invested as a *geneu credeto*, a spirit of belief, more commonly called a "godhand."

Once formally invested, godhands are marked with a halo, which usually appears to be a solid disk of precious metal, crystal, or ivory, perhaps humble or perhaps ornately decorated, matching the godhand's personality.



The halo is intangible, and its precise location is different for each viewer, such that it always is directly on the opposite side of the godhand's head, framing them. They normally do not glow. They can never be transferred, and they remain even after the godhand dies, seeming to decay at roughly the same rate as the sanctified figure's body. A godhand can spend an action to dismiss their halo, should they need to hide their identity, and another action returns it.

We describe here the benefits of godhand investiture, and four possible halos a godhand might be granted. Each halo has an ability that you can activate whenever you take any reaction. The halo's ability happens in addition to that reaction.

Godhand Investiture

Supernatural gift, rare

Requirements: The requirements are up to the Narrator, but at minimum godhand investiture is only granted to members of the Clergy religion who are proficient with Culture and Religion, have some sort of ability to fight unarmed, and are at least 6th level.

Your unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. You can ignore incorporeal creatures' immunity to being grappled or restrained if you grab with an unarmed strike. While you are grabbing a creature (incorporeal or otherwise), it cannot teleport or travel to other planes, such as through a succubus's Etherealness ability.

Additionally, you gain one Godhand Halo of your choice. Each halo grants a special power which you can use when you use a reaction. The halo's effect is in addition to the normal effect of whatever reaction you used.

Annulus of Heaven's Succour

This decorated metallic ring spins slowly and soothingly. The halo has three charges, which recharge daily at dawn.

Whenever you use a reaction, you can expend a charge to have yourself or an ally within 60 feet heal a number of d6s of hit points equal to your proficiency bonus.

Alternately, when you would interact with an object you can expend a charge to teleport an object to your hand or that of an ally within 60 feet. The object must be either one you own that is within three miles of you, or an unattended object you can see.

Corona of Burning Judgment

When you are angry, this halo flickers with fire as bright as candle light. The halo has three charges, which recharge daily at dawn.

Whenever you use a reaction, you can expend a charge to have the halo sear an enemy within 60 feet of you. That creature takes a number of d6s of radiant damage equal to your proficiency bonus. When you do, the halo glows as bright as a torch for one round. For the next hour you have advantage to Insight and Intimidation checks against that creature.

Halo of Rarefied Enlightenment

With but a thought, you can cause this halo to glow with clear light as bright as a torch, as dim as a candle, or not at all. The halo has three charges, which recharge daily at dawn.

Whenever you use a reaction, you can expend a charge to have the halo flash with blinding light. Choose a creature within 60 feet. That creature must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom or Charisma modifier) or be blinded until the end of the next turn of whichever creature triggered your reaction. When you use this ability, the halo sheds a sphere of bright light for 60 feet, and 60 feet of dim light beyond it, lasting for one round.

Nimbus of Gathered Courage

This halo is slightly translucent, like a cloud. The halo has three charges, which recharge daily at dawn.

Whenever you use a reaction, you can expend a charge to share your courage with an ally. Choose an ally within 60 feet to gain an inspiration die, a d6. This functions like a bardic inspiration die. While that ally is inspired, your halo expands to frame your entire physical body, and an identical halo frames your inspired ally.

Martial Scientist Theses

The Martial Studies feat lets a character of any class make limited use of the Savant class's tricks. Herein is a selection of renowned martial theses from around the world, and the tricks they let you acquire. A Savant or character with the Martial Studies feat that has a copy of one of these theses can spend a long rest to swap one of the tricks they know for the trick the thesis details.

There are two main categories of savant tricks: aegis and flourish.

- An **aegis** is a technique that can turn the momentum of a fight by not only avoiding an attack, but also putting your opponent in a bad position.
- A **flourish** is a technique that you can add to an attack that meets a certain condition.

Every graduate of a martial academy must defend their thesis from a group of challengers, and because it has long been taught that scientific breakthroughs are born of both careful study and wild experimentation, most graduates will have *Committee Defense* and *Experimental Flourish*. However, amateurs or people who received private tutelage may start with other tricks known. Some examples follow.

Ber

Beran soldiers are often trained with a no-frills text called *How Not to Get Shot*, by Kenna Vigilante. This teaches the *Serpentine Rush Aegis*.

Crisillyir

Before becoming Prime Cardinal of the Clergy in the 3rd century, Glorius Willis was a famed instructor at the College of Divine Trials in Sid Minos, where he penned *Liturgical Lessons: Applications of Psalms in a Battlefield Context*. This teaches the *Saving Advice* trick.

Danor

The late Lya Jierre, a scion of the prominent tiefling Jierre family, published her thesis *Field Study of Melee Effectiveness and Foe Debilitation through Focused Limb Severance Techniques Contrasted with Mainstream Opportunistic Techniques*. This teaches the *Surgical Flourish*.

Drakr

A respected artillerism student at the *Boehno Texhnyeconn* made a splash with her text, *Suppressing Dissent and Incentivizing Disengagement through the Fervent Deployment of Loud Weapons*. This teaches the *Frightful Suppression* trick.

Dreaming

Though the fey do not have any organized academies of martial science, some powerful warriors of the Dreaming take it upon themselves to write up their often-nonsensical tactics as if they were war veterans. From among sheafs of pointless blathering, a handful of intelligible texts emerge, which give some insight into the way these beings think about battle.

A Record of the Applause at a Production of "The Burning Heart of a Warrior" was composed by a fey lord named Karrest, who wished to record how well an audience received his autobiographical play. Excessive attention is paid to just how the actor was meant to appear to fall in battle in order to best persuade the onlookers that their hero had perished, suggesting that for this fey, at least, the story of the battle was at least as important as the threat to life and limb.

A derivative and simplified version of this technique was presented in the far less compelling thesis *Unexpected Tactics of Fey Swordsmen*.

Either version teaches the *Sweeping Stride* trick.

Elfaivar

The oldest and deadliest Elfaivaran warriors were known as dreadnoughts, who fought implacably, using tactics to awe their enemies into submission, often capable of facing hordes of common soldiers and winning the day. One survivor of such an engagement published *Lessons from a Battlefield Engagement between an Elfaivaran Dreadnought and Seven Riflemen*. This teaches the *Tangled Dance Aegis*.

Malice Lands

The monster hunter Xavier Sangria mastered hunting malice beasts, and he learned to use the chaotic magic that once suffused the Malice Lands as a defensive shield. By training himself to intensely feel the emotion of malice at will, he could briefly create a sympathetic link to the region's wild magic, and so cause magic that would harm him to instead suffer a mishap. However, holding a reservoir of such latent evil will was perilous.

He recorded his insights in his thesis, *Intentional Emotions as Sympathetic Invocation of Malice Mishaps*, but mastering this technique requires practicing it in a place of wild magic. Older martial scientists might have visited the Malice Lands, but modern scholars can only find suitable conditions in the dead city of Methia, or in a few scattered pockets of wild magic around the region. This teaches a rare trick that is not normally available to Savants.

Malicious Deflection (Aegis)

As you prepare this trick, you build up a reservoir of seething malice and then tamp it down. While this trick is prepared, you have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws.



When you succeed a saving throw against a spell or other magical effect, as a reaction you can use this technique to release your pent up malice, which causes a sudden wave of wild magic to disrupt that spell or effect. The magic does not affect you, but instead you choose a new target within 30 feet, which must save as if it were the original target.

Miscellaneous

A treatise often edited and amended, the original author of *Methods of Extricating Warriors from a Variety of Tentacled and Tendriled Monsters* is unclear. It is kept in collections in academies around the world, and many students have heard the humorous rumor that the first copy was dictated by a ghost who died facing horrors from other worlds. This teaches a rare trick that is not normally available to Savants.

Tentacle Technique (Aegis)

When you or an ally you're aware of becomes grabbed by a creature, you can use this trick to let the grabbed creature spend a reaction to make a melee attack against the enemy that is grabbing it. If this attack hits, the grab ends in addition to the attack's normal effect.

Risur

District Mayor Dale, tasked with protecting the city of Flint from the dark forces atop the infamous mountain Cauldron Hill, wrote *Meditation, Coffee, and Cherry Pie: Unorthodox Salves Against the Supernatural*. This teaches the trick *Mindful Reason Aegis*, and has tips on where to get excellent food in the city of Flint.

Vagabonds

Strangers from beyond this world possess many fascinating fighting techniques. A sailor from the Yerasol Archipelago was inspired to enroll in the *Jierre Sciens d'Arms* after he witnessed an aged monk from Caeloon dodge a jaguar's lunge and fling the cat thirty feet, an event he later recorded in *Artistic Paper Folding and Humanoid Anatomy: Theories on Implicit Extradimensionality*. This teaches a rare trick that is not normally available to Savants.

Stance of the Paper Wind (Aegis)

When a creature you have not attacked since the start of your previous turn attacks you in melee, you can use this trick to fold your body away from the attack's full force, then unfold and use your enemy's momentum against them to hurl them away. You gain resistance to that attack's damage, and after the attack, you throw the attacker a distance equal to 5 feet times your proficiency bonus in the direction of your choice. The attacker can make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid being moved.

The Rites of Rulership

The monarch of Risur derives powers from their position, drawing upon the approval and loyalty of their nation through the rites of rulership, which were first established seventeen hundred years ago by King Kelland. Empowered by this magic, King Baldrey Korrigan was able to resist the strange magic of the Great Eclipse and lead allies from around Lanjyr to save the world.

Shortly before the eclipse, spies stole the secrets of these rites, and in the chaos afterward that information became public knowledge. But even though anyone can easily read the text of the rites, other nations have struggled to make use of them. In Risur, they carry the weight of seventeen centuries of proud and honorable rule, and are reinforced by a bond of friendship with the fey of the Dreaming stretching back to the nation's founding. It seems there is no shortcut to match that.

Risur's Rites

Risur's rites of rulership trace back to the first defeat of the fey titans. The titans each command one terrain—mountain, swamp, forest, plains, and sea. And the monarch of Risur is like a titan too, but their terrain is civilization. The more faith the people have in society and the state, the stronger the ruler is.

The rites have two components. First, if they are approved by the landed nobility, they become **Lord of the Land**. Second, if they have the approval of the public, they also become **Monarch of the Masses**.

Formal Succession

When the current monarch dies or abdicates, the successor must be approved by the House of Nobles. The House of Nobles includes the current holders of any Baron, Viscount, Count, Earl, Marquess, or Duke titles (or the equivalent) handed out by the current or a previous monarch. Such titles can be revoked by royal decree, with consent of a majority of other nobles.

This can be done procedurally in advance if the nobles know the successor, which prevents a discontinuity of the monarchy. A consequence of this is that if a monarch who has named a successor dies and remains dead for more than a few minutes, the powers of the crown will be passed on, and cannot be reclaimed even if he were brought back from the dead.

Formal acceptance by the nobles grants the new monarch the powers detailed below under **Lord of the Land**. At any time a majority of the nobility may issue grievances to the monarch and thus deprive him or her of this power until they again grant their approval, but in practice this has rarely happened.

Public Acceptance

In Risur's long history, a monarch has almost never passed on their crown to a blood relative. Instead, an outgoing monarch usually picks someone who is well beloved and respected by the public, or picks a trusted ally and creates opportunities for them to act as a public hero.

Once the people of Risur accept their new king or queen, he or she also gains the powers of **Monarch of the Masses**. A monarch who loses this trust cannot use those powers. This connection has helped keep Risur's rulers attentive to the needs of their subjects.

Lord of the Land

A monarch who has **Lord of the Land** powers and is within their nation can spend a bonus action to move up to four 5-foot cubes of earth, stone, or foliage up to 5 feet. This cannot affect land that is within 5 feet of a hostile creature, so this power doesn't, for example, allow the monarch to create a pit under an enemy's feet.

The monarch can name creatures to forbid them from entering their nation via teleportation or planar travel for one month, but must know the person's actual name. Likewise, the monarch can spend ten minutes to open a pathway from a point in their nation to the equivalent spot in the Dreaming, as per the spell *gate*.

When the monarch is engaged in battle with a person or group actively contending for control of their territory, the monarch's power is elevated to match the strongest individual among their enemies. When facing a fey titan, this gives a mortal incredible strength and stamina, but it is of little use against invading armies, since the monarch is likely already about as powerful as even the most dangerous of their enemies.

When the monarch is in an encounter with a hostile creature that is contesting control of their nation's lands (or if the monarch is trying to conquer lands controlled by an enemy), the monarch gains the following benefits:

- A bonus to attack rolls and saving throws, and to Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based checks, equal to the difference in proficiency bonus, if the enemy's is higher.
- Temporary hit points equal to 50 times the difference in proficiency bonus. This is in addition to the regeneration granted by Monarch of the Masses (see below).
- When using abilities that depend on size, the monarch can choose to be considered the same size as their opponent. (Zidi the Halfling Queen once put Granny Allswell into a headlock.)

The Rites in Other Nations

Other nations have tried to implement the rites, to varying degrees of success.

Beran land ownership is so fractious it is impossible to gather a quorum to grant Bruse Corta Nariz the Lord of the Land benefits. She certainly has sufficient public support to benefit from Monarch of the Masses, but as the rites draw power from the Dreaming, her barring travel to the Dreaming has rendered the rites ineffective for her.

While the *people* of Crisillyir take a dim view of the Dreaming, the Clergy saw the benefit of making amends, such as was possible given the leaderless nature of their Dreaming analogue. The church took legal ownership of the nation's territory under the leadership of Prime Cardinal Malthusius shortly after the eclipse in an attempt to gain the benefits of Lord of the Land. This worked, but the political factionalism between Meliskans and Ottoplismists has led to each group maintaining a formal bare majority of approval of the current Prime Cardinal Tullius. Tullius wields immense divine magic by dint of being head of the Clergy, through some religious doctrine somewhat similar to the Monarch of the Masses.

Danor is far too fractious for either President Duvall or Empress Duffet to acquire either of the rite's benefits.

Drakr gave Drakran coins to thousands of minor fey throughout its Dreaming to form a bond, then held a long referendum via territorial census and approved use of the rites by the chancellor. This would have granted Vlendam Heid the powers of Lord of the Land in seeming perpetuity, and he likely has enough support of the public to also benefit from Monarch of the Masses. But the man has philosophical objections to having literal physical power greater than other people, and so he has refused to complete his part of the rites.

Elfaivar's various enclave matriarchs long had powers similar to the rites, but the gulmohar's return and the Ranimandala's claim to the colonies of different nations cost them those powers. It seems the lack of a unitary executive in Elfaivar's current government means no one can benefit from the rites, though some political theorists suspect Adin Radhasi's invasion of Vendricce was intended to claim enough land for her to invoke the rites for herself alone.

Other nations, such as various border states and the nascent Malice State of Pala, have lesser versions of the rites of rulership, though with lower populations and less land the powers they grant are less world-shaking.

- If the creature has Legendary Resistance, the monarch also gains that trait. Typically this lets the monarch reroll a failed saving throw three times per day.

For example, when King Dukain (proficiency bonus +5) fought the Voice of Rot (proficiency bonus +9), he benefited from a +4 bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and physical ability checks, as well as 200 temporary hit points. He gained legendary resistance and could shove the titan around as if he were colossal.

Monarch of the Masses

A monarch who has the approval of the people gains a +5 bonus to saves against charm, fear, and poison. When the monarch falls to 0 hit points or below for the first time in an encounter, each of the monarch's allies within three miles is overcome with weakness and falls prone. If the monarch starts their turn above 0 hit points, they heal 10 hit points.

Risur's Crown

The monarch also receives the *crown of Risur*, which lets the wearer always know the names people they see would prefer to be called. On the monarch's turn, they can say someone's name (without spending an action) to grant them a new save against an effect with an ongoing duration, but only once per person per day.

Minutiae

If the current monarch dies without naming a successor, the House of Nobles can name one, but they must have majority approval of all nobles living in the land the monarch will rule. If the monarch is on a plane other than the Waking and Dreaming, the text of the rites offers a niche situation where the ruler's power can be contested by a very small number of nobles who are on the same plane, but even then, the crown can only shift with the approval of the nobles in Waking Risur.

In Risur, nearly all land is owned by the nobility; other people simply pay taxes for permission to use it. Efforts to reform land ownership or calls to elect the ruler democratically are non-starters in Risur. This is one reason the rites are not easily transferable to other nations, because they have different legal frameworks.

Prestige Classes

The following ten prestige classes are tied to the character themes in Chapter One. You can multiclass into a prestige class if you meet the listed prerequisites. Each only has three levels.

Applied Astronomist

The myriad motes shining in the night sky influence the world through subtle magic, and with the proper study that magic can be grasped and harnessed. Skyseers, familiar with sensing the patterns of the stars, can learn to wield this magic in battle, enhancing themselves, conjuring otherworldly destructive forces, or shifting the environment to be more like those of these wandering planes.

The Great Eclipse increased public interest in the heavens and in skyseers, and researchers at several new telescope observatories seek to measure the effects of the planets and stars, gaining deeper insights than traditional skyseers can glean with their more intuitive techniques.

The airship docks at Flint are currently constructing an experimental levitating scientific vessel, to be commanded by one **Captain Phineas Mount-Redoubt**, an academic skyseer who hopes to observe the night sky from above the clouds themselves. Mount-Redoubt hopes that this escapade will attract the attention and the patronage of one or both of Lanjyr's space exploration agencies: Pemberton Industries' interplanar exploration division, and the Drakran Planarnaya Razvedyvatel'naya Kompaniya.

Prerequisite: Skyseer Vision feat, proficient in Arcana and Nature, character level 7th, must be able to name and identify all the planets detailed in Chapter Five

Features

Hit Dice: 1d6 per applied astronomist level.

Hit Points: 1d6 (or 4) + your Constitution modifier per applied astronomist level.

Spellcasting. Add the following spells to all of your classes' spell lists: *augury, clairvoyance, contact other plane, divination, guidance, guiding bolt*. Whenever you gain a level in this class, it grants or advances your choice of bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, or wizard spellcasting or warlock Pact Magic. This advancement includes spell slots, spells prepared, and spells known.

Stargazer (1st level). You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet; if you already have darkvision, its range is extended by 60 feet. The range increases to one mile under starlight or moonlight. You cannot be blinded.

Touching the Wheel of Heaven (1st level). Different planes are in ascendance or decline each day, entering or leaving conjunction with various constellations and other celestial phenomena.

After a long rest, if you were able to spend an hour watching the night sky in the past day, roll two times on the following table to determine which planes you are able to connect to. Reroll duplicates. This connection determines the effects of some of your powers. The connection lasts until you finish a long rest or for 24 hours, whichever is longer.

TABLE: APPLIED ASTRONOMIST CONNECTION

1d8	Connection (2/day)
1	Jiese, plane of fire.
2	Caeloon, plane of air.
3	Av, plane of dreams.
4	Ostea, plane of water.
5	Urim, plane of earth.
6	Mavisha, plane of journeys.
7	Ascetia, plane of time.
8	Amrou, plane of wards.

Heavenly Flare (1st level). As an action, you can choose one plane you are attuned to and one creature you can see within 60 feet. You manifest a flare of starlight which deals 2d6 radiant damage to that creature and inflicts an additional effect based on the plane you chose. The damage increases to 3d6 if your character level is 11 or higher, and 4d6 at level 17 or higher. A saving throw against your spell DC negates the damage and extra effect. The type of saving throw depends on which plane you choose.

Plane	Additional Effect on Target
Jiese, plane of fire	(DEX save) The target catches on fire. A creature that is on fire take 1d10 fire damage at the end of each of its turns until it spends an action to put itself out. The damage increases 2d10 when you reach 17th level.
Caeloon, plane of air	(DEX save) Erratic winds impose disadvantage on the target's attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Av, plane of dreams	(WIS save) The target is charmed until the end of your next turn.
Ostea, plane of water	(CON save) If the target has blood, choose a creature within 60 feet of you to heal an amount equal to the damage you dealt.
Urim, plane of earth	(STR save) The target is knocked prone and cannot teleport until the end of your next turn.
Mavisha, plane of journeys	(STR save) A surge of water pushes the target 20 feet in any direction.
Ascetia, plane of time	(CHA save) The target is stunned until the end of your next turn. While stunned, the target is immune to damage, forced movement, and status effects. No creature can be affected by this two rounds in a row.
Amrou, plane of wards	(WIS save) Until the end of your next turn, the target's speed is reduced to 0, and it cannot benefit from increases to speed.

Follow Yonder Star (2nd level). You can let the stars guide your movement and protect you. At the start of your turn you can call upon the stars. This does not require an action. Until the end of your next turn your enemies miss with their opportunity attacks that target you or your allies. You cannot use this power again until you finish a long rest.

Space Travel (2nd level). Each day you gain movement options or bonuses from the two planes you are connected to.

Plane	Movement Option
Jiese, plane of fire	You can Dash as a bonus action.
Caeloon, plane of air	You gain a fly speed equal to your base land speed, and you can hover.
Av, plane of dreams	You can walk on walls and ceilings, and if you fall you safely land on the nearest surface as if it were down.
Ostea, plane of water	You gain a swim speed equal to your base land speed.
Urim, plane of earth	You ignore the first 5 feet of forced movement whenever you'd be moved. You may automatically resist being teleported or knocked prone.
Mavisha, plane of journeys	You can teleport 30 feet as an action. If you arrive in an area that provides concealment or that no other creature is observing, you can Hide without spending an action.
Ascetia, plane of time	If you did not move on your previous turn, double your speed.
Amrou, plane of wards	Enemies treat the ground within 10 feet of you as difficult terrain.

Cataclysmic Conjunction (3rd level). As an action you can cause a portion of another plane to temporarily merge with reality. Choose a plane you're attuned to today. A 15-foot-radius burst within 60 feet of you becomes suffused with the essence of that plane.

When you use this ability, creatures in the burst must make a save against your spell DC. The chosen plane determines the type of save, as with *heavenly flare*. On a failed save, a creature takes 4d6 force damage and 4d6 radiant damage and suffers the same effect as a *heavenly flare* of that plane. A creature that succeeds its save takes half as much damage and suffers no extra effect.

For the next five minutes, that area is altered, depending on what plane you chose. You cannot use this power again until you finish a long rest.

Plane	Area Effect
Jiese, plane of fire	As a bonus action, you can create an object composed of solid firegem, of any rough shape, up to 15 feet across in any unoccupied space in the area. The object is as durable as wood, but vanishes when the effect ends.
Caeloon, plane of air	Area fills with your choice of fog (concealment), or winds up to 30 miles per hour (disadvantage to ranged weapon attacks at short range, and long range attacks are impossible), or calm air (makes the temperature comfortable and the air breathable).
Av, plane of dreams	Enemies in the area have disadvantage on saves against magical effects. Allies in the area have advantage on those saves.
Ostea, plane of water	Area fills with blood to the depth of your choice, either calm or choppy—which requires a DC 5 or DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.
Urim, plane of earth	As a bonus action, you can roughly tunnel through up to three 5-ft. cubes of earth or stone in the zone, or extrude an equal amount of stone from a rocky surface.
Mavisha, plane of journeys	When a creature enters the area, you can spend your reaction to have it arrive in any space along the interior perimeter of the area. When a creature leaves the area, you can spend a reaction to have it exit on any exterior space along the perimeter.
Ascetia, plane of time	Enemies in the area are overwhelmed with images from their memories, and treat the area as heavily obscured.
Amrou, plane of wards	Creatures in the area lose resistances to damage, and if they are immune to a damage type instead they have resistance to it.

Logos

Philosophers practice swaying people's opinions with words, by reshaping how they think about the world. Convince a man that charity is wasting money on people who contribute nothing to society, and he will see a starving child as a beggar. Convince that same man that charity can lift up the poor so they rejoin the workforce, and he'll see the same child as a potential worker or investment. Great heroism and horrid cruelty can occur when a powerful idea holds sway.

Underlying philosophy is the understanding that some if not all truths are relative. And some philosophers—whether they have

grown jaded to the constant ebb and flow of ideologies battling for ascendance, or they have come to realize that even their own beliefs are impermanent and their perceptions inherently faulty—can effect changes in the world through speech alone.

It is said that the second-century Drakran philosopher von Copenhoff learned to yield such power after he discovered a book written by William Miller, a philosopher whose teachings were declared heretical by the Clergy. Perhaps the Clergy was wise, for von Copenhoff nearly took control of an entire nation by declaring to people in power one-by-one that they agreed with him.

Prerequisite: Expression of Belief feat, proficient in Persuasion and Religion, character level 7th, must have convinced an enemy to surrender without fighting

Features

Hit Dice: 1d8 per logos level.

Hit Points: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per logos level.

Fiat (1st level). If opinion can be swayed by rhetoric, so too can behavior. You can impose this certainty upon the world by fiat. As an action you can state what a creature you can see will do on its next turn. This command must be equivalent to the one-word commands listed in the *command* spell—approach, drop, flee, grovel, halt, or something similar—though you state it as a declaration rather than an order, such as, "The red-haired brigand cast his weapons to the ground."

If the creature fails a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier) it acts as you stated on its next turn if possible, taking no other actions or movement. This feature has no effect if your command is directly harmful to the target, but it can put it in a dangerous situation (standing beneath a teetering boulder, or running past foes and provoking opportunity attacks). This feature does not require the target to understand you, and it can affect undead targets normally. You can use this power at will, but after you use it on a given creature, you cannot use it on the same creature until you finish a long rest.

Pathos of the Inanimate (1st level). People can disagree with an argument, but inanimate objects have no power to resist your words. You can manipulate unattended objects by speech alone, causing furniture to move, trees to crack, locks and doors to open or close, and even guns to fire on their own, simply by stating it occurs.

As an action, you can move objects filling up to a 10-ft. square within 30 feet, objects as large as a person as a bonus action, and handheld items without spending an action. You can only manifest something that might happen to the object naturally in time, or that a person could cause the object to do, so you cannot make a tree float, but you could fling a butcher knife or have a wagon roll down the street at a walking pace. If you use this power in a way that might damage a creature, it will typically deal no more than 1d10 damage, with a Dexterity save (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier) to negate.

This cannot affect objects that have been given a name, since doing so imbues them with a fragment of willpower.

Make It So (2nd level). By framing luck and chance as an argument between possible futures, you can sometimes choose which argument is more convincing. As an action, choose a creature you can see and declare whether its next attack will hit or miss. The next time that creature makes an attack, it either hits or misses as you declared. This effect wears off if the creature takes a short or long rest. You can use this power at will, but after you use it on a given creature, you cannot use it on the same creature until you finish a long rest. If the creature has multiple attacks, you can choose a specific attack you wish to affect, such as, "The manticore's bite shall miss."

Ethos of the Unwilling (2nd level). As a student of behavior and rhetoric, you know that if someone agrees to a small concession, they develop a small measure of trust. Even if they are not conscious of it, it becomes easier for you to get them to agree with you. Whenever you hit a creature with an attack or a creature fails a save against an effect you created, that creature takes a –2 penalty to its first attack roll on its next turn, and the DC of the first saving throw it makes a creature roll next turn is likewise reduced by 2.

Inexplicable Narration (3rd level). Until one sees a place, that location could contain anything. You just need to convince it to be what you want.

As an action you may choose an area that you are unaware of the details of, no more than 20 feet across, and describe that area. If any creature enters that area within the next five minutes, it will match the description until you finish a long rest. The logos can declare mundane objects or minor elements of terrain, but cannot use this power to cause damage, create creatures, or create magical effects or objects of any noteworthy value.

Simple changes are almost always possible (e.g., the doors down that short hallway are unlocked, and the lever to deactivate any

Magical Epistemology

Magical power is normally thought of to flow to mortals from various mighty sources. Clerics claim they create miracles thanks to their gods. Druids say they can direct the primal energy of nature. Wizards scribe treatises about arcane rules of reality which they can exploit in their spellcasting.

Far less is spoken about the power of belief.

Perhaps what clerics think is the power of their god is in truth the shared faith of worshipers, which they are particularly attuned to. And surely nature is as vibrant in every land, yet druids are most common in lands where people value the land and revere its rhythms. And as the Great Eclipse demonstrated, the rules of reality can change, so some theorize that wizardly magic is less a science and more a talent for convincing *oneself* that impossible things are actually possible.

The greatest source of power is the idea.

Kings, invested with the loyalty of their subjects, can achieve deeds no mere mortal possibly could, because the idea of a country is so powerful. Enlightened philosophers find that the more accepted their ideology becomes, the more they can exert their will on reality. And at its basest level, if you tell a town that the people who live in the next valley over are villains who must be destroyed, and if they act on that idea, the ensuing feud will take on a life of its own, and the rivalry will be true regardless of whether the initial claim was a lie.

Upon hearing this concept, it is natural to question one's own ideology. How can we know whether any knowledge is valid? But a more useful question might be, how can we persuade others that *our* knowledge is more valid than *theirs*?



traps is within easy view; or behind this wall is a hidden chamber filled with weapons). At the Narrator's discretion, however, more drastic declarations may cause the ability to simply fail (e.g., the hold of this ship is filled with lava; or a note explaining the villain's plans just happens to be sitting on a table waiting for us).

After you use this power you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Undeniable Truth (3rd level). When a creature fails a save against your Fiat feature, you may choose to state a more involved or long-lasting task. If the creature fails another Wisdom save (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier), it follows your direction as it would the *suggestion* spell, except this feature does not require the creature to understand you.

Mad Shootist

Guns, feh. Guns are passé. The weapon of the future needs to do more than just shed blood. A firearm can store magical power, firing explosive projectiles, striking with beams of elemental energy, or creating even more unusual effects. You never know what tool you need to win a battle, but soon you will be able to carry them all at once!

Prerequisite: The Man with Two Guns is God feat, proficient in Arcana, character level 7th, access to a technology lab with at least 500 gp in components

Features

Hit Dice: 1d10 per mad shootist level.

Hit Points: 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per mad shootist level.

Inventive Gunnery (1st level). Choose a type of non-grenade firearm. You have invented a "blaster," a modular arcano-scientific version of that weapon which is powered by an unstable energy matrix. You can craft this blaster or upgrade an existing firearm by spending one day and 500 gp in raw materials beyond the normal price of the weapon.

You can have your blaster use its normal method of firing, or you can have it fire force blasts. These are identical to normal rounds, except they deal force damage and can be fired limitlessly without requiring reloading. And they sound very futuristic.

The energy matrix of a blaster is very volatile, and while you know how to keep your weapons within limits, if anyone else fires one of your blasters, it begins to pulse, and then if you do not regain possession within three rounds, it releases a burst of force energy. Each creature within 15 feet takes 7d6 force damage. A successful Dexterity save (DC 15) reduces the damage by half.

A blaster discharge doesn't damage the weapon, but does drain it. Restoring the energy matrix requires 50 gp in raw materials and eight hours' work, but any enchantments and other modifications on the weapon survive. If one of your blasters discharges, it cascades through the energy matrix of every other blaster you've crafted, which drains those weapons too.

Autofire (1st level). With the flip of a switch, your blaster converts from firing a single shot to releasing a volley of smaller force bolts. When you make an attack with your blaster, you can choose to autofire. This deals damage equal to your Dexterity modifier to each creature within 5 feet of the space you targeted with your attack. If you hit your primary target this doesn't add any damage, but if you miss and would normally deal no damage, the autofire instead deals this grazing damage. Creatures that have cover relative to you take no damage from autofire.

If you are 11th level or higher, increase this damage to 2 + your Dex modifier, and at 17th level to 4 + your Dex modifier.

If you use autofire, during your next turn your blaster is overheated and cannot fire normal blasts, but it can use other abilities like beam shot and mobility shot.

Beam Shot (1st level). During a long rest you can use the energy matrix of a blaster to refine latent elemental energy in the environment and charge three cartridges, which glow blue, and red, and yellow. The cartridges lose their charge within a day, making it impossible—barring further technological innovation—to stockpile such ammo.

As an action or bonus action you can load one of these cartridges into your blaster. The next shot with your blaster creates a beam of energy that sounds even more futuristic. The cartridge loses its charge after use, but can be recharged during your next long rest.

- **Freeze Ray.** A creature you hit with this beam is restrained by encasing ice, and if the attack reduces them to 0 hit points it does not kill them. The restrained creature or one who can touch the ice can use its action to make a Strength check (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence modifier) to free the creature. While the creature is restrained, it is vulnerable to the first attack that damages it. Thereafter the ice is broken and it is freed.
- **Shrink Ray.** A creature you hit with this beam takes no damage but instead it shrinks by three size categories (gargantuan to huge, large, medium, small, tiny, and miniscule), it has disadvantage on Strength checks and saves, its speed is halved, and it deals half damage with its non-spell attacks. If it is reduced below Tiny, it instead deals only 1 damage with its non-spell attacks, and its speed is reduced to 5 ft. If the creature is incapacitated, it remains shrunk for one hour. Otherwise, it returns to its original size at the end of your next turn. At the Narrator's discretion, other effects may apply.
- **Wave Beam.** This beam oscillates with visible peaks and troughs, ignoring static, inanimate objects and covering a wide enough area that you only need to aim in approximately the right spot. Your shot ignores cover and concealment. A

creature struck by this shot takes an extra 1d10 damage. This increases to 2d10 if you are 11th level, and 3d10 at 17th level.

Kinetic Repulse (2nd level). You can spend a bonus action to activate an arctech kinetic shield, which surrounds you until the start of your next turn. It grants you resistance to all damage except psychic damage. Track how much damage is prevented this way. On your next turn, when your blaster deals damage to a creature, you can have it deal extra damage equal to how much the shield blocked, to a maximum of 20 extra damage. This repulsed energy can only damage one creature, even if you hit multiple with the same attack.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

When you reach third level, you do not have to spend a bonus action to activate this ability.

Mobility Shot (2nd level). You can fire an electrical grapple from your blaster as a bonus action. You target a solid anchor point at least 5 feet across within 30 feet and then fire a grapple beam. You can use your movement to pull yourself to that location and hang (so if you're 20 feet away, it takes 20 feet of movement), or you can use it as the anchor point of a swing, so if you make a long jump you can add up to the length of your beam to the distance you jump (at the Narrator's discretion). You can keep the grapple shot engaged as long as you want, but once you release it, it takes 5 minutes to recharge. While the grapple beam is engaged, you cannot fire your blaster.

If the anchor moves, the beam disengages. The grapple cannot damage creatures.

Rocket Launcher (2nd level). After a long rest, you can create up to five rockets. Like beam shot cartridges, they destabilize after a day. Similar to an alchemical launcher, you can load a rocket as an action, and they function as grenades with your blaster's range and attack bonus.

Hyper Beam (3rd level). Instead of having your blaster overheat after using autofire, you can choose to have it use that unstable energy to charge a hyperbeam. On your next turn as an action you can unleash a 5-foot-wide beam out to the weapon's maximum range. Make an attack roll against every creature in that line, and roll damage once to apply to all the targets. You also deal autofire damage to every creature within 5 feet of that line, and to any creature in the line that you miss with your attack roll. If you loaded a beam shot charge, all these attacks are with the chosen beam. After this hyper shot, your blaster is depleted for five minutes.

Monument of War

All militaries spin their greatest war veterans into mythic heroes, who come to embody the ideals and hallmarks of various wars for their nation's citizenry. Some rare veterans become empowered by this public investment in their life stories, and learn to manifest parts of their myth in battle today. At the veteran's invocation, a remembered fusillade of cannons might strike a new foe, or a fallen ally might once again step in the path of a bullet to spare the veteran's life.

These living monuments of war are often haunted by their fallen brethren or by the dishonorable acts they had to perform to survive, which they must now keep secret as the public cheers them as unimpeachable heroes. Yet others just wish to recapture their glory



days or to get another shot at the enemies who wronged them and got away.

Ber's national pride has been hurt by almost losing its first major war as a new nation, and Elfaivar is still constrained by the memories of losing the Second Victory. Both nations are likely to produce monuments of war, though Elfaivarans are more likely to recall barrages of arrows or spells than cannons.

Prerequisite: Display of Heroism feat, proficient in Athletics and History, character level 7th

Features

Hit Dice: 1d12 per monument of war level.

Hit Points: 1d12 (or 7) + your Constitution modifier per monument of war level.

Instant Boot Camp (1st level). As a bonus action you can shout directions you recall from your own military training. You and each ally who can see or hear you becomes proficient in Athletics and proficient in all simple and martial weapons for the next minute. You and each of those allies can immediately stand up or drop prone, then walk 10 feet or crawl 5 feet.

Fearless Mien (1st level). Accounts of your heroism carry their own strength. You and allies within 30 feet of you have advantage on saving throws against being frightened. When you use your Display of Heroism, each ally you affect can spend and roll one hit die, and heal that many hit points. If they were at 0 hit points, they instead heal that much plus 1.

Shell Shock (1st level). As an action you can call upon a powerful memory of being caught in an artillery barrage to conjure psychic manifestations of a cannon strike in your immediate vicinity. This manifestation must be centered on a space no more than 10 feet away, and strikes in a 15-foot-radius burst. Thus you must be caught in your own remembered blast, though perhaps cover might shield you.

Targets in the area take 7d6 points of force damage, and are pushed 5 feet and knocked prone. A successful Dexterity save (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Constitution modifier) halves

the damage and prevents a creature from falling prone. The area of the blast is filled with dust and smoke, providing concealment until the end of your next turn.

After using this power, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Do You Want to Live Forever? (2nd level). You have survived bullet hells or arrow tempests where the crossfire should have killed anyone, and that story is so well-known and powerful that it protects you. When you have no physical cover or concealment, you gain the benefit of cover against non-melee attacks.

Remembrance of the Heroic Sacrifice (2nd level). You can call upon the psychic memory of a long-dead friend to save an ally from an attack. When an attack is about to hit you or an ally, you can conjure the psychic manifestation, who is struck by the attack instead of the original target. The manifestation is instantly destroyed, but the original target of the attack is unaffected by it.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Cannon Overture (3rd level). When you use your *shell shock* ability, on the following two rounds you may as a bonus action call in additional artillery strikes. These strikes do *not* need to include you in their area of effect, but each one must land at least 30 feet from the center point of any other previous strike.

Notorious Celebrity

Some say gods gain power from the devotion of their followers, and that kings are strengthened by the approval of their subjects. Well you're damned famous, and people spend more time each day thinking about your dramatic and entertaining feats than about stodgy monarchs or absent deities. Why shouldn't your notoriety grant you power and influence?

A handful of notorious celebrities seem to only grow more impressive the more people hear of them. They demand attention, and attract followers (colloquially known as a posse) who do their bidding and share in their supernatural power. To take full advantage of their unique abilities they must make an effort to have an audience wherever they go, and they find it impossible to avoid scrutiny. This is perhaps not the best choice for a constable who might need to travel incognito, but sometimes the affection of fans is more useful than the indifference of strangers.

Prerequisite: Docker's Jank feat (or Actor or Inspiring Leader), proficient in Performance, character level 7th, must be wildly popular as an entertainer

Features

Hit Dice: 1d8 per notorious celebrity level.

Hit Points: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per notorious celebrity level.

Roll with a Posse (1st level). You attract four loyal followers, your "posse," who protect you from unimportant people and do tasks you don't have time for, as well as aid you in combat. Each member of your posse has the following stats, or something roughly equivalent.

Posse Member Challenge N/A

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 11 (leather)

HP 16 (3d8+3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	8 (–1)	12 (+1)	10 (+1)	8 (+1)	12 (+0)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2, one other

Senses passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Bolstered by Celebrity. As long as a posse member has seen you in the past five minutes, they add your proficiency bonus instead of their own (+2) to attack rolls and to saving throws they are proficient in.

If a posse member is reduced to 0 HP they automatically stabilize unless there was an extra 16 damage beyond what took them to 0 HP, in which case they die instantly.

Once per day during a short rest, a posse member can heal to full.

Hype Tactics. The posse member has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if their celebrity attacked that creature in the past round or is within 5 feet of that creature.

ACTIONS

Scrap and Slash. *Your guys have a variety of weapons. Sometimes they just need to break some teeth. Sometimes they need a spear to hold off a monster. Mostly they use those fine matching swords you bought them. Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit; range 20/60; one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d10–1) piercing damage. *Special:* The weapon misfires on a natural 1. Reloading requires an action or bonus action.

Your posse members act on your initiative in combat, but normally they hang back and don't attack. They'll move where you direct without you needing to spend an action. You can spend an action to have them each take the Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help action. Thereafter they return to being noncombatants.

You have a subtle supernatural connection to each member of your posse, so whenever something deals damage to a posse member you can see, you can transfer that damage to yourself. If the same source damages multiple posse members simultaneously, you can protect all of them, but you only take the damage once. If a source would damage *you* and one or more of your posse members simultaneously, you can shield them automatically without taking any extra damage.

A posse member who dies should be mourned briefly and then can be replaced casually the next time you're somewhere you have fans. You might eulogize them in a song, and everyone will admire how great you are for respecting whatever-their-name-was.

Audience Participation (1st level). You're unparalleled at getting the crowd on your side. If there are noncombatants present who are friendly to you and aware that you're engaged in combat, whenever an enemy starts its turn within 5 feet of one or more of those noncombatants, the crowd deals 4 bludgeoning damage to that creature. This damage increases to 6 if you are 11th level, and 8 if you are 17th level. Your posse counts as noncombatants for this effect if you haven't directed them to act in the past round.

Demand Attention (1st level). On your turn you can shout for attention. Choose one non-mindless enemy aware of you. That enemy has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets other than you until the end of your next turn. After using this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Crowd Effect (2nd level). When you have an audience of at least eight non-combatant bystanders, their reactions bolster you. While you have an audience, you gain a +5 bonus on death saving throws, and whenever you drop an enemy you gain 6 temporary hit points. This increases to 9 if you are 11th level, and to 12 if you are 17th level.

Summon Audience (2nd level). As a bonus action, you can create up to eight illusory people in a 20-foot cube within 120 feet, lasting for ten minutes or until you dismiss them. These illusions are as convincing as *major illusion*, and are lifelike but generally stationary unless you spend an action to have them move. You and your allies can move freely through the illusory crowd, but they are difficult terrain for enemies and grant cover against ranged attacks. These audience members count as real onlookers for the purpose of your *audience participation* and *crowd effect* abilities.

After using this power, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

One-Upmanship (3rd level). You find it hard to let your allies have a moment in the spotlight. The first time each combat when an ally drops an enemy or scores a critical hit, you grant yourself the benefits of the Bardic Inspiration die from your Docker's Jank feat. This doesn't expend the die you would normally grant to your allies. If you don't have the Docker's Jank feat, instead you gain a d6 inspiration die.

Shock and Awe (3rd level). When you hit an enemy with an attack or an enemy fails a save against a spell you cast, as a bonus action you can have one of your posse members attack the same enemy. If your posse member hits, the enemy is frightened of you until the end of your next turn unless it succeeds a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Charisma modifier).

Polyhistor

Ballistics is a science. Angle, velocity, force—all these can be calculated and refined for the perfect shot. Medicine is likewise a science. Arteries, ligaments, organs—damage to these in varying intensities cause readily-measured negative consequences to the injured party. Similarly the kinetics of motion, the materials science of armor and weapon, even the nascent study of psychology and sociology all can lend understanding to the complex system that is a battle.

As a polyhistor you are well-learned, versed in an expansive list of sciences, all with a focus on their relation to warfare and combat. Using your diverse knowledge and your keen intellect you can compose at a moment's notice the ideal method of attack for any situation. Of course, sometimes an immediate attack is not optimal. Better perhaps to observe a foe's patterns, and to let him leave an opening you can exploit.

Prerequisite: Martial Studies feat or Savant class, proficient in Culture, character level 7th; must have contacts with a college, university, or military academy.



Features

Hit Dice: 1d10 per polyhistor level.

Hit Points: 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per polyhistor level.

Studied Proficiency (1st level). You are proficient in all weapons. For your Martial Studies feat, you can prepare two techniques after you complete a long rest, but one must be either *experimental strike* or *committee defense*.

Combat Focus (1st level). At the end of your turn, if in the past round you took a hostile action against a foe, a foe took hostile action against you, or you witnessed a foe taking or receiving hostile action, you gain 1 focus, to a maximum of five. Whenever five minutes pass without you gaining any focus, your focus resets to however many levels you have in this prestige class (1, 2, or 3).

You can use focus to temporarily access combat feats and gain other benefits.

Adaptive Style (1st level). You have learned a diverse set of fighting styles, and while you are master of none, as you gain insight into a battle you can discern moments where such techniques could be useful.

During your turn, you can spend 1 focus to gain the benefits of a combat feat. You must meet any prerequisites, and the feat must provide some benefit during combat and not provide an ability score increase. Whether a feat qualifies is at the Narrator's discretion.

(If you're playing *Level Up*, consider that you can use this ability to temporarily acquire new combat maneuvers via the feat Martial Scholar.)

You can gain access to up to two bonus feats this way at a time, which last until the end of combat, to a maximum of five minutes.

Inner Defenses (2nd level). You have devised techniques to recognize mental threats and divert them. Whenever you need to make a saving throw, you can spend 1 focus to become proficient in that type of save until the end of the combat (to a maximum of five minutes).

Perfect Aim (2nd level). If you have advantage on an attack roll and you hit with both attack rolls, you can spend 2 focus to treat the attack as a critical hit.

Cunning Defense (3rd level). You can anticipate your enemy's moves, plotting out strikes, parries, and ripostes like gambits on a chessboard. You can modify your AC with your proficiency bonus instead of your Dexterity.

Masterstroke (3rd level). It is mentally exhausting, but you can use your considerable intellect to compose the perfect attack amidst the seeming randomness of battle. As an action, you can study the battlefield. Then until the end of your next turn you have advantage on all attack rolls, and if the unmodified die roll of an attack you make is 12 or lower, treat it as if you had rolled a natural 13. Additionally until the end of your next turn, your polyhistor abilities do not cost focus to use.

After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Steamsuit Pilot

If you can build a quadruped contraption that can fire a gun or channel magical energy, it's merely a matter of scale to produce a larger vehicle, perhaps something someone could wear like a suit of armor. Now, a person would have to be a fool to strap into a heat-conducting pile of metal powered by an arcane engine, but well, you've invented the damned thing. It'd be *more* foolish to let it go to waste.

In the past technologists designed suits powered by arcane steam boilers, but today they are more likely to use wayfarer engines, which are lighter and don't belch obscuring vapors. The name steamsuit has become the common parlance, however, and some traditionalists still add boilers merely for the aesthetic.

Each technologist who tries to design a steamsuit adds their own flair and quirks. Sometimes an elf wants a verdigris suit of skintight plate armor that merely increases her strength and speed. Sometimes a gnome wants to ride around in a mechanized gorilla the size of a bear and tear through everything in his path. But invariably, these suits are just machines, and any machine, no matter how ingeniously crafted, can break.

Prerequisite: Arctech Tinkerer feat, proficient in Arcana and Engineering, character level 7th, access to a technology lab with at least 5,000 gp in components

Features

Hit Dice: 1d8 per steamsuit pilot level.

Hit Points: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per steamsuit pilot level.

Steam & Steel (1st level). You have designed an arcanoscientific power matrix which you can integrate into a suit of armor as a sort of steam engine, enhancing your strength and ability to move while wearing the armor. Indeed, the power matrix can even let you wear armor larger than your actual body.

If you start with a suit of armor and spend one day and 500 gp in raw materials, you can upgrade that armor with a power matrix and the necessary enchantments and steam valves to operate it. The armor can be your size or larger, up to Large size. Large armor costs the same as medium or small armor, since the main expense is labor, not materials. The archetypical steamsuit is modified Large full plate, whose only drawback is that it might not fit in some places. (You can certainly build a leather steamsuit, or multiple steamsuits, but you can only operate one at a time.)



A steamsuit is inert without a pilot, and since you designed it for yourself only a creature the same size as you can fit into your suit. You can enter or exit a suit by spending 10 feet of movement. Most suits are designed with masterful locking mechanisms which can be opened either by a key as a bonus action, or by a Dexterity check (DC 20) with thieves' tools as an action. When you enter the suit you can lock it without spending an action.

You are restrained and blinded while inside a suit that is deactivated. Activating or deactivating the arcane steam engine takes a bonus action. While the engine is active, you are considered proficient in whatever type of armor the suit is. You have a magical link to your steamsuit, so any magical enchantments on what you're wearing also apply to the steamsuit's armor. Your steamsuit will typically have hands, so it can wield weapons. If you have a magic weapon, it can wield that weapon, or if it has the same type of weapon and you have the weapon on your person while inside the suit, the weapon the suit wields benefits from that enchantment.

As long as the engine is active, you must maintain the power matrix. As creator of the suit your magical link lets you do this without spending an action as long as you're inside the suit, even if you're incapacitated. If anyone else is in the suit, they must make a DC 15 Intelligence check at the start of each turn or else be restrained and unable to use any of the suit's powers until the start of their next turn.

While in your suit, your Strength score is increased to 19, or to 23 if you are proficient in the type of armor the suit is made out of (i.e., you don't need the suit to do as much work for you), unless your Strength is already higher. You have double the lifting capacity of a normal creature your size with that Strength. Your suit doesn't count toward your encumbrance.

You are considered proficient with your suit's unarmed attacks, which deal 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

At the end of your turn, if you took damage since your last turn while in the suit, make an Intelligence saving throw (DC 10) to keep the suit's power matrix stable. If you fail three saves, the engine enters a safe mode. This reduces your Strength to its normal amount, imposes a –2 penalty on AC and Dexterity saving throws, and prevents you from taking reactions that require movement. You can repair the suit during a short rest.

Personal Touches (1st level). Choose up to ten objects that can be held in one hand (or two-handed objects, which take up two "slots"). You integrate these objects into your suit and can retrieve them and swap between them without limit on your turn, plus they can be hidden from casual view. Sure, it's obvious you're in a a half-ton clanking shell of steel, but your enemies won't know you've got a shotgun, a musket, a shield, a lantern, a portable ram, and a pair of integrated scimitars. You can still only make use of two hands' worth of weapons or shields at a time.

Additionally, choose a 1st level spell from the wizard spell list, as long as it does not require an expensive material component. You can use the suit to cast that spell one time, using your Intelligence as the spellcasting ability. Afterward you cannot use it to cast that spell again until you finish a short rest.

At 2nd level, add a 2nd level wizard spell to your capabilities, and at 3rd level add a 3rd level wizard spell. You can cast each spell once between short rests.

If a spell the suit casts has the duration of concentration, whenever you take damage you may make an Intelligence saving throw instead of Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration.

Power Fist (2nd level). Steam pistons in your suit's arm can launch a devastating punch. When you hit an enemy with your suit's unarmed strike, you can trigger the power fist. The attack deals an extra 1d6 damage, and the target must make a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence modifier) or else be shoved 10 feet. You can only use this ability once per turn, and you cannot use it if your suit is in safe mode.

Defensive Shield (2nd level). You can enhance your armor's resilience with charged wards with limited duration. As a bonus action choose a damage type and gain resistance to that damage type until the end of your next turn. You cannot use this ability if your suit is in safe mode.

Matrix Stability (3rd level). If you suit goes into safe mode, you can repair it by spending an action instead of having to spend a short rest.

Redline Rush (3rd level). On your turn you can overheat your engine to increase your suit's speed. You double your walking speed for the turn and gain a +5 bonus to all Acrobatics and Athletics checks during this movement. This destabilizes the engine as if you had taken damage, forcing you to make an Intelligence save at the end of your turn, in addition to any save you'd normally make due to taking damage. You cannot use this ability if your suit is in safe mode.

Quick-Don (3rd level). Without spending an action, you can cause your suit to magically collapse into a mechanical object that fits into your palm and weighs only five pounds. You can spend an action or bonus action to cause this object to transform into your suit, and may have the suit form around you and activate the engine. It thus becomes relatively easy to have multiple suits for different occasions.

Urban Empath

Mediums can sense the lingering thoughts of spirits of the dead, but people have for ages referred to cities as having a spirit, a *genius loci*. Especially in a place where so many have died over the years, with the right mindset it becomes possible for a medium to attune to the



psychic nature of cities. The city begins to sustain them, speak to them, and protect them.

This close communion with urban environments has its limitations, of course. A medium who devotes himself to speaking with cities can still use his powers in the wilderness, but in a much weakened capacity. In the smog-choked streets of a burgeoning industrial metropolis, though, he has a veritable army at his command.

Prerequisite: Unfinished Business feat, proficient in Persuasion and Insight, character level 7th

Features

Hit Dice: 1d6 per urban empath level.

Hit Points: 1d6 (or 4) + your Constitution modifier per urban empath level.

Spellcasting. Add the following spells to all of your classes' spell lists: *conjure elemental, dissonant whispers, knock, locate creature, message, tiny hut* (takes the appearance of a small house). Whenever you gain a level in this class, it grants or advances your choice of bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, or wizard spellcasting, or warlock Pact Magic. This advancement includes spell slots, spells prepared, and spells known.

Every Building a Welcoming Home (1st level). As a bonus action, you can ask a city to let you through. Until the end of your turn, you can move through manmade structures as if they weren't there. After using this ability you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Urban Bond (1st level). While in an urban environment (defined generally as a bounded area with a population density of at least 1000 people per square mile), you need neither food nor drink, and you gain a +2 bonus to Acrobatics, Athletics, and Perception checks.

These effects generally extend as long as you're within 3 miles of the border of an urban area.

The City Comes Alive (1st level). As an action you can call upon the city to strike an enemy and possibly trap it in a maw of bricks and cobblestones. Make a melee spell attack with a range of 30 feet; the target must be within 5 feet of a manmade structure, even just a wall or street.

If the attack hits, the target takes 2d12 damage, and if the creature is Large or smaller you may knock it prone, but if you do, it has cover while prone. This damage increases to 3d12 at 11th level, and 4d12 at 17th level.

The City Whispers (2nd level). You can listen to the spirit of the city to learn what it hears and sees. This communion functions similar to the *commune with nature* ritual, granting you knowledge of three facts the city can share. Sample "facts" include:

The general state of every publicly accessible location within 3 miles.

Disturbances in private locations if they could be seen or heard from a public area.

Choose a creature or small group that the city can identify through some physical means. You learn whether it is in the area and where, unless it entered a private area in which case you learn when it entered.

Gain intuitive understanding of all publicly traversable terrain in the area, allowing you to navigate perfectly.

For the purpose of this, "private" generally means somewhere legally owned and off-limits to outsiders. While a museum is owned, the public can access it, and while the sewers are not normal thoroughfares, usually there is no personal ownership of a sewer.

The city doesn't have precise recollection, and cannot convey conversations or subtle actions, but could share details of a broadly-witnessed speech. This power functions to a distance of three miles in an urban environment, but only to 300 feet outside an urban area.

After using this ability you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Every Window an Eye (2nd level). You gain tremorsense out to 60 feet in an urban environment, and can sense the presence and location of creatures that have concealment or cover as long as they are hidden by manmade structures.

The City Marches to War (3rd level): You can call upon a city in your time of dire need, causing walls, streets, and gates to move at your command.

As an action, you cause the terrain in a 40-foot-radius burst within 100 feet of you to rise up and hinder your foes. Enemies that enter that area or end their turn there take 2d6 bludgeoning damage. As a bonus action, you can cause up to six 5-foot cubes of terrain in the area to move up to 30 feet, or to extrude into the area from an existing wall or floor, or to withdraw into an existing wall or floor. This moving terrain can only enter unoccupied spaces, and it is generally composed of whatever the prevailing building materials in the area are. The area lasts for five minutes or until dismissed.

Outside an urban area, instead you can affect a 10-foot-radius burst within 50 feet of you.

After using this ability you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.

Vekeshi Excoriant

Only a handful of mystics among the vekeshi learn the rituals of the fallen goddess Srasama. Though she has passed on, fragments of her power remain scattered across the world, and can still be touched by those who maintain sufficient devotion.

These true believers excoriate their skin and use fire to cauterize and scar in symbols sacred to Srasama, commemorating her three forms of Maiden, Mother, and Crone. Excoriants often either find themselves in charge of local cells of vekeshi mystics, or they altogether transcend hierarchies and pursue their own agendas. Every night however they focus their will by reciting the teachings of Vekesh, so that they maintain a purity of purpose to protect the weak and punish those who would abuse them.

Prerequisite: Hand of Retribution feat, proficiency in History and Religion, must have three iconic scars somewhere on the body, character level 7th

Features

Hit Dice: 1d12 per vekeshi excoriant level.

Hit Points: 1d12 (or 7) + your Constitution modifier per vekeshi excoriant level.

Dreadnought (1st level). The mystic rites you have undertaken to connect you to the goddess have strengthened your will and freed your will to resist worldly temptations. You are proficient in Wisdom saving throws. If you are already proficient in Wisdom saving throws, you get a +2 bonus to Wisdom saving throws.

You also add your proficiency bonus to death saving throws.

Daunting Presence (1st level). On your turn, you can choose to adopt terrifying mannerisms designed to drive your foes back. If you do, you cannot make normal opportunity attacks until the start of your next turn. However, when a creature within your reach would make an attack against you, you can use a reaction to force the creature to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier). If it fails this save, the attacking creature becomes frightened of you for one round; if it succeeds, it becomes immune to being frightened by your daunting stance for one day.

Threefold Presence (1st level). At the start of your turn, you may call upon the threefold presence of Srasama. During this turn, when you move, you can trace three different paths from your initial starting position, as if you were splitting into three versions of yourself. At the start of your next turn, you must choose which of those locations is your actual location, at which point the other two versions of you disappear.

Before you choose your actual location, you can act as if you were in any of the three locations, and you can be affected by others as if you were in any of those locations. Things that would affect you more than once, such an area attack that would hit two of your locations, only affect you once.

Before the start of your next turn, you can take one extra action, one extra bonus action, and one extra reaction. You cannot have any one of your three versions take more than one action, one bonus action, and one reaction each. You cannot use an extra action if another ability grants you an extra action the same turn, such as a fighter's Action Surge.

After using this ability, you cannot use it again until you take a short or long rest.



Vengeful Gaze of the Goddess (1st level). As a bonus action you can choose a creature you can see. Guided by the divine sight of Srasama, you unerringly know the direction to the target until you finish a long rest. You cannot use this power again until you finish a long rest.

Triune Blessing (2nd level). You can call upon the three aspects of the goddess Srasama as a bonus action. For each of these blessings, choose yourself or one creature you're aware of to affect; you can choose the same creature multiple times.

The maiden grants advantage on the creature's next saving throw, and their next attack roll.

The mother heals 5d8+5 points of damage to that creature.

The crone hexes the creature, so that until the start of your next turn, attacks that hit the creature deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage.

After using this ability, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Live for Vengeance (2nd level). Whenever you succeed a death saving throw, you can spend two Hit Dice and heal that many hit points, allowing you to regain consciousness.

Vestige of Srasama (3rd level). As an action, you can call upon a vestige of your goddess. A towering, flaming image of a woman steps into existence. Her features shift by the moment, from youthful warrior, to mature healer, to withered and skeletal sorceress. She strides toward your enemies, six burning swords held in or floating beside her six hands.

This aspect of Srasama does not act with any real intelligence; the only word she ever says is for her *guttering desperation* attack. She is focused on defeating your enemies. She acts on your initiative as soon as you summon her. She follows your desires without you needing to take any action to direct her. This manifestation does not require concentration to maintain as long as any enemies are present, but once you are no longer in danger, you can maintain concentration to keep the aspect present and on guard.

After using this power again, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest. Any wounds the aspect suffers remain the next time you summon her, though all her injuries heal at the start of the next full moon. If the aspect is reduced to 0 hit points, she fades away and cannot be summoned until the start of the next full moon.

Aspect of Srasama Challenge N/A
Huge celestial

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
HP 78 (12d12)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 17
Saving Throws see Shared Prowess
Damage Resistance fire, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities fatigued, frightened, paralyzed, petrified
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13 (see Shared Prowess)

TRAITS

Shared Prowess. The aspect is proficient in the same saving throws you are. It is also proficient in Perception and in all weapons. It adds your proficiency bonus to those saving throws, to Perception checks and passive Perception, to its attack rolls, and to the DCs to resist its powers. (For example, if a character with a +4 proficiency bonus summons the aspect, its attack bonus will be +8, and the save DC to resist its powers would be 15.)

Maiden, Mother, Crone. The aspect can take up to three actions and one bonus action on her turn. She can use burning scimitar up to three times per round (since she has many swords), but she can use crushing vines and guttering desperation no more than once each per turn.

ACTIONS

Burning Scimitar. ***The maiden slices your foe, and fire erupts from the wound.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 + your proficiency bonus to hit; reach 10 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Crushing Vines. ***The mother weaves a spell, creating life.*** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 + your proficiency bonus to hit; range 60 ft.; one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained. It can spend an action to make a Strength check (DC 11 + your proficiency bonus) to free itself.

Guttering Desperation. ***The crone speaks a single word: "Grovel."*** One target within 60 ft. falls prone unless it succeeds a Wisdom saving throw (DC 11 + your proficiency bonus). That creature cannot stand up until the end of its next turn.

Wayfarer Cirqueliste

Courseur philosophy encourages physical fitness so that one's swift movements can inspire rapid progress and innovation. No group combines these two aspects of the ideology more flamboyantly than the Wayfarer Cirquelistes, a group of acrobatic performers in a traveling circus who can use their movement to fuel magic, with a particular penchant for teleportation.

Prerequisite: Brook No Delay feat, proficiency in Acrobatics, Arcana, and Athletics, must have trained with the Wayfarers Cirque, character level 7th

Features

Hit Dice: 1d8 per wayfarer cirqueliste level.

Hit Points: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per wayfarer cirqueliste level.

Wayfarer's Athleticism (1st level). You can double your proficiency bonus when making Acrobatics and Athletics checks. Your base speed increases by 5 feet.

Wayfarer's Kineticism (1st level). You can create and empower magic through movement.

Whenever you move at least 20 feet on your turn, you gain a "step" of power. If you move more than your speed on your turn (such as by taking the Dash action or flinging yourself with a trebuchet), you gain an additional step of power. This gathered power lasts until you spend it or until you finish your turn and have not moved at least 20 feet, and you can have up to a maximum of three steps of power stored at a time.

Holding this power over a long period of time is perilous, so you only gather steps of power when you are clearly in danger. You start each encounter with zero steps of power, even if you were moving just before the encounter begins.

You can spend steps in the following ways.

- Without using an action, spend one step to gain the effects of *freedom of movement* until the end of your next turn.
- Without using an action, when you are endangered by something triggered by your movement like a trap or hazard, spend one step to gain advantage on a Dexterity saving throw or impose disadvantage on an attack roll against you.
- Spend one step to cast *misty step* as an action, or two steps to cast it as a bonus action. Instead of being transported in silvery mist, however, your departure and arrival points are marked with a harmless burst of flame that lingers in the shape of your body. Often cirquelistes will teleport in the middle of acrobatic flips, appreciating the aesthetic of leaving dramatic flaming afterimages of their movement.
- When you or an ally you can see casts a spell, spend two steps to modify that spell with one of the following sorcerer Metamagic abilities: distant, empowered, or extended. You can use your Dexterity modifier in place of your Charisma modifier for this effect.

Wayfarer's Leap (1st level). You can cast *dimension door*. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

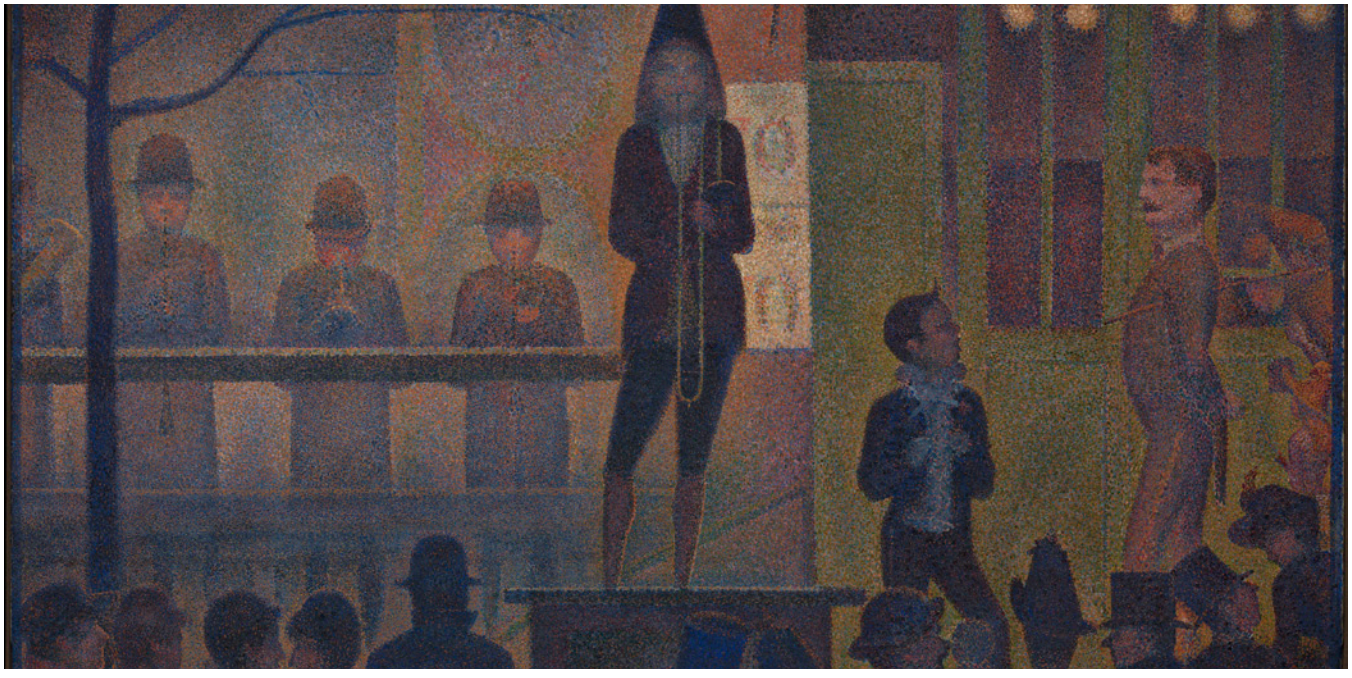
Nomadic Strike (2nd level). When you teleport within 5 feet of a creature, the first attack you make against that creature before the end of your current turn has advantage.

Sense Teleportation (2nd level). You are aware whenever a creature within 150 feet arrives or departs using teleportation, and you know the distance and direction to their origin and destination.

Wayfarer Guide (2nd level). Whenever you use an ability that lets you teleport, you can bring three extra creatures within 20 feet of you along with you, even if the ability normally only teleports you, such as *misty step*. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Grand Journey (3rd level). You can cast *teleportation circle*. After you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest. When you gain this ability, the wayfarers typically share their full collection of sigil sequences.

Ready to Move (3rd level). You start each encounter with one "step" charged up.



CHAPTER SEVEN
A MODERN MENAGERIE

Firearms, new technology, and military tactics have changed the nature of conflict, but perhaps the deepest change is people's awareness of legends and events from far-flung lands.

Journalism, ceraunic telegraphy, and scientific studies of the heavens above have filled people's minds with new things to fear, and new potential foes to test themselves against.

In this section, you'll find stats and information on the following creatures.

- Members of three prominent criminal syndicates.
- Various government police and military forces.
- The dread borenbog, the legendary mythical ten-headed lions of Elfaivar, and other deadly and beautiful fey.
- Technological terrors like piloted steamsuits and the BEAR—Battle Enhanced Animalistic Replicant.
- Creatures produced by forbidden witchoil experiments.
- Mysterious creatures of psychic power called noetic entities, including the infamous malice beasts.

Arctech

Arcanotechnology has allowed industry to produce machines with powers like the greatest warriors and deadliest monsters. Such machines are still relatively rare and expensive, mostly the purview of elite military units and a few masterful inventors.

BEAR—Battle Enhanced Animalistic Replicant

The first BEAR prototype was built by Pemberton Industries before the Great Eclipse, using the most advanced arcanotechnological circuits and divinatory analytical matrices available at the time. It was a novelty back then, good for a few laughs from an audience of amused investors and arena spectators. There was no way that a goofy, bear-shaped machine with claws and rocket-thrusters could ever represent the battlefield of the future, right?

The development of the wayfarer's engine has allowed the creation of significantly more cost-effective BEARs than ever before. The bodies of these constructs are steel integrated with rocky earth-aspected and mirror-like life-aspected planarite, while its armaments are similar to arcane fusils but charged with coherent thunder air planarite. The BEAR is not the most powerful construct around, but it is among the most cost-effective, beaten in that field only by the highly contraband witchoil guardians.

In Ber, these constructs are mostly used for defending important buildings, with a handful of goliath military units training alongside them. However, the BEAR design has leaked out of Pemberton Industries, inspiring copycat constructs all over Lanjyr. A few of these intimidating constructs have been deployed to control riots in Drakr, as their brutality and implacability means for most protesters, resisting it is suicidal.

While these constructs were first crafted to resemble brown bears on all fours, successive generations have since been made more compact and reminiscent of black bears. Subsequent batches are molded to resemble all manner of wingless quadrupeds of roughly similar size and natural weapons: boars, deers, hyenas, jaguars, panthers, wolves, ambush drakes, and even basilisks. Some are enhanced with illusions to make them resemble living creatures.

Technological Weaknesses

Many creatures in this bestiary possess an entry for a Technological Weakness, with a skill and a DC listed in parentheses. Whenever the party encounters such a creature, each character who is proficient in the listed skill knows that the creature has a weakness, but figuring it out requires a moment. That character may spend a bonus action to make the listed check. If they succeed, they learn the details of the weakness. If they fail, they can try again.

Our intent is to create more opportunities for adventurers to win a battle with their wits, and to reward PCs deploying some atypical tactics.

BEAR Challenge 10
Medium construct (5,900 XP)

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
HP 123 (13d8 + 65)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Proficiency +4; **Maneuver DC** 17
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +6, Perception +9, Stealth +13
Saving Throws CON +10, WIS +5
Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, fatigued, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak, aside from a few prerecorded lines, usually ordering compliance

TRAITS

Magic Capacitor. ***Its eyes turn a deeper shade of red, and it lets loose a pre-recorded growl. Electricity begins to course along the gaps and cracks of the bestial machine's steel plating.*** The BEAR has an internal adaptive capacitor which can hold one charge. When the BEAR fails a saving throw against a spell and other magical effect, it can choose to absorb the magic, gain a charge, and instead succeed the saving throw. The BEAR can expend this charge to activate certain bonus actions, but until it does it cannot use this trait again.

Magic Weapons. The BEAR's weapon attacks are magical.

Merciful Wind. ***The disciplined winds of Caeloon allow the BEAR to cushion its blows with layers of magical wind and fire bullets of compressed air.*** When the BEAR reduces a creature to 0 HP, it can choose to knock the creature out, leaving it unconscious and stable.

Unyielding. ***Pale white glyphs flicker across its armor plating.*** The BEAR cannot be pushed, pulled, or affected by teleportation or planar travel unless it wishes to be.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The BEAR makes two attacks.

Maul. ***The machine claws and bites.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (5d12 + 5) piercing damage.

Integrated Semi-Automatic Firearm. ***A turret springs up from the quadrupedal construct's back and takes aim with terrifying speed.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (5d12 + 5) piercing damage.

Ground Pound (Recharge 5–6). The BEAR Disengages, then jumps up to 30 feet. Each Large or smaller creature of the BEAR's choice within 5 feet of it must succeed a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and take 37 (5d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, and it is not knocked prone.

Precision Targeting (Recharge 5–6). ***The BEAR's integrated firearm cycles across a series of designated threats with inexorable accuracy.*** The BEAR chooses any number of creatures within a 30-foot cone. Each of those creatures must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 37 (5d12 + 5) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

BONUS ACTIONS

Overclock. ***With a high-pitched whine, the steel beast powers up.*** The BEAR expends the charge of its capacitor; it recharges Ground Pound and Precision Targeting, it has advantage on attack rolls until the start of its next turn, creatures have disadvantage on saving throws against its abilities, and it deals 2 (1d4) extra lightning damage whenever it deals damage to a creature.

Thrusters. ***With a mechanical clank and a small burst of rocket-flame, the steel beast leaps skyward.*** The BEAR expends the charge of its capacitor and flies 60 feet; it can hover until the start of its next turn.

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESS

Precarious Complexity (Engineering DC 14). ***The construct combines many different types of planarite, and sometimes they are incompatible with each other's energies.*** At the start of the BEAR's turn, if it took damage from four or more types since the start of its previous turn, it seizes briefly. Its capacitor loses its charge and ceases to function for one hour, and the BEAR cannot use any of its recharge abilities this turn.



Brass Men

Risuri soldiers who served in the Fourth Yerasol War tell ghost stories of men made of brass who fought alongside them, voiceless, but possessed of unsettling awareness. Implacable and nearly impervious to most weapons, they were also slow and had poor aim.

The usual tales involves sailing to war beside a friend with some memorable quirk, losing the friend in battle, then weeks later being saved by a lance of these brass men—never more than six—led by a live officer. The officer demands they tell no one of the strange mechanical warriors, then orders the lance to move out. But before leaving, one of the brass men nods to the storyteller and performs the same quirk their friend always did.

The Risuri government claims it undertook a formal inquiry into these stories and determined the constructs were the creation of a lone wizard whose name has not been revealed. However, sightings continue around the world, and recently a ranger of the Titan Conclave reported seeing a lance of these same brass men marching toward the ancient ziggurat in the Antwalk Thicket near Bole.

Brass Man Challenge 3
Medium construct (450 XP)

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
HP 36 (8d8)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 14
Saving Throws see Shared Will and Peer Pressure
Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities fatigued, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 feet, passive Perception 12
Languages understands Common and Primordial but can't speak

TRAITS

Aligned Senses. Increase the passive Perception of all brass men within 3 miles of each other by +1 for each brass man after the first.

Coordinated Tactics. Roll once for the initiative count of all the brass men; they all act simultaneously. Each can move independently but must take the same action; if a given brass man cannot take the same action as its peers, it takes no action. Likewise, they must take the same bonus action (typically to reload their muskets). Brass men cannot take reactions.

Shared Will. Brass men have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws. See also Peer Pressure.

ACTIONS

Metal Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Musket. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit; range 60/180, one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) piercing damage. *Special:* The brass man (and all its peers) must use an action or bonus action to reload its weapon, so cannot attack with it more than once per turn. If the brass man rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll with the musket, the barrel is fouled, causing future attacks to have disadvantage until the brass man spends an action to clear the barrel (but see Coordinated Tactics). Rolling a natural 1 on an attack roll with a fouled barrel causes the weapon to explode, dealing 9 (2d8) damage to the brass man.

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESS

Peer Pressure (Insight DC 12). ***Their movements are so synchronized, it's like they share one mind.*** If the brass man fails an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, the consequence also affects all of its peers within 3 miles.

Military Steamsuit

Danor invented the military steamsuit, but the Orithean Concordat forced them to send hundreds to other nations' militaries. Not many soldiers are technologically adept enough to keep the suit's engine stable in combat, so a steamsuit pilot holds a position of prestige. Most customize their suits with various mundane weapons and items that are stored in internal components.



Armor Class 18 (powered armor)
HP 90 (12d10+24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 17
Saving Throws INT +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 5
Languages Common

TRAITS

Piloted Vehicle. These stats represent the pilot in the suit and the abilities the suit grants them. Reducing the pilot to 0 HP does not destroy the suit any more than an unconscious knight's full plate would cease to work.

If another creature enters the suit, it gains a Strength of 23, can attack with the suit's weapons and use its bonus actions, and treats it as heavy armor that grants AC 18. The creature gains darkvision 60 ft, but disadvantage on Perception checks.

However, because the controls of the suit are complex, only the pilot who trained with the suit knows how to pilot it well. Anyone else must make a DC 15 Intelligence (Engineering) check each turn or else be restrained and unable to use any of the suit's abilities until the start of their next turn.

Though they seldom need to, the pilot can exit as a bonus action, emerging in an adjacent space. For a "standard" pilot, this reduces the pilot's AC to 15 and size to Medium, and they can use none of their abilities except to multiattack with unarmed strike.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pilot makes two attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *The pilot without the suit has moxie, but not much power. Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Piston Fist. *A moment after the metal fist strikes, a burst of steam launches it like a piston hammer for a second hit. Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) bludgeoning damage and the target is pushed 10 feet unless it succeeds a DC 15 Strength saving throw.

Heavy Shotgun (2/Encounter). *A cover on its other arm conceals a massive double-barreled shotgun. Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit; range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d8+3) piercing damage. *Special:* If the attack has advantage and both rolls hit, it deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage. If the attack has disadvantage and at least one roll hits, the graze still deals 4 (1d8) damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Arcane Shield. *A dome on its head flashes, and a faintly visible aura extends twenty feet from it.* The pilot chooses a damage type. Until the end of its next turn, the suit and creatures within 20 feet have resistance to that damage type. The pilot can start encounters with a resistance already active (usually piercing).

Dazing Light. *An integrated launcher in its shoulder chucks a vial that shatters and releases a blinding blast of light.* The pilot picks a spot within 30 feet. Each creature within 10 feet of that spot is blinded unless it succeeds a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature blinded this way can make a new saving throw at the end of its turn to end this effect. *Special:* The pilot is wearing goggles and has advantage on this saving throw.

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESS

Reverse the Deflector Shield Polarity (Engineering DC 13). *When the suit's arcane aura switches, the dome on its head rotates and snaps to a precise angle, suggesting physical alignment affects how the shield works.* A character who successfully Shoves the pilot can, instead of moving the suit, disrupt the arcane shield by rotating the dome on the suit's head. The pilot cannot use Arcane Shield on their next turn, and until they use arcane shield, the pilot instead has vulnerability to the last chosen damage type instead of resistance.

Ran's Cachean Elephant

During the two Victories, Elfaivar marched to war with great elephants which had their flesh threaded with ribbons of cacheum, golden planarite that originated from Urim. The skill needed to grow and train these warbeasts faded in the centuries after the Great Malice, but several gulmohar have revived the art.

Though lacking any gears or steam, cachean beasts are arctech of a sort, and the techniques have only improved with modern understanding of planarite and animal physiology. In addition to the defensive and disruptive benefits of golden cacheum, these newly bred war elephants shimmer with white galelite gemstones pressed into their hide in floral patterns, and the tips of their tusks are stained saffron red with dried scabosine. The animals are quite intelligent, trained from a young age to intuitively control their magical powers, and to understand their preternatural strength.



Ran's Cachean Elephant Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)
Huge monstrosity

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
HP 119 (14d10+42)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (–1)	16 (+3)	5 (–3)	11 (+0)	6 (–2)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 17
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages understand Elvish

TRAITS

Golden Gravity. *You see yourself reflected in the metal woven through the creature's limbs, and your own limbs feel heavy.* Hostile creatures that start their turn or move within 10 feet of the elephant must succeed a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or else have their speed reduced to 0 and be unable to teleport until the start of their next turn.

Trampling Charge. If the elephant moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the elephant can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8+6) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit; reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10+6) bludgeoning damage.

Farslayer Tusks. *The saffron stain on its tusks darkens as if wet with blood, and you feel yourself impaled.* The elephant chooses a creature within 150 feet. That creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. It takes 19 (3d8+6) piercing damage, or half as much on a successful save.

REACTIONS

Gale Shield. *Wind catches incoming projectiles and flings them away.* When a creature hits the elephant or a creature adjacent to it with a ranged weapon attack, the elephant can use its reaction to reduce the damage by 1d10 + 12. If this causes the attack to deal no damage, the elephant can immediately make the following attack with the weapon. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit; range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d12–1) damage—type varies.

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESS

Reject Graft (Medicine DC 13). *All those components aren't natural to its body, and healing would treat them as foreign.* When magic heals any of the elephant's hit point damage, choose one of the following abilities, which stops working until the elephant completes a long rest: Damage Resistance, Farslayer Tusks, or Gale Shield.

Crooks

The three prominent criminal syndicates in Lanjyr each attract a distinct class of crook.

Family Bravura

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 12 (studded leather or light defensive stance [Sartorial Defense variant rule])

HP 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, others vary

TRAITS

Part of the Family. ***Your attack knocks the criminal to the ground, but before they lose consciousness they reach out for help toward one of their allies. That ally's expression burns with vengeance.*** When an attack reduces the bravura to 0 HP, one allied creature with this same ability can use its reaction to move its speed, then can make an attack against the creature that knocked the bravura out.

ACTIONS

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit; range 20/60; one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage. *Special:* The weapon misfires on a natural 1. Reloading requires an action or bonus action.

Kuchnost Strangler

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 12 (studded leather or light defensive stance [Sartorial Defense variant rule])

HP 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Dwarvish, others vary

TRAITS

Close Quarters Combat. ***You overcommit on a swing, and he shoves you so that you slice yourself with your own blade.*** Whenever an adjacent creature misses with an attack against the strangler when they had disadvantage on their attack roll, the strangler can use its reaction to make the attacker deal 2 (1d4) damage to itself, using its own weapon.

ACTIONS

Knife. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Strangle. The strangler Grabs a creature. If it succeeds, the target takes 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage. While grabbed, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against the strangler.

Family Capodecina

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 13 (studded leather or light defensive stance [Sartorial Defense variant rule])

HP 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11

Skills Intimidation +4, Perception +2, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, others vary

TRAITS

Part of the Family. When an attack reduces the capo to 0 HP, one allied creature with this same ability can use its reaction to move its speed, then can make an attack against the creature that knocked the capo out.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn the capo can deal an extra 10 (3d6) to one creature it hits with an attack if it has advantage on the attack roll. It doesn't need advantage if one of the capo's allies is adjacent to the target, as long as the capo doesn't have disadvantage on the attack.

ACTIONS

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Disappear in a Crowd. If the capo has two enemies within 10 feet, it makes a Stealth check to hide against them. Then it can either Dash or use Short Sword.

REACTIONS

Sly Maneuver. When a creature attacks the capodecina, if the capo is adjacent to any creatures other than the attacker, the attacker makes a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13). If it fails, the attack targets one of those other creatures instead. If there's more than one, the capo decides who is hit.

BONUS ACTIONS

Sudden Disappearance (1/Encounter). ***He snaps his fingers, and his whole gang disappears. You hear a scramble of feet as they move to flank you.*** The capo and each ally within 20 feet turns invisible until the start of the capo's next turn. If one of those creatures attacks, the invisibility ends for that creature.



Kuchnost Negotiator
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 13 (studded leather or light defensive stance [Sartorial Defense variant rule])
HP 39 (6d8+12)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11
Skills Deception +4, Intimidation +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Dwarvish, others vary

TRAITS

Close Quarters Combat. As Kuchnost Strangler, above.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The negotiator makes two attacks.

Dirty Fighting. ***He smashes your face with his shotgun and spits in your eyes.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, and the target makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 13). If it fails, it's blind until the start of the negotiator's next turn.

Shotgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; range 30/90; one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage. *Special:* The weapon misfires on a natural 1. Reloading requires an action or bonus action. The weapon has scatter. If the attack has advantage and both rolls hit, it deals an extra 6 (1d10) damage. If it has disadvantage and hits with at least one, the graze still deals 2 (1d4) damage.

Fight Amongst Yourselves (Recharge 5–6). ***He moans a spell and points an open-palmed hand at your head, and you hear a voice snarling in your ear for you to turn on your friend.*** The negotiator chooses a spot within 30 feet. Each enemy within 10 feet of that spot makes a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13). If it fails, it is goaded for one minute. While goaded, it has disadvantage on attack rolls except against its own allies. This effect ends immediately if it deals damage to an ally.

Last Raven Fetch
Challenge ⅛ (25 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 12
HP 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 12
Skills Arcana +4, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Primordial, others vary

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit; reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Raven's Perch (1/Day). ***She whispers, one hand tucked out of sight, and then a raven screeches in your ear and begins to claw at your face and hair.*** The fetch chooses a creature within 30 feet. That creature is grabbed by a summoned shadowy raven. The raven's grab automatically persists until it dies or is removed, at which point it disappears.

The raven has 1 hit point, AC 12, a Maneuver DC of 12, an Athletics check bonus of +4, and otherwise has a +0 bonus on all die rolls. It can grab creatures as if it were Medium size. On the Fetch's turn it can have the raven fly with speed 20, potentially dragging or even flying off with the creature it has grabbed.

BONUS ACTIONS

Raven's Hex (1/Day). The fetch casts *hex* on a target she can see within 90 feet, which lasts up to 1 hour or as long as the fetch concentrates on it. Until the spell ends, the fetch deals an extra 3 (1d6) necrotic damage to any target it hits with an attack. The fetch chooses one ability: the target has disadvantage on ability checks made with the chosen ability. If the target drops to 0 HP before this spell ends, the fetch can use a bonus action on a subsequent turn to curse a new creature.

Last Raven Rooker
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 15 (mage armor)
HP 36 (8d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 12
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Primordial, others vary

ACTIONS

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Swooping Familiar. ***An eerie whistle sounds from the shadows, and a construct with blade-like wings flashes through the air, striking several targets one by one.*** The rooker chooses a path up to 120 feet long, which starts at her space and then returns to her. Her familiar flies that route and makes the following attack against up to three targets along the path. The flight doesn't provoke opportunity attacks, and the familiar cannot be attacked separately. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, one to three targets. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage. *Special:* If the Rooker is hidden when she makes these attacks, the attack does not reveal her location, though people can possibly guess based on the path of the familiar's flight.

Curse of the Mage's Shadow (1/Day). ***You feel a chill across your body, and notice that your shadow seems to be trying to pull away from you.*** The rooker chooses a creature within 30 feet that she has cast hex on. As long as the creature remains hexed, whenever it attempts to cast a spell or use an ability that matches a spell, it makes an opposed Intelligence (Arcana) check against the rooker. If it fails, that creature's spell has no effect, and the rooker can use her reaction to cast the spell.

BONUS ACTIONS

Raven's Hex (1/Day). The rooker casts *hex* on a target it can see within 90 feet, which lasts up to 1 hour or as long as the rooker concentrates on it. Until the spell ends, the rooker deals an extra 3 (1d6) necrotic damage to any target it hits with an attack. The rooker chooses one ability: the target has disadvantage on ability checks made with the chosen ability. If the target drops to 0 HP before this spell ends, the rooker can use a bonus action on a subsequent turn to curse a new creature.

Government Forces

Police and military units are much the same in any nation.

Police Officer

Challenge ⅛ (25 XP)

Medium humanoid (any species)

Armor Class 12 (studded leather or light defensive stance [Sartorial Defense variant rule])

HP 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11

Skills Intimidation +2, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages varies

Equipment uniform, badge, whistle, hand-cuffs

TRAITS

Home Advantage. Due to familiarity with their home community, the officer can use their reaction when targeted by a ranged or area attack to move 5 feet or to drop prone, which might grant them cover against the attack.

ACTIONS

Billy Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit; range 20/60; one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage. *Special:* The weapon misfires on a natural 1. Reloading requires an action or bonus action.

Police Squad

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Large swarm of Medium humanoids (unit)

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)

HP 50

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 11

Senses passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Fighting Unit. The unit consists of 10 officers working in tandem, filling the space of a single Large creature. Enemies treat spaces within 5 feet of the unit as difficult terrain. The unit can make up to four opportunity attacks per round without using its reaction.

Attacks that affect an area deal double damage to the unit if they include 2 spaces of the unit, or triple if they include the unit's entire space.

Non-damaging effects that target only a single creature (such as the poisoned effect of *ray of sickness*) usually have no effect on the unit. The Narrator should use their best judgment when adjudicating such effects.

Damage to the unit wounds individuals and weakens unit cohesion. Defeated soldiers typically are back in fighting shape after a day's rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The police squad cluster makes two attacks.

Subdue with Clubs. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit; range 20/60; one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage. *Special:* There are enough pistols that misfires and reloading don't matter.



Military Troop

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Huge swarm of Medium humanoids (unit)

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

HP 125

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 13

Senses passive Perception 17

TRAITS

Fighting Unit. The unit consists of 25 officers working in tandem, filling the space of a single Huge creature. Enemies treat spaces within 5 feet of the unit as difficult terrain. The unit can make up to four opportunity attacks per round without using its reaction.

Attacks that affect an area deal double damage to the unit if they include 2 spaces of the unit, or triple if they include the unit's entire space.

Non-damaging effects that target only a single creature (such as the poisoned effect of *ray of sickness*) usually have no effect on the unit. The Narrator should use their best judgment when adjudicating such effects.

Damage to the unit wounds individual soldiers and weakens unit cohesion. Defeated soldiers typically are back in fighting shape after a day's rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The military troop makes four attacks. (The unit's attacks include a +2 bonus to represent the benefits of teamwork and spotting.)

Blades and Bludgeons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage.

Muskets. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit; range 60/180; one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8+1) piercing damage. *Special:* There are enough muskets that misfires and reloading don't matter.

Fey

Strange fey are common and often welcome in Risur, and Elfaivarans boast of their fey-conjured warbeasts. Other countries seldom see more than a few pixies and sprites.

Rangales

One of the most refined fey in Risur are the rangale—human-faced elks, stags, and gazelles who have no arms, but instead telekinetically control hovering spears or other weapons. More than mere warriors, they have a knack not only for moving things from afar, but also for seeing things, even knowing people's secrets. Many serve as guards of the Unseen Court, and when an interloper earns their ire, rangales like to toy with them from afar, watching them with magic, reading their thoughts, and taunting them with whispers that come from nowhere.

Rangales pride themselves on their fastidiousness. Stories emphasize that they learn all manner of gossip and secrets to leverage other fey into doing undesirable deeds for them. As the joke goes, they don't like to get their hands dirty.

Rangale Challenge 8
Large fey (3,900 XP)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
HP 119 (14d10+42)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 17
Skills Insight +8, Intimidation +4, Nature +4, Perception +5, Persuasion +4, Survival +8
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Elvish, Primordial, Sylvan
Equipment spear of living wood, longbow of deer antlers, rope woven from the hair of two lovers, chalk, charcoal, and a bag of cherries

TRAITS

Hands-Off. The rangale cannot be disarmed, as it does not need limbs to wield its weapons.
Innate Magic. The rangale can cast the following spells at-will: *clairvoyance*, *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *message*, and *telekinesis*. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom, and its spell save DC is 13.
Overbearing Watch. The rangale can spend a bonus action to magically mark a foe within 90 feet for one hour. Its attacks against that target deal an extra 1d6 damage, it has advantage on Wisdom checks to find it, and it can cast any of its other innate spells to target that creature from any range. If it uses this ability again, the previous mark lapses.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rangale attacks three times.
Spear. Melee/*Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit; reach 15 ft. or range 20/60; one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+6) piercing damage.
Retrieving Bow. ***Its arrow digs deep where it strikes, then flies back to the rangale, drawing you with it.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit; range 150/600; one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+3) piercing damage. The rangale pulls the target up to 50 ft. If the creature succeeds a DC 13 Strength saving throw, the rangale can only pull the target 10 ft.



The Borenbog

The Borenbog is an obscure folk terror from the High Bayou, which can steal men's will, passion, and creativity, which it stores in a gourd at its hip. Though only the size of a dwarf, its stupefying presence affects a vast area. None have managed to kill it, for it is said that no given weapon can ever harm it twice, and most challengers run out of ideas of how to attack it before it will die. It drinks more than a horse, belches, farts, and is all around an unpleasant boor.

Matching his dull demeanor, the Borenbog has the ability to strip men of their passion and creativity. Those who drink are particularly vulnerable, and over the centuries many a drunken poet has been warned to watch out for the Borenbog on his walk home after a long night of seeking his muse. Tales say that the stolen ideas are trapped in the creature's gourd, and that by drinking from the gourd another creature can take those ideas for himself.

Some say that the Borenbog and his rotting swamp first held the secret of fermentation, which was stolen by dwarves, men, elves, or whoever is telling the tale. It is for this reason that the Borenbog hates civilization, and terrorizes anyone he comes across who has alcohol.

The legend of the Borenbog tells of a group of fishermen who brought beer to drink when they rowed out into a swamp to fish. The Borenbog, smelling the delicious alcohol, used his magic to daze the fishermen, then climbed aboard the boat and drank himself into a stupor. Finally, the only drink left on the boat was a gourd of beer one of the fishermen was holding, but when the Borenbog tried to take it, the man was too stubborn to let go, so the Borenbog took the fisherman's knife and chopped off the man's hand. The pain snapped him out of his confusion and he managed to swim away, but his companions were never found.

(The Borenbog could have been a Legendary monster, but it is too lazy to act on another creature's turn. It will just blow a raspberry in boredom as its foes waste their time trying to hurt it.)

The Dread Borenbog
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Medium fey

Hunched like a dwarf with a hangover, this squat, wart-skinned goblinlike creature has a vindictive disdain in his red eyes, and he slowly licks his lips with thirst. One of the creature's hands tightly clenches a large sloshing gourd, while the other errantly twirls a long blade meant for gutting fish. The blade is rusted and blood-stained, perhaps from the severed hands hanging at the creature's belt. The creature meets your eyes and sneers, and the world begins to turn dull and hazy.

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
HP 264 (23d8+161)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (–1)	24 (+7)	6 (–2)	9 (–1)	5 (–3)

Proficiency +5; **Maneuver DC** 18
Skills Intimidation +7, Survival +9
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Goblin, Primordial
Equipment fishguttin' knife, borenbog's gourd

TRAITS

Alcohol Sense. The Borenbog can use an action to sense the direction to the nearest source of alcohol within 1 mile.

Lucky Hands (2/day). ***After your attack, the Borenbog spits in anger and rips one free one of the severed hands tacked to its belt. That seems to help it recover from the injury.*** The Borenbog begins combat with two severed hands tacked to its belt. It might add more if it succeeds with its Take Hand feature, to a maximum of six. When it fails a saving throw or ability check, the Borenbog can rip one of the hands free (this requires no action) to reroll.

Magic Resistance. The Borenbog has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Quick Swig (2/short rest). The Borenbog uses a bonus action to drink from its magical gourd. The gourd (AC 18, 50 HP, resistance to bludgeoning damage) is attached to a knotty leather cord around the Borenbog's neck. If the gourd is taken, the Borenbog cannot use this trait and does everything in its power to both get the gourd back and kill the bastard who tried to take it. When it drinks, the Borenbog gains one of the following benefits of its choice:

- *Giant's Draught:* The Borenbog becomes Huge size, deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage with all melee weapon attacks, and on a successful melee attack it can choose to push its target 15 feet away.
- *Bayou Brew:* All ground within the area of the Borenbog's Stupefy Aura becomes swampy, transforming from hard surfaces into waterlogged spiderwebs and tangled roots suffused with negative energies. All other creatures treat the area as difficult terrain, taking 17 (5d6) necrotic damage at the end of their turn if they are in contact with the floor.

Redundant Defense. Any attack made against the Borenbog has no effect if the same type of weapon, energy type, or specific spell affected it in the past 24 hours. For example, only one attack with a longsword can harm it per day, even if one is steel and one is silver. You should use your best judgment for attacks that don't use weapons or energy damage. When the Borenbog takes ongoing damage, once that ongoing damage ends it cannot suffer that same type of ongoing damage for 24 hours.

Stupefying Aura. ***The mere sight of the glowering fey makes life seem dull and uninteresting.*** Hostile creatures entering or starting their turn within a 40-foot radius of the Borenbog must make a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or be stupefied for one round. A stupefied creature can only use an action or bonus action each round (not both) and can only move at half speed. In addition, the only actions it can take are very uncreative like walking, making basic attacks, or casting cantrips. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw against this aura becomes immune to its effects for 24 hours.

When the Borenbog is reduced below half of its HP for the first time in a day, the aura surges with power. Creatures previously immune to the aura are subject to its effects again until they successfully save a second time.

Take Hand. ***It grabs your hand, then hacks it off at the wrist with two inept, brutal chops. He laughs. "At least yer good for sum'n."*** If the Borenbog hits a stupefied creature twice in the same turn with its gutting knife, the Borenbog also cuts off one of the target's hands, impaling it onto a nail on the Borenbog's belt and increasing the uses of the Lucky Hands trait. A creature that loses its hand becomes immune to the Borenbog's stupefying aura, even after the trait resurges. The victim bleeds, taking damage equal to its level or challenge at the end of each of its turns. The bleeding ends if it receives magical healing, or if someone makes a DC 15 Medicine check as an action to stanch the wound.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Borenbog attacks four times: three times with Gutting Knife and once with either Slam or Entangling Spit.

Gutting Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit; reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit; reach 5 ft.; one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (Escape DC 18).

Entangling Spit. The Borenbog spits a glob of black saliva at a creature it can see within 150 feet. The target makes a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or takes 17 (5d6) acid damage and is restrained (Escape DC 18). At the start of its turn, a creature restrained by Entangling Spit takes 17 (5d6) acid damage.

Bleak Court Beasts

The Bleak Court are Risuri fey who were exiled to the Bleak Gate. Presented below are two examples of bleak courtiers of merely bestial intellect.

The **serpent-maned lion** is a mutation of common Dreaming cats. Serpent-maned lions look disturbing and menacing enough to be mistaken for undead, and some characterize them as inherently evil, but in truth, they are flesh-and-blood carnivores simply looking for their next meal in the nigh-empty Bleak Gate. The lionesses have no serpent-manes; instead, a lioness's tail is simply one very large serpent, no less deadly.

The **shadowlisk** is a dark evolution of the basilisks of the Dreaming. Hunting from the liminal spaces of light and darkness, a shadowlisk directly consumes minds and souls; in doing so, the creature prefers to first obliterate the body.

Immense bounties are placed on live shadowlisks for their subterfuge-obliterating and prisoner-containing gazes, and various powerful organizations look to tame these reptiles for supremely discerning security checkpoints.

Serpent-Maned Lion

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Large fey

Armor Class 12
HP 60 (8d10 + 16)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 14
Saving Throws CON +4, WIS +3
Skills Athletics +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands Primordial and Sylvan but can't speak

TRAITS

Abnegation (1/Encounter). If the lion fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead. Alternatively, it can expend this feature to safely pass through conjurations and evocations until the end of its next turn.

Crepusculous and Adumbral. ***Though clearly a beast of flesh and blood, the edges of its body drift away in wisps of shadow.*** The lion has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Its weapon attacks are magical. Magical darkness doesn't impede its darkvision. While the lion has 30 or fewer HP, magical darkness (as the spell *darkness*) seeps from its body in a 15-foot radius that moves with it.

Crown of Asps. ***A writhing mass of flicking tongues and venom-slick fangs frame its fierce visage. The many ophidian heads' mesmerizing motions disorient you.*** The lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the lion can long jump up to 25 ft.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lion makes two attacks: one Claw and one Flurry of Serpents.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) slashing damage.

Flurry of Serpents. ***Countless serpents in the lion's mane bare their fangs and strike.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d6) poison damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Cacophonous Roar (1/Encounter). ***The lion roars, and the air is filled with a chorus of wails, shrieks, and hisses from all manner of beings of the Bleak Gate.*** Each creature of the lion's choice that is within 500 feet and able to hear it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is also paralyzed for the same duration. Creatures in darkness have disadvantage on this saving throw. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Shadowlisk

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Large fey

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
HP 92 (8d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Proficiency +4; **Maneuver DC** 17
Saving Throws DEX +9, CON +10, INT +2, WIS +5
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +9, Stealth +13
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing while at least part of the shadowlisk is in dim light or darkness; necrotic
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages understands Primordial and Sylvan but can't speak

TRAITS

Abnegation (1/Encounter). If the shadowlisk fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead. Alternatively, it can expend this feature to safely pass through conjurations and evocations until the end of its next turn.

Crepusculous and Adumbral. The shadowlisk has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Its weapon attacks are magical. Magical darkness doesn't impede its darkvision. While the lion has 30 or fewer HP, magical darkness (as the spell *darkness*) seeps from its body in a 15-foot radius that moves with it.

Amorphous. ***A dark form slithers toward you, like a snake massive enough to swallow a man whole. The moment it touches light, its body explodes into vivid color, its clawed legs reach forward, and its massive eyes begin to glow. It's difficult to look away.*** The shadowlisk can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Mirage Bane. Any creature that ends its turn in the shadowlisk's line of sight and within 120 feet has its true form revealed, ignoring any illusions or transmutations. Magical effects are not dispelled or suppressed, simply seen through.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. ***It swipes at you, dances sideways in a dexterous coil of motion, then snaps its beak into your thigh.*** The shadowlisk chooses one of the following:

- It makes two attacks—Claw and then Beak—and can use Gloaming Leap before, between, or after the attacks.
- It makes a Claw attack, then uses Umbrafying Gaze.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (9d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 38 (6d10 + 5) piercing damage. If then Shoves the target, trying to knock it prone.

Gloaming Leap. ***It sinks into its own shadow and vanishes. But you are too close, and your shadow is entangled with its, pulling you along.*** The shadowlisk magically teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. The shadowlisk cannot use this ability if its current location or destination are entirely brightly illuminated. When the shadowlisk teleports, any creature that is prone and within 5 feet of it also teleports, arriving in an unoccupied space next to the monster.

Umbrafying Gaze. ***Its eyes flash with the light of twin suns, obliterating your body and burning your mind and soul into the very ground you once stood upon.*** The shadowlisk magically focuses the light from its eyes in a path that is 25 feet long and 5 feet wide. Creatures in the path must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw,



taking 38 (5d12 + 6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. A creature reduced to 0 HP by this damage is annihilated as its body burns away and its mind and soul are imprinted on the closest surface as a shadowy silhouette, suitable for consumption by shadowlisks. While it is annihilated in this way, a creature can perceive its immediate surroundings, but is incapacitated and stunned and cannot communicate.

If a different creature coats its hands with the blood of a shadowlisk, it can touch the mind and soul of a creature that has been annihilated within the last day and restore its body as an action. A creature restored in this way is alive and stable, with 0 HP.

REACTIONS

Obtenebrating Escape (1/Encounter). If the shadowlisk would take damage, it uses Gloaming Leap. The shadowlisk does not suffer the triggering damage or any effects attached to it. The area within 5 feet of the space it teleports to is covered in magical darkness until the end of the shadowlisk's next turn.

Ten-Headed Lion

Old Elfaivar's magics were the mightiest in the world; after the empire collapsed, each individual enclave matriarch had access to more magical assets than any wizard had before. To defend their hidden safeholds, the matriarchs worked with wizards and druids to weave the wild possibilities of the Dreaming into mighty guardian beasts. The greatest of these creatures were the ten-headed lions; each head possessed a different terrifying means of attack.

Few actual accounts of travelers surviving these creatures ever reached beyond the borders of Elfaivar, but since the gulmohars' return the elves of Elfaivar have become proud to talk about them, the better to project an air of otherworldly might. It is rumored that gulmohar extremists plan to field one of these ferocious felids in their efforts to reclaim colonial land.

Despite its nine extra heads, however, a ten-headed lion merely has a conventional, if cunning, bestial mind. Its usual tactic is to release its Roiling Flame to force foes off low ground and into trees or atop rocks. With their movement limited, it focuses on subduing one or two enemies with the majority of its floating heads, while using a couple (typically with Paralyzing Hunger and Snarling Hurl) to keep foes from regrouping.

Due to its nature as a creature crafted of the dreams of many Elfaivarans, even if a ten-headed lion is destroyed, as long as at least ten people survive in the community it guards, it will return to life after 1d10 days.

Ten-Headed Lion Challenge 14
Large fey (11,500 XP)

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
HP 126 (11d10 + 66)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Proficiency +5; **Maneuver DC** 18
Skills Athletics +10, Deception +8, Perception +11, Stealth +15
Saving Throws DEX +10, CON +11, INT +3, WIS +6
Damage Immunities fire
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages understands Elvish and Sylvan but can't speak

TRAITS

Dreamborn. The lion doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep. It has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Its attacks are magical. It is aware of the location of each sleeping creature within 1 mile.

Mandala Mane. The lion's regal poise is glorified by an additional nine heads, whirling around the catlike creature in a maned mandala. These additional heads can fly freely within 150 feet of the body. If a head starts its turn farther from the body than 150 feet, it teleports adjacent to the body, or is destroyed if it cannot teleport. Each head is a Small creature with 25 HP. It has the same AC, saves, and immunities as the body, and can take its own reaction (usually to bite as an opportunity attack). However if a damaging source with an area of effect would strike multiple heads simultaneously, the damage is only dealt once and is divided equally among them.

The lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

If the lion has at least 1 HP and starts its turn under any of the above conditions, it can destroy a head of its choice and end all those conditions.

Whenever a head is destroyed, the lion's maximum HP are reduced by 25. The lion restores all of its heads as part of a long rest.

The body can attach itself to one of its heads without an action, at any time, simply by sharing a space. The body can also detach its current head without an action, at any time. It can operate just fine without a head.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lion uses Denarian Dance four times and makes an attack with its claw. If Roiling Flame is available, the lion can use it in place of the claw attack.

Bite (Head Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage. If the target has already been bitten by another head this round, the target is grabbed (Escape DC 19).

Claw (Body Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is grabbed by a head, it is knocked prone unless it succeeds a Strength saving throw (DC 19).

Roiling Flame (Recharges 3 Rounds after Use). ***Flame pours outward from the lion in all directions, rolling across the ground like a wave, yet not a single blade of grass is singed. Every moment the fires grow in intensity.*** The ground within 150 feet of the lion is coated with flames. They linger, filling low elevations but not flowing uphill. Creatures in the area take 11 (2d10) fire damage immediately, as does any creature that enters the area.

At the start of the lion's next turn, the flames grow more intense, dealing 22 (4d10) fire damage immediately and to any creature that enters the area.

At the start of the lion's third turn the flames flash, dealing 44 (8d10) fire damage and then vanishing. At the end of that turn, this power recharges.

Denarian Dance. One of the lion's heads flies up to 80 feet; the lion either makes a Bite attack with that head or uses that head's special action. Once the lion uses a specific head, that head cannot act again until the start of the lion's next turn.

1 Healing Tongue. The head licks wounds upon the lion's body or a bodiless head. The head must be within 5 feet of the recipient. The recipient regains 14 (4d6) HP.

2 Entangling Exhalation. The head exhales hot breath upon the ground, and dense foliage erupts around each creature of its choice in a 20-foot cone. Each creature must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be entangled until the end of its next turn.

3 Terrifying Roar. The head roars at each creature of its choice in a 20-foot cone. Each creature must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. When it succeeds, the fear ends and it becomes immune to this roar for the next day.

4 Petrifying Gaze. The head locks eyes with a creature it can see within 10 feet of it, which must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. A creature may choose to shut its eyes at the start of its turn and keep them shut until the start of its next turn. If it does, the partial petrification ends.

If the creature is already partially petrified and it fails its save against this attack, it is petrified until lion is destroyed or the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

5 Gnashing Dispel. The head gnashes its teeth and uses *dispel magic* with a range of 50 feet. Constitution is its spellcasting ability.

6 Paralyzing Hunger. The head licks its lips at a creature it can see within 10 feet of it, which must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become paralyzed at the start of its next turn. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

7 Venom Fangs. Black ichor coats the fangs of the head as it makes a Bite attack against a creature within reach. If the attack hits, the creature is poisoned. The creature can make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



8 Radiant Beam. Light lances out from the head's gaping mouth. The head makes a ranged spell attack with a +10 attack bonus against a creature within 50 feet. On a hit, the creature takes 14 (4d6) radiant damage and is blinded until the end of its next turn.

9 Steal Voice. The head takes a deep breath, which agonizes the tongue of a creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The creature must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be cursed, unable to speak above a croaking whisper until the curse is removed or the lion is destroyed.

Until the target recovers its voice, all of the lion's heads can perfectly imitate it, and the lion instinctively knows how to use this voice to trick others. Whenever the target casts a spell with a verbal component, it can attempt a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If it fails, it expends the spell slot without casting the spell.

10 Snarling Hurl. The head bares its fangs at a Huge or smaller creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The creature must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be moved up to 30 feet in any direction, including upward. Until the end of the creature's next turn, the creature is restrained by a telekinetic force. A creature lifted upward is suspended in midair. The creature might fall once it is no longer restrained.

Alternatively, the tenth head can try to move an object that weighs up to 1,000 pounds it can see within 10 feet of it, as per the *telekinesis* spell. Constitution is its spellcasting ability.

Legendary Actions

The lion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The lion regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Direct the Pride. The lion uses Denarian Dance two times.

Fading Leap. The lion's body detaches its current head (if any), then magically teleports up to 120 feet to a space occupied by one of its heads. That head then attaches to the body.

Elfaivaran Samsāra-Fey

Elfaivaran "technology" is deeply interwoven with the malleability of the Dreaming. A few rare mages have learned the art of creating samsāra-fey. Samsāra is a Seedist term for the concept of rebirth and the cyclicality of existence, and a samsāra-fey is created when a person lucidly dreams in the Dreaming, having first extracted a fragment of their soul. Around that soul they weave a creature envisioned in their dream.

This can create a mighty guardian or warrior, but while it may have an affinity for its creator, it has a will of its own. Moreover, this process cuts the creator off from the cycle of rebirth, preventing reincarnation (or resurrection) for as long as the samsāra-fey survives.

Many strange monsters of the Elfaivaran Dreaming are the last remembrance of mighty spellcasters who sought to save their nation in the Perang Devar or afterward, often still guarding a ruin centuries after their creator perished.

Painted Fey

In Crisyllir, many fey take the form of paintings come to life. A **notturna** (plural notturni) is a type of fey that came to life from a specific type of painting—night-time landscapes wherein the artists hid tiny figures as a fun little treat for attentive onlookers. Notturni embrace this joy of artistry, and are themselves painters.

When a notturna paints a figure with a face on a flat surface, that figure can move about, though it is simply a picture, and cannot spring off the wall. However, if a notturna paints a face onto a three-dimensional object, it can begin to move as an animated object. This magic is limited in that it ends the moment the object is exposed to sunlight (or a *daylight* spell; the objects aren't smart enough to know the difference).

Often notturni lend their magic to help protect remote towns and farms from threats at night, hoping for nothing more than a chance to create beautiful graffiti, and perhaps a bit of wine and cheese. However, unappreciative Clericist farmers often believe their art is the work of demons, and they set out traps to catch the tiny painters.

Notturna Challenge ⅛
Tiny fey (25 XP)

Armor Class 14
HP 2 (1d4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (–4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 14
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Sylvan

TRAITS

Magic Resistance. A notturna has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. A notturna can use *druidcraft* and *minor illusion* at will. Its save DC is 12. Once per short rest it can cast *animate objects*, though it must spend an action painting each object it animates.

ACTIONS

Superior Invisibility. The notturna turns magically invisible until its concentration ends.

Witchoil Experiment

Witchoil is the second most commonly available form of planarite after firegems. Unensouled, it can channel the tenebrous and necromantic power of the Bleak Gate. Ensouled, witchoil can burn as fuel for months without being consumed. Trapping minds and souls in torturous oil-prisons where they are slowly, painfully, and permanently obliterated from existence is an act of great darkness, but unscrupulous inventors consider it an acceptable price to pay for arcanoscientific progress and the manufacturing of powerful minions.

While a witchoil experiment is being created, a spirit medium can hear the moans and wails of the minds and souls within the witchoil, who are in indescribable terror. However, this sense is imprecise; in a city, for example, it may merely identify several streets in which a witchoil experiment is being crafted.

A History of Oily Creations

In 395 AOV, over a century before the wayfarer's engine, the Bleak Court arcanosmith Nifelis invented the rusted iron soul-eater engine. It consumed both unensouled witchoil and a much smaller proportion of ensouled witchoil, obliterating at least one soul every few days, generating an immense magnitude of dark and deathly power.

Later, she developed the first animated metal witchoil guardian. Next came the first witchoil monstrosity, a mangled animal augmented by a soul-eater engine. Her final invention was the first shadow hound, a mortal humanoid imbued with ensouled witchoil.

Depending on who's telling the story, her designs were stolen by Arrovian necrotechnologists, bought by faceless conspirators, or recovered by decent upstanding Risuri patriots from a cabal of mad scientists. The techniques were carefully hidden, but after the Great Eclipse the secret was shared widely, and ever since, others enthralled by the potential of witchoil have created their own versions of these three witchoil experiments.

Graced by the Glistening Oil

Regional Effects. Sites frequented by witchoil experiments are touched favorably by the Bleak Gate, which protects its children from perceptions and hexes alike. The following phenomena manifest in those areas, and extend across the boundaries of the Waking and its parallel realms:

- Planar portals, tides, and storms to and from the Bleak Gate are more common. Planarite manifests around them, particularly witchoil; and afterlife shades seep through, struggling to deliver messages beyond the grave.
- Witchoil experiments have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide.
- Curses affecting any witchoil experiments are suppressed.

If all of the witchoil experiments frequenting a site die, these effects end immediately.

Witchoil Automaton

Wizards have been weaving magic into inanimate objects to create guardians for ages, but the soul-eater engine required less magical expertise than traditional automaton construction. The only drawback is that the creator had to be unbothered by tormenting the souls consumed in the engine's witchoil fuel.

Witchoil Automaton Challenge 7
Large construct 2,900 XP

Armor Class 17
HP 134 (18d10+36)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	6 (–2)	14 (+2)	3 (–4)	11 (+0)	1 (–5)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 16
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, fatigued, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

TRAITS

Bleak Aura. ***The construct's attacks smear you with witchoil, drawing you and those nearby toward the Bleak Gate.*** The automaton's weapon attacks are magical, and some of the automaton's attacks can afflict a creature with its Bleak Aura. At the start of the automaton's turn, each afflicted creature and each creature within 10 feet of an afflicted creature takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage. However, that creature's weapon attacks count as magical for the purpose of harming the automaton. A creature can remove the Bleak Aura from itself by immersing in water, taking fire damage, or spending an action to wipe the oil off.

Witchoil Ward. ***The dull etched runes on the construct flare brighter and brighter as you assail it with magic. Their light seems to slow projectiles.*** The automaton has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects. Ranged attacks against it that originate more than 20 feet away have disadvantage. If those attacks already have disadvantage from being at long range, they automatically miss.

Witchoil Breach. ***The glowing runes go dark, and then the construct's torso shatters, spraying forth gallons of searing witchoil. The suddenly hollow machine teeters, but catches itself on a mangled forelimb.*** When the automaton is first reduced to 30 HP or fewer, its souleater engine ruptures in a powerful explosion. Each creature within 20 feet takes 10 (3d6) fire damage, or half as much if it succeeds a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. Each creature in the area is afflicted by the automaton's Bleak Aura. Thereafter, the automaton's speed increases to 40 feet, and it gains a climb speed of 40 feet, but it loses Witchoil Ward and its Witchoil Fist attack no longer inflicts a Bleak Aura.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The automaton makes two attacks.

Witchoil Fist. ***Black oil leaks from between the joints of its fist.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) bludgeoning damage and the target is afflicted by the automaton's Bleak Aura.



Smash Aside. ***It plows through creatures and hurls objects in its way.*** The automaton throws an object of up to Medium size. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit; range 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) bludgeoning damage. *Special:* If the automaton hit a Medium or smaller creature with its Witchoil Fist attack this turn, when it uses this attack it throws that creature. If it hits with the attack, the thrown creature also takes 9 (1d8+5 bludgeoning damage).

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESSES

Howl of Souls (Arcana DC 13). ***The spirits burning in the construct's engine wail, but are too weak to break free.*** Magic that would heal the automaton instead deals an equal amount of damage. The restorative energy briefly empowers the souls in the witchoil engine, and they fight against the wards holding them in. The automaton's Bleak Aura does no damage on its next turn.

Cold Fragility (Engineering DC 13). ***The belly of the machine is searing hot metal, with all the stresses that entails.*** When the automaton takes cold damage, if any single attack deals 15 or more bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage to it in the next turn, this triggers Witchoil Breach (regardless of how many HP the automaton has) if it hasn't already triggered.

Witchoil Monstrosity

Witchoil monstrosities start as mundane animals which are inhumanely mangled in a horrific surgery. A soul-eater engine is installed amidst its vital organs and linked biomechanically to the entirety of its muscular structure, augmenting the beast with dark and supernatural power.

Contrary to their gruesome appearances and eerie silence, witchoil monstrosities are not actually undead, though it is currently unknown whether these surgically-mutilated abominations are in constant pain. Such is unlikely to concern the dark conspiracies and mad scientists who typically create and employ these disfigured animals.

Below is the **flayed jaguar**, the first type of witchoil monstrosity to have ever been created. Despite its vicious lethality, the design of this dark creature comes with an unusual weakness in the form of its steel chest-plate and command collar. Sometimes those who craft these fleshless felines drape them in illusions to conceal their monstrous appearance, but the stench of witchoil lingers around them like burnt engine grease.

Flayed Jaguar Challenge 2
Medium monstrosity (450 XP)

Armor Class 12
HP 60 (8d8 + 24)
Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 12
Saving Throws CON +5, WIS +3
Skills Athletics +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Immunities necrotic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

TRAITS

Abnegation (1/Encounter). If the jaguar fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead. Alternatively, it can expend this to safely pass through conjurations and evocations until the end of its next turn.

Crepusculous and Adumbral. ***Though clearly a beast of flesh and blood, the edges of its body drift away in wisps of shadow.*** The jaguar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Its weapon attacks are magical. Magical darkness doesn't impede its darkvision.

Cursed Blood. ***You stab the jaguar's flayed and unnatural muscles and sinew. Pulsating veins and arteries snap open, and its black blood sizzles and releases a horrid stench where it stains the ground.*** Whenever the jaguar takes piercing or slashing damage, it sprays out dark blood. Each creature within 5 feet of the jaguar cannot regain HP until the end of its next turn. Additionally, until the end of the jaguar's next turn, each space it moves through becomes contaminated difficult terrain until it is scrubbed clean. Each time a creature enters this contaminated difficult terrain or ends its turn there, it cannot regain HP until the end of its next turn.

Keen Smell. The jaguar has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

No Escape. ***You can see the muscles of the skinless jaguar flex as it swipes a claw at your leg and trips you.*** If the jaguar hits with an opportunity attack, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



Volatile Existence. When the jaguar is reduced to 0 HP, it dies. Any witchoil it has that is not ensouled degenerates into regular oil; its ensouled witchoil can still be gathered up.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The jaguar makes two Claw attacks. If the target is prone, it instead makes two Claw attacks and a Bite attack.

Bite. ***Every inch of the jaguar's bared skull is visible to you as the beast clamps down.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a prone Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 12), and the jaguar cannot bite another target until this grapple ends.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESSES

Witchoil Heart (Arcana DC 12). ***A steel plate is bolted directly into the ribcage of the poor creature, and black witchoil pumps across it in pulses, like the beating of a heart.*** If the jaguar's speed is 0, a creature within reach can spend an action to attempt a DC 13 Strength check to remove the steel plate covering the jaguar's heart. On a success, the jaguar takes 10 points of damage at the start of each of its turns, and the next attack that deals damage to the jaguar kills it.

Command Collar (Insight DC 12). ***The creature shrinks away whenever anyone is near its collar.*** A creature that grappling the jaguar can grab its collar and spend a bonus action to attempt a DC 13 Charisma (Animal Handling) check. On a success, for 1 minute, the jaguar is charmed by the creature that subjugated it and obeys that creature's verbal commands, though it will defend itself if attacked, ignoring any commands. If the subjugation attempt fails, the creature can try again, assuming it's fine getting mauled in the meanwhile.

While the jaguar is charmed, the character who charmed it can remove its witchoil heart or safely open it to refill it with ensouled witchoil. If a character does so, the jaguar becomes loyal to the character for a week.

Shadow Hound

Shadow hounds are not actual dog-like creatures, but rather mortal or fey humanoids infused with ensouled witchoil through a dark ceremony. Often these beings are victims transmuted against their will, but some rare few volunteer for the transmogrification. The ritual leaves their skin flayed, but they cloak themselves in impenetrable, angular shadows. Only by banishing the shadow can the hound be truly harmed.

Shadow Hound Killer Challenge 5
Medium humanoid (any species) (450 XP)

Armor Class 15
HP 75 (10d8+30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Proficiency +3; **Maneuver DC** 16
Skills Stealth +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Various

TRAITS

Abnegation (1/Encounter). If the killer fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead. Alternatively, it can expend this to safely pass through conjurations and evocations until the end of its next turn.

Crepusculous and Adumbral. Though clearly a beast of flesh and blood, the edges of its body drift away in wisps of shadow. The killer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Its weapon attacks are magical. Magical darkness doesn't impede its darkvision.

ACTIONS

Claw of Shadow. His fingers are like pitch black blades, infinitely sharp. He swipes his hand, and though he doesn't touch you, blood erupts from your skin, and cold pours into your flesh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit; reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage. If the target is a living creature and it takes any damage from this attack, its life is linked to the Bleak Gate, and it bleeds copiously, feeling a terrible chill. While linked this way, it cannot heal HP. Additionally, it takes 10 (3d6) cold damage at the start of each of its turn. Its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The link lasts until the creature ends its turn in a brightly lit area, or until a creature spends an action and makes a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check to stanch the bleeding.

BONUS ACTIONS

Hide in Shadows. The killer casts darkness, then becomes invisible if it is in area of dim light or darkness, and it remains invisible until it attacks, enters a brightly lit area, or takes radiant damage. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma.

REACTIONS

Draw the Black Veil Shut (1/Encounter). *He snarls in pain, his voice clearly human despite his monstrous form. Then the world goes completely dark.* When an attack damages the killer, it uses Hide in Shadows and then teleports 30 feet to a location it can see.

TECHNOLOGICAL WEAKNESS

Hideous Reveal (Religion DC 12). The figure's flesh is too dark, like he's cloaked in the essence of an undead shadow. Whenever the killer takes radiant damage or ends its turn in a brightly lit area, the man's matte black skin fades, revealing for a moment raw muscle and sinew and weeping rivulets of blood. The killer becomes visible if it previously hid with Hide in Shadows. Additionally, until the end of its next turn it loses its damage resistances and cannot use Hide in Shadows or Draw the Dark Veil Shut.



Noetic Entities

Many are the monsters with strong links to the mind and the soul. These creatures might be flesh and blood but with the ability to warp reality with psychic energies, or can exist as freeform thoughts and emotions only able to influence the world by controlling other creatures' minds. Some rare and foreign beings straddle the divide, gaining physical form under certain circumstances.

Most people do not think to classify these diverse oddities under a single category, but scholars of psionic phenomena, most notably the spirit mediums for whom psychic magic comes naturally, favor the term "noetic entities."

Varieties of Noetic Entities

The infamous **malice beasts** are the best-known noetic entities, which physically resemble monstrous and twisted animals but can psychically provoke emotions and then feed upon them.

Popular stories are currently quite smitten with beings known as **ship-spirits**, where somehow the pride or infamy surrounding an actual ship comes alive as a being capable of thinking and speaking. The general public woefully misunderstands them, but are endeared with the stories of glamorous figureheads coming alive and befriending the sailors who serve on the vessel.

Experts study a class of entities called **egregores**, a sort of unified consciousness made of several minds joined together with a singular idea or purpose. People who lived through the Great Eclipse recall with dread the **hiveminds** that trapped the minds and bodies of the unwilling. However, it seems to be possible for people to willingly form **gestalts**, unifying their minds without losing them.

Beyond these well-known noetic entities are many other rumored threats. Monstrous researchers are eager for funding to study whether ghosts and other incorporeal spirits might be



understood more properly as noetic phenomena, as well as tiny fear-fueled figures called spooks that prowl near pathways to the Bleak Gate. And historians struggle to gather information about beings called **gidim psychovores**, which apparently threatened Danor and Ber during the Great Eclipse. Governments have tried to quash all knowledge of these apparently perilous creatures, as if merely *knowing* about them might make them appear.

Of course, to even an educated citizen, they're all just monsters.

Malice Beasts

Five centuries ago, the Great Malice transformed large swaths of Danoran territory into a savage wilderness inundated with wild magic, impossible and shifting terrain, and strange mutants known as malice beasts. Locals and well-read outsiders know more of the monsters: they hunger for emotions, sometimes with discerning tastes.

The Great Eclipse mysteriously caused the Malice Lands' wild magic to stabilize, and the land shifts around more predictably, but the surreal topography and the abominations still linger, so locals and visitors alike have many wonders and horrors to gawk at. Malice beast safaris have always been popular.

Malice Taxonomy

Classifying malice beasts is hard, since an animal species can "evolve" into myriads of malice beast types, and some malice beast types can originate from different animals. Their biological lineages are maddeningly inconsistent. However, all malice beasts are apotropaically warded off by jade.

First-generation malice beasts were once regular animals, mutated by the region's eldritch power into bizarrely-shaped abominations with a taste for powerful emotions. These mutants retain whatever eating habits they originally had: herbivores stay herbivores, and carnivores still devour flesh. They crave strong emotions as a matter of flavor; a malice beast does not require these to survive, but will be very motivated to acquire such fine meals.

Terror is a tried-and-true standby, but the mutants prefer rarer flavors, particularly heroic verve. They band together in eclectic packs and brazenly deprioritize self-preservation in the hunt for emotions, sometimes attacking emotionally charged convoys, towns, or gatherings.

Varmint Wranglers

Native Malice-Landers call the mutant beasts "varmints" and practice old-fashioned country wisdom and steadfast discipline; it helps a frontiersman avoid these emotivores out in the wild. Ranchers of axebeaks and more conventional livestock have identified a few "safe spots" in the region, ranging from farm-sized to city-scale. Animals here very seldom have malice mutations, though existing malice beasts are no less willing to go into these zones.

Thoughtflesh and Thoughtforms

Malice beasts are normal flesh and blood, but many noetic entities create their bodies out if a strange and scintillating substance known as thoughtflesh. Both ship-spirits and egregores are composed of thoughtflesh.

If planarite is materialized planar energy of a given plane, then thoughtflesh is materialized psychic energies of thoughts and emotions. Spirit mediums, given their psionic sensitivity, find thoughtflesh to be oddly soothing to be around, or sometimes provoking an exhilarating high, depending on the nature of the ideas and emotions that compose the thoughtflesh.

A few esoteric artisans are developing techniques to weave clothes or tools out of the substance, creating objects that respond to the owner's own mind.

Far rarer are creatures called thoughtforms. These have no physical bodies normally, and though they can be perceived and interacted with, they are incorporeal except in specific circumstances. The mysterious gidim were thoughtform beings, and little is publicly known about them.

Pacts of Highest Thought

Any noetic entity of challenge 5+ can, with significant effort and great sacrifice, forge a sublime psychic bond with a creature equivalent to a warlock's Great Old One pact, Genius Loci pact, or perhaps a Hexblade pact. Eventually a warlock may bypass the power of his patron, simply relying on the entity as a connection with a greater psychic energy source.

Making a Meal of Yourself

A few desperate, gullible saps think they can have sorrowful emotions siphoned off. Those fools get eaten. A malice beast that gets a psychic whiff of despair or remorse won't stop with just a mind meal, but will include flesh as well for a full banquet. Emotion is often physical, after all, from racing hearts to jittery nerves. Even an herbivore will try to violently consume someone in the throes of emotion, and may spontaneously manifest sharp canines if need be.

Nobody knows why people are immune to malice mutation. Some dispute that, citing strange powers acquired from even the present-day Malice Lands. Hushed rumors murmur of shady arcanoscientists conducting inhumane experiments to force mutations onto people.

Other Potential Emotivores

In addition to the two sample malice beasts presented here, you can use existing monsters to represent malice beasts. Whether encountered in their natural habitat or as wild weapons all-too-often exported elsewhere, malice beasts are a good opportunity for you to field any feral monster you please.

Because they hunt in eclectic packs, malice beasts allow unusual mixtures of monsters to cooperate against the party. You could have **basilisks**, **bulettes**, **cockatrices**, **gorgons**, and **shambling mounds** all traveling together. Just adjust their visuals, and perhaps add a small psychic ability, and have yourself a perfectly perilous malice beast.

Malice beasts of challenge 6 and above should generally be classified as Armageddon beasts; good candidates include **grick alphas**, **hydras**, **remorhazes**, **rocs**, and **wyverns**, and they will seldom hunt alone. Even nonmagical animals like **dinosaurs**, **dire wolves**, **elephants**, **lions**, and **tigers** can serve as malice beasts, though they definitely need extensive appearance changes to sell them as mutants, and exotic names to match.

Conversely, a daring few bandits have crafted (admittedly unreliable) techniques for taming malice beasts, which helps their raids against travelers and towns, if the outlaws do not get eaten by their own pets.

Trains trace many paths through the Malice Lands, and the Avery Coast Railroad was the first to offer passengers, free of charge, the opportunity to shoot "varmints" for sport. If there is a particularly good catch, some specially-equipped trains might slow down just a bit to haul in the beast by crane.

The Business of the Beasts

A Malice beast's body parts are conventional matter, not thought-flesh. They carry a psychic aura for a year or two, and their meat is a prized delicacy, with connoisseurs likening it to a marinade that hits your tongue like a symphony hits your ears.

Craftsmen make nifty-looking weapons and armor out of "varmint" parts, suitable for magic items, which nudge the owners and sometimes those in a close aura toward specific emotions. Unfortunately, the aura is quite addictive, so anything that radiates it is considered contraband in Crisillyir, Danor, Risur, and many border states. This has not stopped people from spicing up parties and other entertainment avenues with these psychic emotion-enhancers. Pitiable is the addict whose heart feels cold and numb when not under the aura's influence.

Even more illegal is the lucrative trafficking of live "varmints." Few seem to learn that malice beasts are impossible to domesticate. Others just want to unleash monsters as terrorist acts, or gradually harvest emotion-heightening drugs.



Monster Hunters

The **Knights of Sangria**, founded by the late martial scientist **Xavier Sangria**, loosely style themselves after Risuri fey cavaliers. They protect Malice-Landers from these mutants, and crack down on the ever-dogged beast smugglers.

Kiov Hetman, a dwarven scholar from the Drakran border city of Ysfeld, notes that the region originally radiated wild magic eastwards, so mutants are generally more powerful the further east they spawned, up to terrifying "Armageddon beasts" that hunt—sometimes in packs—along Malice-Drakr border.

The dwarves of old built a line of warding towers along the Malice-Drakr border to prevent the wild magic from going east. Since the stabilization of magic in the region, the Knights of Sangria have reinforced Drakran soldiers, using these towers with their ancient wards as rally points on the rare occasion an Armageddon beast intrudes into Drakran lands.

Methia and Perpetual City Beasts

Ever since the Great Eclipse, Methia (page 130) lost its status as a true dead magic zone, instead transforming into a wild magic area akin to the Malice Lands of old. Consequently, the metropolis's ruins are spawning malice beasts as well. They are still rare, as animals were always too spooked to go into Methia after the Great Malice; only a small trickle of animals comes to the ruins these days, but those that do arrive begin to mutate.

The Imperium's military is unaccustomed to these malice beasts. Officers have been considering reaching out to Malice-Landers for their expertise against these "varmints," particularly after sightings of mutants amassing near certain historical landmarks, like the Lance of Triegenes, the original seat of the Clergy's power.

Far away in Elfaivar, the ruins of the Perpetual City follow the exact same pattern as Methia: it acquired pockets of antimagic after the Great Malice, only for those to degrade into wild magic following the Great Eclipse. And just like Methia, the mysterious Perpetual City spawns its own share of malice beasts. These are, however, accompanied by strange, corporeal creatures that resemble popular depictions of Clericist and Seedist gods.



Malice Rager

A malice rager is an example of a common sort of malice beast with a unique psychic aura. Walking on two legs like an overgrown scaled cassowary, this creature had an early diet of intense anger, which caused it to develop the ability to not only incite that emotion among its prey, but to cause its fury to burn from its mind into reality.

These striding beasts have been spotted driving small herds of herbivores toward larger prey. When close to the large prey, the rager dashes close enough to the herd to catch them in its Aura of Fury, using them as impromptu weapons against its intended target. Even hunting such a beast from afar is dangerous, as its Goading Urge feature can work from any range.

Malice Rager Challenge 3
Large aberration (malice) (700 XP)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
HP 88 (12d10+24)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Proficiency +2; **Maneuver DC** 14
Damage Immunities fire
Damage Vulnerabilities psychic
Senses passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Aura of Fury. *The light around the creature is tinged red and scatters jaggedly. As you approach, you feel flush with anger and violent urges.* Any creature that starts its turn or moves to within 20 feet of the malice beast must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, it is gripped with fury for one minute. If it succeeds its save, or when the fury ends, that creature becomes immune to this malice beast's emotion aura for 24 hours. The malice beast can suppress this aura at will, such as if it wants to ambush prey.

A furious creature adds 2 fire damage to any melee attack it makes. If a furious creature can see an enemy at the start of its turn, it feels an urge to make a melee attack against an enemy or to use its full movement speed to approach an enemy, and it cannot willingly move away from an enemy it is adjacent to. If it doesn't comply with this urge, at the end of its turn it takes 2 psychic damage.

Psychic Vulnerability. Whenever the malice beast takes psychic damage, one creature of the attacker's choice becomes immune to its aura for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit; reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Fire Burst (Recharge 5–6). The beast glares at a point it can see within 120 feet of it, and fire manifests in that spot. Each creature in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on that point takes 14 (4d6) fire damage, or half that damage if it succeeds a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw.

REACTIONS

Goading Urge. After a creature outside the malice rager's Aura of Fury deals damage to it, that creature must make a saving throw as if it had entered the aura.

Malice Beast Traits

All malice beasts share the following traits unless otherwise stated.

- **Type.** A malice beast is an aberration, with the tag Malice, and it loses any other tags.
- **Optional Trait: Executive Overload Aura.** Whenever a non-malice creature starts its turn within 20 feet of this malice beast, it must make a Wisdom saving throw (with a DC appropriate to the malice beast's Challenge). If it succeeds, it is immune to this aura for 24 hours. If it fails, the creature loses control of its emotions for a moment. It can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn.

  On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature it could reach if it moved, or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

  The malice beast can use a reaction to cause a creature that deals damage to it to have to make a saving throw to resist its aura, even if the creature is out of range.

  Other malice beasts may instead have their own unique traits that represent a specialized psychic aura.
- **Mental Vulnerability.** If the malice beast is given Executive Overload Aura, it also gains a vulnerability to psychic damage, and whenever it takes psychic damage, one creature of the attacker's choice that is being affected by its aura becomes immune for 24 hours.
- **Challenge.** The combination of aura and vulnerability negate each other, and so do not modify the creature's challenge.

Hunter of Heroes: The Screaming Malice

Presented below is among the most powerful malice beasts and Armageddon beasts. The **screaming malice** spends most of its everyday existence as a formless mass of black scales that coats bodies of water like a sprawling, squamous lily. When the screaming malice senses the presence of sophonts, it manifests into a physical form reminiscent of a tar-covered hydra, then bands together with whatever nearby pack it can find and commences the hunt for delectable emotions. More so than other malice beasts, the screaming malice is a particular connoisseur of heroic ardor, and loves to feast on would-be heroes.

The Knights of Sangria have yet to discern how it might be possible to permanently vanquish such a beast, for it always dissipates back into its amorphous mass—once even sinking into the ground like oil—only to reform again 1d10 days later. This makes the screaming malice among the very few malice beasts whose parts have never been harvested, at least for now.

Screaming Malice

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Huge aberration (malice)

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

HP 125 (10d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Proficiency +4; **Maneuver DC** 17

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +9, Stealth +13

Saving Throws CON +10, WIS +5

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Damage Vulnerabilities psychic

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

TRAITS

Legendary Resistances (3/Day). If the screaming malice fails a saving throw, it can succeed instead.

Psychic Vulnerability. Whenever the beast takes psychic damage, one creature of the attacker's choice becomes immune to its Emotive Wail for 24 hours.

Cephalic Quincunx. *Vaster and grander than any conventional hydra, the Armageddon beast's five tarry heads stretch out from its scaled body in a quincunx formation.* The screaming malice has five Medium heads which can share the body's space and which each have a reach of 5 feet. Whenever the screaming malice moves, only its body moves unless otherwise stipulated. When it starts its turn, it can reposition its heads to spaces of its choice within 30 feet of its body, which does not provoke opportunity attacks. If a head is ever more than 30 feet away, it falls off and dies harmlessly, and a replacement head grows at the end of the screaming malice's next turn, sharing its space. Each head can be dealt damage by attacking it, but the heads and body share a single hit point pool. Individual heads cannot be destroyed this way. While it has more than one head, the screaming malice cannot be blinded, deafened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

The screaming malice can take four reactions per round, but the extra three can only be used to make opportunity attack bites with heads, and each head can only make one opportunity attack per round.

Magic Resistance. The creature has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The creature's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The creature uses Emotive Wail, then for each of its heads, it uses either Predatory Pentad or Cranial Biogenesis.

Bite. *A head with fangs as long as your arm gnashes its tarry maw around you. Psychic currents excite your heightened emotions, and your synapses falter, bringing you to the ground in a heap. Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is charmed, frightened, or experiencing intense magical emotions (such as from hideous laughter, rage, or Emotive Wail), it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone.

Emotive Wail. *Many mouths stretch open wide, then roar in unison. Wispy shadows coalesce around the Armageddon beast's heads, full of hallucinatory detail and textures. Your heart races with uncertainty before finally settling on one self-destructive impulse. It screams, penetrating deafness and magical silence.* Each non-malice creature within 120 feet of it and not currently affected by Emotive Wail takes 2 (1d4) nonlethal psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or suffer a random effect for 1 minute. Each creature rolls a d6 to determine how it is magically affected:

1–2: Fear. The creature is frightened.

3–4: Fascination. The creature is charmed. The effect ends if the creature takes any damage.

5–6: Euphoria. The only action that the creature can take is Dash.

A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Emotive Wail for the next 24 hours.



Predatory Pentad. It moves one of its heads up to 30 feet and makes a Bite attack with that head.

Cranial Biogenesis. ***The head rips itself free from a long neck. Bones crack and tendons snap together as the skull reshapes itself into a semi-autonomous, reptilian predator, covered in the same tar as the greater beast.*** The screaming malice moves one of its heads up to 30 feet and detaches and transforms that head into a malice spawn. The spawn acts immediately after each of the screaming malice's turns, including the turn in which the spawn was created. A new head regrows at the end of the screaming malice's next turn. The creature cannot use this ability if it already has three active spawn.

REACTIONS

Devour Heroics. *Your triumph may be short-lived, as ravenous jaws come careening towards you.* After another creature achieves a natural 20 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, the screaming malice can make use Predatory Pentad and try to bite it.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The screaming malice can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. It regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Never-Tangling Quintet. The screaming malice uses Predatory Pentad.

Feed on Fear. *You glimpse a terrifying hallucination of your death.* One frightened creature within 120 feet of the screaming malice must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If it fails it takes 9 (1d6 + 6) psychic damage, and the screaming malice can move 10 feet.

Lure. *You see the object of your heart's desire nestled within its writhing necks, and you stagger gape-mouthed toward it.* One charmed creature within 120 feet moves a distance equal to its speed, its path chosen by the screaming malice. The creature is then incapacitated for as long as it remains charmed by the screaming malice.

Malice Spawn
Medium aberration

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

HP 10

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	4 (–3)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Proficiency +4; **Maneuver DC** 17

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +9, Stealth +13

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Damage Vulnerabilities psychic

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

TRAITS

Evasive Mettle. If the malice spawn is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to only take half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Fueled by Malice. Killing a malice spawn deals 10 necrotic damage to the screaming malice. The malice spawn automatically dies if it strays more than three miles from the screaming malice that created it.

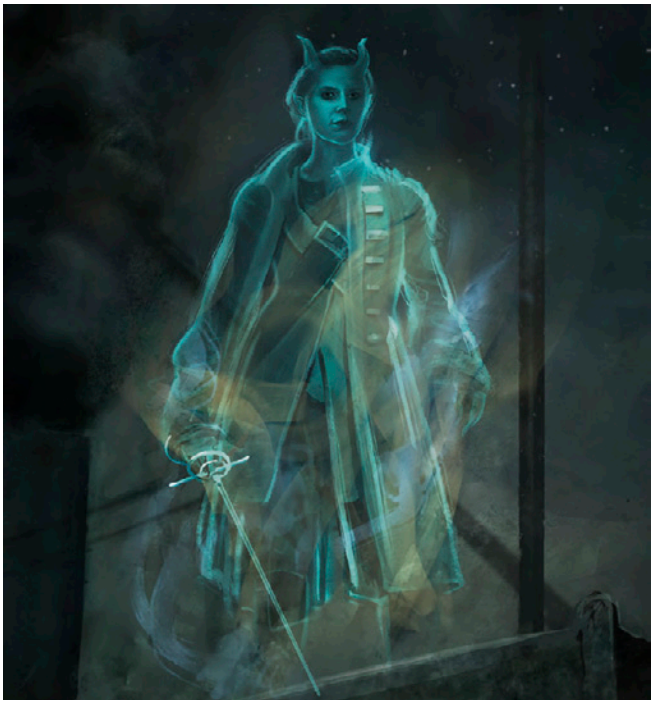
Magic Resistance. The malice spawn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The malice spawn's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Claw. *A strike of its talons elicits a flood of emotions. Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is charmed, frightened, or experiencing intense magical emotions, it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone.





Ship-Spirits

A ship-spirit is the sophont thoughtform embodiment of a ship, which is intentionally created using energy drawn from the plane Mavisha. Across the six great nations of Lanjyr, ships are symbols of national pride, military might, and the will to explore the unknown, and many nations desire to give that pride, might, and will spectral form.

Mysteries from Another World

Six years ago a planar vagabond named **Lady Kotele of the Dun God** found herself stranded in the Waking, far from her homeland. An undine with felid features, she claimed she hailed from the divine noble houses of Yarna, a continent-sized empire on the plane of Mavisha.

An instant celebrity for her exotic poise and charming manner of deflecting questions about her homeworld, Kotele soon found herself having audiences with admirals of every great nation except Elfaivar. And to them she offered a mysterious invention: a *Mavishan cube*.

A marvelous contraption of the Mavisha planarite, this crystalline azure cube glows from within, where some fluid shifts between shapes that remind people of the waves on a sea, and every so often a viewer catches a glimpse of what appears to be a modern ship in miniature scale.

Over the course of a one-hour ritual aboard a ship while it is in motion, the *Mavishan cube* gathers up the psychic energies of every single hope, dream, and fear related to the vessel, then weaves them into a ship-spirit.

The result is an intelligent creature of thoughtflesh, driven to loyally serve her nation and inspire her crew and officers with purpose and conviction. As ships are generally thought of as feminine, a ship-spirit usually appears as a glamorous humanoid woman, almost like a figurehead brought to life.

Kotele's Motivation

By selling her secrets to five nations, Lady Kotele purchased herself an extravagant lifestyle full of sea voyages around the world, but many people doubt this was her true motivation.

The answer to this mystery may lie in tales of those who claim to have traveled to Mavisha, where they found strange recreations of famous shipwrecks from the Waking, as if the seas of that watery plane were watching and learning from our own world.

But then, more ominous: reports of entire ships matching those lost at sea, complete with a forlorn but seemingly flesh-and-blood crew, sailing despondently, only coming alive to ferociously defend themselves.

By manifesting ship-spirits in the Waking, perhaps these ships are being copied on Mavisha, their doppelganger crews press-ganged to serve the "noble houses of Yarna."

When asked about these strange reconstituted ships, Lady Kotele, as ever, charmingly changes the subject.

Risur was the first nation willing to risk the unusual foreign magic. It had some experience with ships having personalities, having long employed the fey-blessed schooner RNS *Roscommon* which was home to a dryad. When Risur tested a *Mavishan cube* on the RNS *Khalundurrin* (which had been captured from Drakr decades earlier), the ship-spirit manifested the form of a sooty dwarf in an apron fit for shoveling firegems. He saluted the captain, reported gruffly about every small issue with the old warship's maintenance, commended the existing engineers for doing a fine job, and asked if they might bring aboard some dwarven musicians, as he missed the songs he'd heard when his hull was first being laid down in Trekhom.

Personalities of Ship Spirits

Ship spirits serve as major-domos for the captains who command them, can sense damage and intruders, even single-handedly steer the vessel and control its weapons, though at great mental toll. After some initial wariness, navies have embraced these entities as valued allies and fellow sailors.

Of course, before a ship can manifest a spirit, it must become a focus for countless hopes, dreams, and fears. The more known a vessel is, and the clearer its identity is in the mind of its crew and the world, the stronger its ship spirit becomes.

For instance, the launch of the RNS *Coaltongue* in 500 AOV was an international event, and today the near-sabotage of its maiden voyage is remembered for the first hint of the coming threat of the Great Eclipse. The vessel was later retrofitted with the miraculous ability to fly, and three years ago helped force an end to the Gulmohar Reclamation Crisis. Its ship spirit appears as an imperious and grizzled orc, dressed in an ancient warlord-emperor's raiment, and from his back spread great wings with fiery crystal feathers. Coaltongue—for that is his name (though he'll accept "emperor" as well)—wields a massive, flaming mace, not unlike a torch.

By contrast, Crisillyiri's new destroyer *Fluctus Tortis* launched from Sid Minos, and carries the aspirations of a pious nation to show the world it can protect their souls. Its ship-spirit takes the form of a young woman with blue braided hair in priest raiments, whose presence protects against curses.

Combat Powers

Ship-spirits are usually reserved for prominent vessels, and so player characters are more likely to face one in battle in mid- to high-level adventures than have one as an ally at low-level.

Though it is rare they go into battle, each ship-spirit's stats are unique. An angelic planetar could represent the spirit of the *Coaltongue*, the most famous ship in the world, while the stoic *Khalundurrin* is a bit more like an earth elemental.

Beyond that, ship-spirits all can choose to stand and move across liquid surfaces as if they were solid ground, but cannot stray more than a quarter-mile away from their ship. If a ship-spirit is killed or destroyed, it rejuvenates in perfect condition aboard the ship in 1d10 days, unless the ship or its *Mavishan cube* have been destroyed. A ship-spirit might wind up lingering by her own vessel's shipwreck, slowly attempting to repair it.

Avatars or Idols

Due to the expense of locating enough Mavishan planarite, and the requirement for a vessel to develop something of a reputation before it make use of a *Mavishan cube*, each nation only has a half-dozen or fewer ship spirits.

Despite the clear pride most navies have in their famous vessels' spirits, many people are unsettled by them. Widespread fear of noetic entities lingers from the horrors hiveminds caused during the Eclipse, and when people see a ship-spirit dressed in finery and brought to a seaside gala as a symbol of naval prestige, it triggers the same uncanny anxiety as the thought of a child's toy coming to life. Such things are not meant to have a will of their own, many say.

It certainly doesn't help that one Danoran captain half-jokingly suggested marrying his ship-spirit, although such would likely be against regulations.

More seriously, just recently a rare Beran skyseer made international news with her divination that when the under-construction aerial battleship RAS *Burning Sky* is given a ship-spirit, she will manifest as a red dragon, a symbol of fiery tyranny.

Egregores

Egregores are psionic entities composed of the minds and souls of a group of at least seven sophont intellects, joined together by a place of power known as an **egregoric column**. The egregore then might creates a thoughtflesh body for that new shared consciousness, or simply operate multiple bodies as easily as a person can wiggle their fingers independently.

Egregoric columns are a little-understood phenomenon where an area—never more than thirty feet across but seeming to extend all the way to the sky—becomes like a psychic echo chamber. Identification is tricky. The only clue is a subtle feeling of sublime interconnectedness with anyone else inside. The common man may pass this off as a good mood, but it is unmistakable to a savvy occultist.

What causes them is unknown, and most are fleeting. If enough thinking creatures spend time in a column it can become more stable, even faintly visible like a beam of dim golden light. But if it is starved of thoughts, the column gradually evaporates. Formal treaties require all the great nations to report and cordon off these



areas to eliminate the threat they pose, but rumors fly of secret egregoric columns being used to create loyal monsters and psychic super-weapons.

Hiveminds and Gestalts

Egregores come in two varieties: feral hiveminds, and smart gestalts.

During the Great Eclipse, **hiveminds** dragged hundreds of people into a shared chaotic consciousness and trapped their bodies in titanic masses of warty flesh and tentacles that wrought havoc. Strict social distancing was required to prevent even small gatherings from devolving into a hivemind. The conditions that let hiveminds during the Eclipse draw any bystanders have passed, but occasionally a small hivemind will still manifest, and governments are vigilant to control and cordon off any egregoric columns that are discovered.

Gestalts are (usually) willingly created by a small group of like-minded individuals who find an egregoric column and agree to weld their minds for a higher purpose. They are often fiendishly intelligent and driven, able to operate in multiple places at once through their different bodies, regenerate as long as any one body survives, and pool the knowledge and resources of many people.

Gestalts are rare, and what little the public knows of them has motivated all the great nations to agree (at least nominally) to report any egregore they discover.

Known Egregores

In the Shawl Mountains of Drakr, there are reports of a hivemind that twenty years ago formed from the combined fears of hundreds of soldiers who prepared for battle against the apocalyptic army of Grandis Komanov. The warriors had gathered around a great forge to stay warm as a blizzard fell upon their fort. Today they slither through remote frozen passes as a blue and fuschia winged worm known as the **abominable remorhaz**, whose body releases a killing heat that can melt metal weapons.

The **glazierbeast** is a younger feral hivemind, born from a work crew renovating the stained glass of a Crisillyiri cathedral after a storm. Unified by a need to repair the glass, they melded into a horrific starfish-like entity with crystalline skin, and they proceeded to coat half a city district in ectoplasm that hardened into glass, suffocating dozens. The monster was driven from the city and today traces eerie patterns in the sands of the Senesi desert.

Rumors and sensationalism claim various famous people are intentional gestalts. For example, a Meliskan prophet in Vendricce claimed he received a revelation that the great gulmohar leader Dhebisu is not a real person, but a gestalt consciousness created for the sole purpose of conquest. Likewise, some speculate that the famed Beran spymaster El Extraño is just a shared construct that absorbs the nation's patriots when they grow too old to serve.

In Risur, a sudden change in behavior by unrepentant playgirl **Galatea Goodson**, heir to the Goodson family fortune, has prompted scandalous accusations that industrialist Guy Goodson has replaced her with an egregore that he intends to join himself, making himself immortal so he never has to share his wealth with anyone.

Narrator Advice: Egregores

In a Zeitgeist campaign, a feral hivemind egregore can serves as a unique high-level monster, often a sign that something else is going terribly wrong and causing people's minds to merge out of control. A conspiracy might seek to create one intentionally, perhaps with a bit more intention and fewer warty tentacles.

Of course, that's not to say that there can't be small feral hiveminds; for example, a gang that really likes tunnels and snakes might get stuck in an egregoric column and merge to form a large serpent that appears to be composed of leather jackets. Egregores are likely to be weird simply owing to their very nature.

Gestalts, on the other hand, make for a truly daunting adversary, perhaps as the mastermind of an entire campaign. You might spend seven adventures setting up a rogue's gallery, then have the villains unite for a climax. A gestalt might already exist and be grooming an antagonist of the PCs to join their collective. Or perhaps to face an insurmountable foe, the PCs might need to gather the right allies and merge into a single higher being to work in perfect harmony.

See The Secrets of Egregores (page 275) for more information.

Making Monsters

In 518 AOV, an anonymous letter published in several Danoran newspapers encouraged the government to build a prison in the next egregoric column it found, suggesting that the inhumane conditions within would easily produce feral egregores for study. This provoked outrage, and many suspect it was a stunt intended to warn off any courseurs considering such vile experiments.

If that were its intent, it failed. A year later, the only publicly-known gestalt was created.

Cid La Fange was originally a group of seven disgruntled veterans of the Danoran army, who had been united by their opposition to both the Orithean Concordat and the tyranny of Eloise Duffet. Believing Danor needed a smarter military leader, they prepared to unite themselves, and when word arrived in 519 of the government attempting to cordon off an egregroic column in a remote woodland, the seven fought past the guards, secured the area, and entered the column.



What emerged was a statuesque specimen of the perfect Danoran man, flanked by the seven bodies that had entered. He introduced himself to government officials and apologized for his violence, and then six of the component bodies each went their own ways, while one went with Cid himself to meet President Remy Duvall. By the time the train arrived in Cherage, Cid had written two hundred pages anticipating what future wars might entail. When he met with the president, though, he began to weep and could do nothing but stagger away.

Today the various components of La Fange spend most of their time at military graveyards, never speaking, always watched warily by two Danoran handlers. Cid himself has offered to enlist in the military, so that should war come, none will die before him, but Danoran law has forbidden him from doing so.

Psychonautics

The full nature of egregores remain unexplored. Some who have lost family members to one of these new hiveminds are pursuing ways to liberate individuals from the gestalt. One academic paper published in Danor claimed that the researcher was able, with the aid of a bard, to teleport into a sort of mindscape where the consciousness of an egregore became a physical place.

Drakran psychometrists who are using the ideology of **Delkovich Nihisol** to develop cures for mental injuries believe this might let one slay phobias and wrestle anxieties. One doctor announced she would attempt this feat, but has since gone missing.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE GRAND DESIGN

The technology level, international politics, and unique cosmology of Zeitgeist encourages types of adventures slightly outside the norms of fantasy roleplaying games. This chapter offers guidance and game mechanics for a variety of campaign styles, and hints at what might lie in the world's future.

The Risuri city of Flint (page 174) serves as a perfect starting point for any type of campaign.

Campaign Styles

You've played through the starter adventure *Death of the Author*, and now you're ready to homebrew your own Zeitgeist adventure for your gaming group. You have a whole world available. Where do you start, and what do you do?

If you're eager for dungeon delving and monster slaying, the ziggurats of the Ancients or the cracked vaults of the Clergy promise classical perils. Should the Hero's Journey call to you, know that farmers from all over the world can set out to save innocents from the spirits of the Bleak Gate, rescue children kidnapped by the fey of the Dreaming, or confront the atrocities of warlords and cultists, be they Elfaivaran conquerors, Drakran doomsayers, or Beran chieftains who see civilization as weakness.

"Importing a Save" from Zeitgeist: The Gears of Revolution

If your group played through the original adventure path, this book cannot possibly accommodate all the different choices that you may have made. It's quite possible your constables became legendary paragons who created a utopia, or they set themselves up as overlords, or maybe they just let Flint explode.

But for the sake of presenting a setting where new characters can make their mark on a new age, we've made a variety of assumptions, ones we think produce a compelling world, and one exciting to adventure in. In this world, heroes rose up to save the world from annihilation during the Great Eclipse, but they did not avert every calamity, nor cure every animosity between great powers. Afterward, they eventually withdrew from world affairs. They had fought tyrants and megalomaniacs, and did not want to risk becoming the same.

Even if this is a far cry from your own playthrough, we hope you find this version of the setting compelling. If you want to work your group's PCs into the setting, you could swap in those characters for famous figures of the current day, and perhaps change how a city or country looks. The world is vast, though, and the two decades since the Great Eclipse allow plenty of time for fortunes to shift and new villains to find their way to power. Even if the heroes of the last age are great warriors, they might hesitate to move against their rivals, lest they precipitate a new global conflict. And whoever became Risur's monarch, their abdication heralds an unstable period of transition.

Feel free to change what doesn't fit for you, or bypass the problem entirely by running your next campaign somewhere far from the attention of the great heroes. If your group did indeed create a utopia, perhaps take a cue from *Star Trek*, and set out to explore the solar system. And if our planar arrangement doesn't match yours, check out the section "A Different Cosmology" (page 276).

But you can have those sorts of adventures in any setting. If you're going to play in Zeitgeist, consider adding some elements of the following campaign styles.

- **Constabulary.** Serving as formal or consulting detectives, the PCs investigate crimes and conspiracies.
- **Conspirator.** The PCs are all members of a conspiracy, working to seize power or cast down their ideological rivals.
- **Revolutionary.** The game occurs in an area full of social upheaval and unrest, and the PCs begin as normal people who rise to prominence after they choose a side.
- **Voyager.** The PCs do not simply travel the seas and stars, they discover the unknown—new nations, new planets, new technologies—and their discoveries will change how modern civilization understands its place in the world.

See below for suggestions on how to plan campaigns of these styles, as well as optional rules to handle types of encounters—like trailing a suspect or pulling off a heist—that don't show up in your average dungeon crawl.

Scale and Structure

Don't feel obligated to tackle the whole world from the get-go. A tightly planned short adventure or a deeply-detailed small sandbox can get players comfortable with the conceits of the setting. Even if you do desire a long campaign, it's often best to introduce the world with a narrow focus, and expand as needed. As the game progresses, you can employ varying structures to keep things from getting formulaic.

If your group is not sure they want to commit to a long campaign, running a **one-shot** can give them a taste of what makes Zeitgeist stand out. If they like that, you could continue running other one-shots with new characters each time, as a sort of **anthology** series.

A more **episodic** campaign shoots for adventures that can be resolved in a session or three, where the same characters have multiple adventures, but the group's over-arching goal—if any—only comes to the foreground occasionally. These campaigns can be character-driven, have an overarching theme, or just be casual vignettes designed for novelty.

A **sandbox** campaign starts with an interesting area and often will have some conflict steadily progressing in the background, but after an initial hook to get the characters involved will leave the direction of the story to the players' decisions. Even then, there typically is some ultimate objective to drive action.

A **serial** campaign has a broadly pre-planned plot with at least a clear beginning and projected end. Players are expected to buy in and agree to pursue that plot line trusting that the ending payoff is worth the commitment. So prepare a good ending.

Value Your Characters

A crime is only as compelling as its motive, and a revolution only worthy if the tyrant it opposes has a distinct flavor of oppression.

Whatever style of campaign you run, we encourage you to see characters—both PCs and NPCs—as your best tool for crafting excellent adventures. Allies and antagonists ought to have backstories or motivations that relate in some way to those of the PCs. Populate your sessions with figures who have opinions about the changing times, or who are busy with affairs unrelated to whatever the PCs are pursuing. It brings the world alive, and later on will serve as a springboard for future scenes.

Let the PCs find people with eccentric skill sets in a bind, who can become assets later on. Have enemies flee from encounters only to come back better prepared at the worst possible time.

If you need quick inspiration, just pick a historical figure, and have them look like a modern actor; give them some connection to something magical or specific to your game's setting; and provide them a reason to interact with the PCs *before* the scene where they might end up fighting each other.

Constabulary

Three main parameters guide a campaign where the PCs are investigators: deciding on a city or other jurisdiction, knowing whom the PCs are working for, and figuring out what they're investigating.

They might be members of the local police on their home turf, traveling spies operating far from allies, inquisitors trying to dig out supernatural corruption with a dozen tendrils, or merely a band of plucky youths whose county has become a nexus of weirdness.

Culture Conundrums

When the PCs have middling authority—meaning they have enough power to force regular people to obey them, but still have superiors who can give them orders—you can introduce classic tropes from police and spy stories that don't normally appear in hack-and-slash adventures.

Not all antagonists need to be criminals, and not all criminals must be antagonists. Personal rivals might stand in the way of a PC's objective, tempting them to abuse their authority. Charming crooks might offer rewards to PCs if they look the other way, maybe even helping them take out more violent and clearly evil villains, at the cost of entrenching the power of a perhaps more insidious criminal organization.

The Last Ravens in Flint might be pretty clear-cut villains, but we think the two other major cartels in the setting—the Family and Kuchnost—are people you'd at least consider siding with under the right circumstances.

Do be sure to discuss as a group beforehand to get a sense of how corrupt everyone is comfortable getting. Many conflicts in the Zeitgeist setting are driven by clashes of ideology, and it could make for a compelling story to have the status quo the party serves be flawed, forcing the player characters to decide whether to endure it, embrace it, reform it, or turn against it entirely.

Contacts and Connections

To help players learn about their jurisdiction, either before the campaign or after an initial few sessions, you could ask each player to pick two city districts (or cities, or rural counties, depending on the scope), and come up with a contact their character has in each place.

This contact could be a friend or family member, a criminal informant, an ex-boyfriend, a merchant whose shop they frequent, a minor noble who owes them a favor, a religious figure, their fey pepper dealer, or many other options. In particular, it helps to include someone with the same character theme as the PC, which reinforces that these themes represent broad social trends, not simply the skills and interests of an individual.



Contacts provide ways to invest the players in the place they're protecting, to deliver clues and set up adventures, to provide complications when their goals conflict with the party's, and to raise the stakes occasionally by putting their friends in peril.

Investigation Structure

It's an art to tell a mystery story well even in prose, where the author can decree how the protagonist acts. It's particularly challenging in a roleplaying game. Here are some things that may seem obvious, but are good to be reminded of.

First, you need to make sure the characters are invested in solving the mystery. Moreover, the best mystery is one only these particular main characters are positioned to solve. This is where making them constables is handy, since now it's their *job*, and they can't wait for the authorities to deal with a problem because they *are* the authorities. You want a compelling hook that makes it clear that doing nothing will lead to more bad stuff: more thefts, more murders, growing distrust between neighbors, or political tensions turning to open conflict.

Second, you need to know what happened. While the "mystery box" style of storytelling might work for certain film directors, if there is no *solution* to your mystery, or if the mystery isn't important to the resolution of the adventure, don't prime the players to think their goal is to put the clues together and solve the puzzle. It's fine if weird things sometimes remain inexplicable, but don't have the PCs' boss telling them "figure it out" if there's nothing to figure out.

Third, you want resolving the mystery to be exciting. The classic "drawing room murder mystery" format works better for a story than in a game; gamers generally won't enjoy gathering everyone together in cozy setting, explaining how you know who the perpetrator was, and handcuffing the villain without a fight. You'll generally have your antagonist resist arrest, or be in the midst of something nefarious, so that when the PCs realize what he's up to, they must defeat him in combat to stop him. Solving the mystery should lead to a final conflict.

Finally, you want the PCs to find your clues.

Don't call for an Investigation check if failing it will steer the story into a dead end. We find a good technique is to plan three clues

for every part of the mystery that must be understood to solve the main case. When the group comes upon a scene, describe what can be detected with a reasonable first inspection. This should mention at least one of the clues, though its pertinence might not be obvious.

Then call for an Investigation check to find less obvious clues, or perhaps an Insight check to figure out what a witness is nervous about. Even if the characters roll poorly, if the players state that they're looking at a specific thing, or asking a specific question, don't hide information from them due to a bad die roll. Just give them the information. *Asking the right question* is how they "win" the mystery.

For example, maybe they find a murder victim with a viscous brown substance on his cheek, in addition to blood from a gut wound that has covered most of the body. A DC 10 Investigation check might reveal that the substance is shoe polish, and the characters find a tin of shoe polish in the victim's pocket, plus more shoe polish under his fingernails. If the PC failed their check, but specifically said they searched the person's pocket, they find the tin, and they might deduce that the victim was kicked in the face by someone whose shoes he had polished moments earlier.

Even if the party doesn't figure that out, a Medicine check might determine that the victim's cheek is bruised beneath the brown substance. An Investigation check might uncover news that a shoeshiner has gone missing. A spirit medium could talk to the victim, who can describe the attacker but doesn't know the man's name or why the man murdered him.

Mysteries Small to Large

If the party comes upon a murder scene, makes a single Investigation check, and learns that the butler did it, there's not much drama in that. Conversely, if they need to run down a dozen clues scattered across the city before anything makes sense, players are likely to get disengaged.

Mysteries can exist at multiple scales, and one of the best ways to keep your players' attention is to have mini-mysteries with easy-to-find clues that, when put together, form a larger picture that then provides another lead. Solve a small mystery, confront a foe in battle or capture someone to interrogate, then get leads to more clues.

You can scale this up and up, with snippets of evidence pointing to ever higher tiers of villains. You could build a whole serial campaign on this, though heed the advice to plan the answer to your mystery before the game starts.

Divinations and Shortcuts

It is Narrator advice that works for every level, but is especially vital when the party can scry to find hiding suspects, force them to talk, and ask the cosmos for answers: don't fight the party's capabilities; make them pathways to success.

If your party has access to mighty magic, you as Narrator must walk a line between letting the magic be useful and making sure it doesn't trivialize the adventure. Try never to nullify the characters' powers; instead, design a mystery that puts up hurdles, so that divination leads to action. A foe fit for high-level investigators might himself be hidden from scrying, but not his underlings. He might have layers of henchmen to provide him deniability, and might even have used his own magic to erase the memories of those who could identify him. Let this spur your creativity to set up uniquely magical solutions.

Maybe a witness was lost at sea, but the party could speak with the shipwreck's spirit by traveling to Mavisha, then follow its guidance to locate the wreck in the real sea. Perhaps the villain's defensive wards are carved into a newspaper printing press so that every copy of the daily paper is a shield from scrying, but once the group's divinations keep turning up images of whoever's on the front page, they could figure out the connection and go replace the printing press.

And remember, solving the mystery should spur an exciting conclusion. If the group somehow figures things out faster than you expected, the worst that happens is that you get a fun action climax.

Interconnected Gears

The original 13-part *Gears of Revolution* adventure path was a constabulary serial. We structured the campaign to start with the PCs as competent but not exceptional investigators, charged with protecting the city of Flint from threats more complicated than the local police could handle. In the first three adventures they became embroiled in thwarting the sabotage of a new warship, unmasked local corrupt officials involved in smuggling, and chased an extraplanar murderer. The three plots seemed only indirectly related, but by the start of the fourth adventure it became clear that all were fallout from the actions of a global conspiracy.

The reveal of that grander threat spurred the characters to chase down the villains and unravel their plots in other nations and eventually even other planes. We writers knew from the start who the mastermind was and what his plan entailed, even back when the group was just trying to figure out why a murdered factory owner's daughter brought a box of drugged chocolates into the Danoran consulate.

Specialized Mechanics

If the PCs need to tail a suspect or interrogate someone they've captured, sometimes a simple Stealth or Intimidation check is satisfying. But if you want to add a bit more nuance as well as narrative significance to such scenes, see Inquiries (page 266) and Pursuits (page 267) for expanded mechanics.

Handy Constabulary Ability Checks

The following skills have extra value in investigative games.

Arcana. In addition to the typical Intelligence (Arcana) checks to understand what sort of magic something possesses, after a PC finds a clue, the Narrator might call for a Wisdom (Arcana) check to notice that the clue has been magically tampered with. For instance, a victim's wound might be concealed with healing magic moments after their death, or a fleeing suspect's shoes might show signs of having recently been cleaned with *prestidigitation*.

Culture. This skill can reveal that someone's mannerisms don't match the group they claim to be a part of, or can link clues to specific social groups.

Deception. Intelligence (Deception) can be used while tailing a

Black Shores: Noir in the Yerasol Archipelago

Consider a sample episodic campaign where the PCs are a mix of Danoran investigators and representatives of the Concordat of Orithea, initially tasked with preventing smuggling in the city Beaumont. The party could have a mix of responsibilities—keeping the city safe from revanchist agitators, combating piracy, handling foreign bureaucrats who want to squeeze the city for Concordat repayments, tracking down alien beasts that stagger ashore in unnatural storms, and protecting their friends and family from a powerfully-connected criminal politician.

This politician seems to be the main antagonist: a courseur who experimented on himself and gained unnatural strength and resilience. The campaign is roughly broken into seasons, with a rhythm of having four or five short episodic adventures, then switching to a focused climax that changes the status quo a bit, and then back to episodic.

Early investigations would involve local crimes but suggest ties to a pirate conclave active from the archipelago. A beautiful woman in need—an undine originally from Mavisha, stranded on this world—falls in with a gang of smugglers, and comes to the party for help getting out of trouble. These episodes introduce recurring criminals, some of them redeemable, some vile, with the latter sometimes getting protection from the main antagonist politician. Defeating the politician or disgracing him is the climax of the first "season," after which he escapes and links up with the pirates.

During the second season, keeping the peace is complicated as the politician uses his research to create elementally powered pirates who cause mayhem in Beaumont. After a few episodes of this, the climax is kicked off when some pirates attack a foreign dignitary's vessel in Beaumont's harbor. If the perpetrators aren't caught, foreign powers will have an excuse to occupy the city to guarantee it fulfills the Concordat. The party undertakes a spy mission, infiltrating an island lair of the pirates. There they discover that the corsairs and the courseurs are in cahoots, trying to create a weather control machine, which they intend to use as a weapon.

But when the PCs try to confront them, the undine gets there first and absconds with the unfinished contraption. This sets the stage for the final season. Back in Beaumont, the undine needs components to complete the device, so she maneuvers her way to the top of the city's criminal hierarchy. She sees the machine as her only way to find another path back to her homeworld, even if creating a large enough storm to do so would devastate the city. After a series of heists—bringing back familiar faces from all the previous adventures—the party tracks her down just as she activates the machine. In a rainslick confrontation, they might have to kill someone they once saved.

Or they might talk her into using the device in a different city, giving Danor a way to escape the Concordat and forcing two sides of the party to fight each other for control of the device.

suspect to keep up, by predicting how they might try to shake a tail. If you're spotted, Charisma (Deception) can convince the suspect that you're actually harmless.

In an interrogation, Intelligence (Deception) can fake a mutual interest in order to help establish a connection, or Charisma (Deception) can lower someone's guard through charm or seduction. Perhaps a Wisdom (Deception) check after a failed interrogation could glean some bit of information from what the suspect seemed to be evading.

Engineering. Like Culture, this is another skill useful for making sense of clues or tracking down the source of a specific recovered item, like a cask of firedust.

Insight. Interrogations understandably use Wisdom (Insight) checks to extract information. Though psychoanalysis is in its infancy, an Intelligence (Insight) check could deduce an unconscious vulnerability from a suspect's behavior or writings.

Investigation. Intelligence (Investigation) gathers non-obvious clues at crime scenes. Charisma (Investigation) canvasses for information in a neighborhood or small town. Maybe once per day a player could make a Wisdom (Investigation), asking the Narrator to help them understand if they've missed the pertinence of some clue.

Medicine. Intelligence (Medicine) checks can reveal what caused a particular wound or the cause of a creature's death.

Conspiracy

The mirrored reflection of an investigatory campaign with constables is one where the PCs are operating in secret, working to some greater goal and constantly challenged to evade the scrutiny of those with the power to stop them. The three main guiding parameters are what the conspiracy's goal is, where they're enacting it, and whom they're hiding from.





You could be a rising group of thieves trying to get rich in Flint's criminal underworld while squeezed between the well-connected Family and the eerie Last Ravens. You might be a splinter cell in the Royal Homeland Constabulary operating under the queen's secret orders to ruin the reputation of a fey lord of the Unseen Court, or a group of radical Vekeshi mystics infiltrating a league of international criminals, feathering your reputation by pulling heists, so that you might replace the leader and use the organization to further your own magnanimous ends. More maliciously, you could be cultists of a demon hoping to ally with the Kuchnost crime syndicate to install your master as a hierarch of the Clergy, or a small cell of inventors in Danor trying to smuggle in the right components to build an army of constructs to launch a coup.

Secret Goal

A good conspiracy campaign has an assortment of altruistic and sinister secret groups. You might pick one of the ones listed in Sample Conspiracies (page 273), or work with your Narrator and fellow players to devise a more personal goal.

When designing your own conspiracy—whether it's one the PCs will pursue, or one the Narrator wants a group of constables to tango against—you need to know its ultimate goal, the motivation it has for that goal, and the steps it intends to take toward that goal.

Additionally, there are three main types of antagonists for conspiracies: **watchmen** who have the power to stop you if you're caught, **marks** whom you intend to trick to your advantage, and **rivals** whose goals are similar enough to yours that you might face the same watchmen or target the same marks.

Knowing goals, motivation, and antagonists help bring what might be a somewhat amorphous idea into a shape tangible enough to design adventures around.

Consider also the scale of individual goals. Even a grand scheme that would take decades to achieve must require smaller-scale victories, which can take the form of individual game sessions. Or you might build a one-shot around a conspiracy as contained as a mere robbery of a museum's antiquities wing.

Even if you build a campaign around a major goal, it's possible for goals to change. After your demon master becomes a hierarch of the Clergy, well, now you have to corrupt the inquisition so they throw out anyone who might threaten you, and once that's done, you may as well turn the inquisition into a tool to tear down other hierarchs. I mean, you'd be a fool not to.

Masterminds or Minions

It is simpler to introduce this playstyle if the group starts as members of an existing conspiracy with a clear, limited objective. As the party proves their worth and rises in status (or mercilessly arranges the convenient deaths of their superiors), their freedom expands. This can be incredibly empowering for some players—after all, you're probably in a conspiracy because you want to change something about the world you live, not just take orders—but it requires a Narrator willing to listen to what the group is planning, then design bespoke adventures around those goals.

However, if your group is familiar with the setting and comfortable being proactive, you could start a campaign with some inciting incident that unites the party with a common purpose. From there

these nascent masterminds must figure out what marks to take advantage of to achieve their goal, fend off rivals or turn them into allies, and silence watchmen before finally enacting their masterstroke.

Typically the grander the goal, the more powerful the conspirators. But contests of ideas don't require martial prowess. A power disparity between the conspirators and their watchmen can be compelling, as it's easy to cheer even ill-intentioned characters when they're outwitting a stronger foe. The Narrator should be wary, though, not to overemphasize an atmosphere of risk, where a single misplay could bring down unwinnable odds and end the game completely. It can be useful to talk to players before a conspiracy game starts, to make sure there is clarity in what level of danger they face.

Also, emphasizing diverse tool proficiencies during character creation expands the options for novel adventures. Indeed, players ought to make sure the Narrator knows what interesting proficiencies they have, so that adventures can make their use compelling.

Missions and Antagonists

Members of a conspiracy probably don't get recruited by hooded strangers in taverns looking for people to kill monsters for some coin.

The most straightforward missions for a conspiracy entail stealing something the conspiracy needs or killing a person or beast who stands in the group's way, but even these usually require some effort to pin responsibility on someone else or to cover up the action altogether.

More involved are missions that require persuading a mark to act a certain way. You might need to get them to trust you so they'll share something of value, or trick them into thinking you represent a different faction so they'll use their superior firepower to deal with a threat beyond your group's capabilities. Sometimes you might even be doing someone a favor, like persuading two feuding families in the Malice Lands to bury the hatchet so they can work together and help you capture a bizarre beast that ranges between their territories.

Also, though you hide your goals and often your actions from the public, that doesn't mean you're never discovered. Slipping up doesn't mean failure, just complication. Sometimes people who learn your schemes might be sympathetic and become allies, or could be vulnerable to extortion, drawing you into a tangled web of uncertain allegiances and inevitable betrayal.

Act in Secret

Conspiracies are opposed by the forces of the status quo, from whose ranks come the campaign's watchmen. In Zeitgeist's world, magic and forensics give investigators tools to pursue suspicious activities, and journalists might be dogged in turning a secret society into a career-defining story.

If you're playing a campaign of any length, it's an important part of the Narrator's responsibility to ensure the PCs understand what they're up against. This might happen in direct exposition and backstory, or be the result of some montage-style ability checks to gather information. But often the stronger impact would be to tease the threat of discovery during in-game scenes, such as if the party witnesses an inquisitor testifying at a trial, reads about one of their own exploits in the paper, or gets questioned by a constable looking into crimes committed by a rival group.

Sure, it might be briefly exciting to have a group of watchmen storm the party's lair because their wizard cast *contact other plane*



To Court the Unseen: Thievery for a Higher Purpose

Consider a sample campaign that begins with the PCs being novice members of the Risuri Homeland Constabulary. Their chief inspector gives them a secret mission: to gain the trust of the Last Raven thieves' guild in the city of Flint and learn their weaknesses. This requires the group to establish themselves as criminals, avoid arrest, and build a relationship with the Last Ravens over the course of a year. When they finally seek formal entry, the guild's leader demands they prove themselves by entering the Bleak Gate and capturing the spirit of a recently-slain man so she can keep it as a pet and torture it for information.

Once they succeed at this grim task, they're in, but have to keep undertaking criminal schemes to work their way up the ladder. In time they learn that the Last Ravens have allied with a powerful fey who is a member of the Unseen Court in the Dreaming. This is itself a gambit by the Last Ravens, who want to steal the magic that hides the identities of these fey lords. Toward that end, the party's chief inspector commands them to do what that fey lord wants, stealing bizarre treasures, enacting non-fatal but *weird* vengeance on the Unseen Court's enemies, even antagonizing a fey titan into destroying a factory.

Only when the Last Ravens are poised to steal the fey lord's power do the PCs discover that their chief inspector has betrayed them: he reveals the Last Raven's plan to the fey lord, and tries to hand the party over so the fey will owe *him* a favor, and he'll be seen as the hero. Betrayed by the only person who can clear their names, to save their skins they will have to decide whom they need to pretend to be loyal to.

and figured out the party's whole scheme. But the Narrator almost always wants to offer the players a chance to foresee and head off the threat of discovery. The PCs might have contacts in law enforcement who tip them off that an expert has been called to look into some recent "oddities" the conspiracy was responsible for, which gives them time to gather the necessary countermeasures, or to get their stories in order in case they're brought in for interrogation.

One common trap of a game like this is where the PCs get caught up overplanning for eventualities that never matter. Upon hearing a Beran *executore* is bashing her way through the city's criminal underbelly to find a PC who keeps using mind control magic, the party might go into brainstorm mode and come up with a dozen ways to throw her off the trail, bribe her, hire a doppelganger to replace her, and so on, when all the Narrator had in mind was that she'd show up at some upcoming mission and fight them. If the group is enjoying the plotting, that might enrich the game, but we advise groups not to spend too much time on the "covering their tracks" part of enacting a conspiracy.

When used best, these threats heighten tension at a time when the party has other things going on. But if overused, they make the players over-cautious and keep them from ever making progress on their goals. It's the Narrator's duty to either be adaptive and adjust their plans so that the party's preparations are *just right* to thwart the watchmen, or be up front about when the PCs are overthinking something—in which case the best option might be to say, "You take a few hours and set up the necessary precautions, and now can get back to your latest scheme."

Contact with the Enemy

The novelty of a conspiracy campaign is that the PCs will usually be pursuing their goals through cleverness, not brute force. Conspiracies act in secret, and spies and criminals don't like getting into fights—at least not in the real world. But this is an action RPG, and combat is a fun part of the game, so the Narrator will want to design adventures that will require at least some combat to achieve the conspiracy's goals.

That combat might be the means by which the PC conspirators prove to their marks that they can be trusted, by defeating enemies of the mark. Or it might come after the party lures the mark into their ambush and betrays them. The party might be confronted by a rival conspiracy's agents, or have to flee through monster-infested wilderness to evade watchmen.

Whatever prompts the action scene, a key concern of the PCs often will be maintaining obscurity, or at least deniability, so that their actions don't attract scrutiny. Unlike many types of campaigns where a battle in public can feel like a great way for the party to win fame and rise in influence, combats with an audience are an added challenge for a conspiracy. Even when the adventure takes place in an urban environment, the Narrator should consider including in their combat encounters ways for PCs to stay hidden from onlookers. A simple way is to fight at night, in rain, or other poor visibility. The environment might have handy ways to create a distraction, like highly flammable tenements, unsteady water towers, easily spooked cattle, or up-tempo musical performances. Or the PCs can rely on disguises and stealth.

Finally, if the players are okay with having setbacks that they can't fight their way out of, sometimes it can be compelling to present a situation where the only safe way to maintain their cover is to surrender, let themselves be arrested, or temporarily abandon their objective.

Specialized Mechanics

If you as a group want a quick way to justify how the group avoids bringing down heat from the authorities after any loud conflict, consider the Secret Missions mechanics (page 269), where one or more of the challenges the party must overcome represent them maintaining obscurity.

Handy Conspiracy Ability Checks

The following skills have extra value in scheming games.

Culture. Charisma (Culture) checks are useful for crafting cover identities.

Deception. Intelligence (Deception) checks can represent setting up contingencies to protect your secrecy should your mission be discovered.

Intimidation. Intelligence (Intimidation) checks can determine the outcome of a plot you devise to extort someone.

Investigation. Wisdom (Investigation) checks can help you figure out what clues you have left or might need to leave behind for someone else to find.

Stealth. Charisma (Stealth) checks let you blend in with a crowd or move through a public place in a way that onlookers will find unmemorable. Intelligence (Stealth) checks can help you plot a route to avoid patrols or otherwise create an opening so you can do something loud or violent when few witnesses are around.

Revolutionary

Constables serve some superior authority to protect existing power structures. Conspiracies act in secret to wield power. Revolutionaries strive to have the people grant them power.

Of the four suggested campaign styles for Zeitgeist, revolutionary is the one that most clearly draws the lines of conflict based on ideology. The goal of a revolutionary campaign is to prove to the world that your ideals are right, and to persuade the people to join you. The three main parameters for such a game, then, are the location, the ideological change the party wants to achieve, and the power structure that needs to be defeated.

One classic example of a revolutionary ideal creating conflict in the setting is Flint factory workers rallying through protests and street battles to win fair treatment from industrialists and their enforcers in the city police. But at the same time, fey-sympathizing radicals try to sabotage machinery to steer Risur away from technology. As Elfaivar threatens war, bohemian street artists in Ber might invoke classic tribal myths to oppose what they see as their nation's dangerous militarization. And of course both the Ottoplismists and Meliskans in Crisillyir believe the other faction is a threat to the soul of their religion.

But on their own, all those conflicts, no matter how strident, are just social movements. For a revolutionary campaign to really work, you need a villain.



A Worthy Opposition

Robin Hood liberated the common people from the cruelty of the Sheriff of Nottingham (who in many retellings is allied with the usurper Prince John). The Rebellion overthrew Emperor Palpatine and paved the way for a New Republic. In E.N. Publishing's first adventure path *War of the Burning Sky*, Supreme Inquisitor Leska's armies conquered a continent, while the mages of the resistance raced to find an artifact that could defeat her.

So, who's your tyrant?

A good antagonist for a revolutionary campaign has a seat of power remote or secure enough that the PCs cannot think to successfully strike it without plenty of allies. The first act of a campaign could involve surviving the villain's cruel oppressions and fighting the villain's loyalists, culminating in some victory that raises them to prominence. The second act likely sees the party traveling to neighboring areas to try to win allies who also oppose the tyrant, which leads to an open conflict. The third act would be not simply grand battles, but contests with key moral stakes.

In a setting with teleportation, invisibility, and mind control, a tyrant should have considered defenses against assassination. The main villain need not be someone who's directly powerful; they could just be persuasive and backed by strong individuals or loyal masses. Though really, the PCs will want to defeat him somehow, so the Narrator should consider what that climax could look like when crafting the campaign.

The longer the campaign might last, the more layers of underlings and minions they'll need. And with time, it's likely they'll see some nuance in the opposing side, something they might exploit, or even be tempted by.

A Broken System

A villain who can stand against a revolution needs a clear philosophy, though their minions can serve for a mix of earned loyalty, ideological agreement, and craven opportunism. Their strongest allies should share the same ideals, and adventures should explore the contrast between the villains' worldview and the revolution's.

Fighting Illusions with Journalism and Guns

Consider a sample campaign that starts in the mountain forges north of Mirsk, where the PCs toil in gulag-like conditions making guns for the army which, they're told, is desperately fending off attacks by partisans from Crisillyir. Though they're freezing and starving, they can at least content themselves that they're serving a higher purpose.

Until one day a new worker joins their crew, a journalist from the capital city Trekhom. She claims there is no war, and that she was arrested and shipped north to be a forge slave because she was helping the reformist government unearth corrupt links between military procurement and a dwarven arch-illusionist whose tower lies on the border with the Malice Lands.

Realizing they've been duped, the PCs confront the factory owner, then stage a revolt and claim control of the forge for themselves. The journalist suggests they use the forge's fortified position—and massive amount of firearms—to be a bulwark against similar corruption. She knows the locations of other factories in the same mountain range that are using slave labor to win rich contracts from the military. If the party can strike some of those and put the workers in control, they'll attract attention from across the nation.

And if during their missions they can secure the parts for a printing press—and recruit the Danoran inventor of a way to mass-print photographs in a newspaper—they can begin making their case directly to the people. One of them might even be elected to government.

The arch-illusionist challenges the party to come to the Drakran parliament to levy their accusations to his face, but when they arrive they're smeared in the press. Worse, word reaches the capital of massive malice beasts attacking in force from the west, a threat that demands the whole nation unify—especially the rebellious factories in the north. The arch-illusionist persuades the Drakran government to let him aid a military division in reclaiming the factories, and authorities try to arrest the party for organizing an insurrection.

The party escapes, regroups, and manages to repel this initial military assault—which first targets their publishing headquarters—but national public opinion has turned against them, and people are calling them traitors. To secure their long-term safety and freedom they must find other power players who will support them—from politicians to criminal syndicates. During this time, they make contact with one of the arch-illusionist's underlings, who claims the wizard manufactured the border incursion that he used as *casus belli* against them, all so that he could be seen as a national hero and make a bid to become chancellor.

The party can scheme their way into his tower of illusions, but their goal isn't to kill him; it's to recover documents they can publish to reveal his lies to Drakr and the world. But can they trust the underling? Is this just another deception? And even if it is, should they defy their own principles and forge evidence to convince Drakr the truth is what they need it to be?

Are the PCs rationalists opposing a witch who rules through superstition and fear? Are they devoted to letting nations rule themselves after casting down a conquering empire? Do they simply want a different economic system that will put more power in the hands of the people? Is the health of nature at risk, or some pact between mortals and otherworldly forces? Or are the PCs themselves the paternalists, convinced they know best how the world should function, and they just need to convince a desperate populace to trust them, to love them, to do terrible things in their name?

Three Acts or Five?

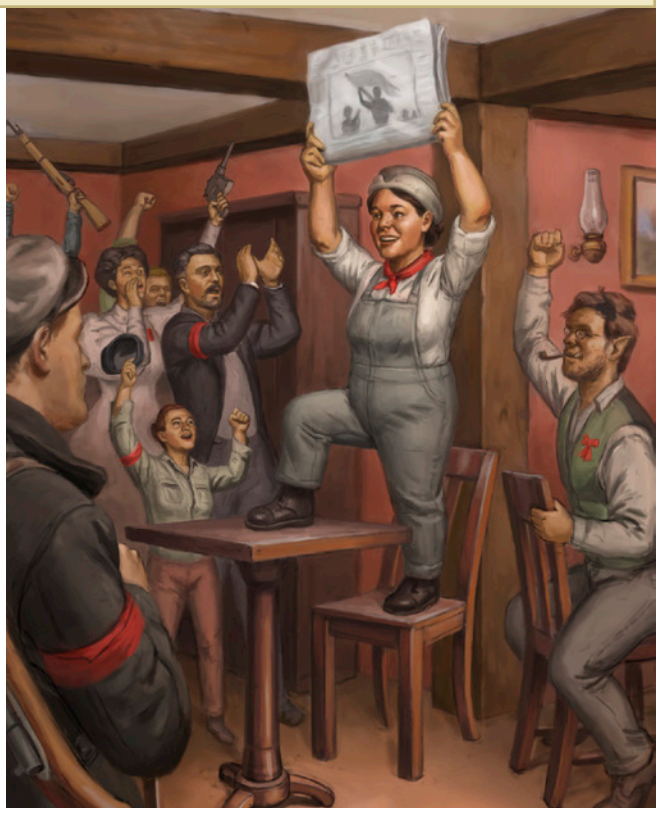
Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* has five acts. The tyrant Caesar is killed at the end of Act Three, and the final two acts involve the dissolution of the Roman Republic and the downfall of Caesar's murderers.

Star Wars took three acts to topple its emperor, and opinions are mixed on how satisfying the "and then what" portion of the story was.

Victory is seldom clean or final, but games only have to be messy and complicated if that's what the group desires. Depending on your mood, achieving the revolution's initial goals might be enough, or it might be more satisfying to secure the survival of its founding ideals, and prove—through some later turmoil that tests the principles of the new order—that it deserves to live on.

Specialized Mechanics

Revolutions might have a scope vast enough that it's untenable to keep track of every NPC's opinions of the party. The Influence system (page 263) broadly measures how much clout the PCs have with different factions.



Handy Revolutionary Ability Checks

The following skills have extra value in revolutionary games.

Deception. Should you get captured by the tyrant's chief torturer, a Constitution (Deception) check might be necessary for you to last long enough that your fake confession will be accepted as truth, and in so doing send your enemies into a trap.



History. At the right time and place, a rousing speech can rally an uncertain crowd to join your cause. In affairs of patriotism or cultural unity, an orator can use a Charisma (History) check to establish rapport with the audience by evoking similar moments in the past where the people had to join a movement. This could provide advantage on the primary Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Intimidation. After interacting with a group of enemy enforcers, a Wisdom (Intimidiation) check could help you discern who are serving willingly and who are simply loyal out of fear.

Performance. Sometimes you need to craft the right legend. A Wisdom (Performance) check can represent a few days' or weeks' worth of noting what sorts of tales resonate with people in an area, to help you determine what sort of moment might catalyze a movement. And if you don't have time to actually win a great victory, a challenging Intelligence (Performance) check can compose a compelling enough story that the truth won't really matter once people hear it.

Religion. Some crowds don't respond to appeals to history, but are persuaded by the right invocation of dogma and show of piety through a Charisma (Religion) check. As with History, this can build a rapport and grant advantage to a primary Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Voyager

The modern age of the Zeitgeist setting began with an industrial revolution, which was spurred by the pursuit of science and of understanding the unknown. In our history, it was during the 19th century's growth of "enlightenment" that fairy stories and science fiction began to develop as a distinct genre, marked by a knowing separation between the real world and another world of imagined possibilities. That thread of literature flowed into sword & sorcery fiction, *Lord of the Rings*, and other touchstones that inspired role-playing games.

Part of the appeal of playing in a new setting is the joy of discovery, and the purest form of that is a game focused on exploration, wayfaring, voyaging to new places, and pushing the boundaries of knowledge and technology.

The three main parameters for such a game are the method of travel, the reason for the journey, and what will be discovered or changed.

You could be a crew of patriotic sailors trying to navigate the length and breadth of Lanjyr in an international competition, a Danoran military squad tasked with exploring the Dreaming to ensure no foreign forces might try to infiltrate national borders

via another plane, Crisillyiri radicals taking a portal to Amrou to ensure the Clergy controls access to the afterlife, or a family of ifrits stranded in the Yerasol Archipelago, charting a course from isle to isle, looking for a way to get back to the planet Jiese.

A Tall Ship

Most of today's great conflicts surround the Avery Sea, and so seafaring PCs such as pirates, merchants, or traveling entertainers could find themselves involved in any sort of world affairs. Meanwhile, explorers devise arcanoscientific vessels to carry them to the stars, where they might be the first to plant a flag on a new world, nevermind the people who already might live there.

How is the party traveling? Does the game begin with them already in a new country, a new plane, a new time, or do they undertake a journey to get there? Are the PCs refugees in a strange land with only their wits, what they can carry on their backs, and what bounty the land offers? Do they ride with full saddlebags, a tax ledger, and a map of every tribal village in Ber? Are they crew or officers of a majestic Risuri airship with sufficient stores to survive on its own in perpetuity? Or perhaps they travel by strange portal or planar confluence, and either have a map to plan their next jaunt, or must hunt for a new staging ground each step of the way.

If the campaign will involve a lot of travel, having a regular cast of characters along for the ride can provide a way for the group to cultivate allies or gain recurring enemies even if they never stay in the same place for long. In turn, though, the presence of others can make it harder to justify why four or five PCs are always taking the lead.

Itinerancy also poses a recurring challenge in that the Narrator must be sure that adventure hooks personally matter to the voyagers. Do-gooders might make friends easily and help those along their travels, while colonizers could have a sense of obligation to protect a land they intend to claim. But if the group has a distant destination and the adventure is just a stop along the way, it may require time to make the party invested in local affairs before the peril becomes apparent.

And a Star to Steer Her By

Even if the journey will make up a bulk of the campaign, consider what the destination offers. Why are the PCs traveling?

The oldest motivation here is to find home, whether that's an old one you have been driven from, or a new one you seek to establish. Old members of the Clergy might flee a reclaimed Elfaivaran colony, navigating the foreign cultures of the gulmohar as they try to reach Crisillyir. Bold Danorans guide wagons of settlers and enough supplies for a homestead in the Malice Lands.

The goal might be glory, as with the Dreaming explorations of Keigar Arukova, or the upcoming international ship race sponsored by Queen Iain of Risur.

The journey could simply be to reach a strategic objective, to scout an enemy's lands or to seize the riches of the heavens.

The nature of the goal will determine what could motivate you to stop along the way to get embroiled in local conflicts. While travelers always have to stop from time to time for supplies, to rest, and to take shelter from storms, if you sail for glory and learn a famous theater troupe and its playwright are imperiled, you might delay your trip to try to get yourself immortalized on stage. Should you seek to establish a new government free from the doldrums of your home, when you hear about a small town beset by a petty tyrant you might see yourself in the locals and feel compelled to render aid.

Wherever you're headed, however you're traveling, and whyever you've decided to do this, what distinguishes a *voyage* from a mere *adventure* is an emphasis on discovery.

Looking to the Classics

Homer's *Odyssey* told an epic series of exciting adventures, and myriad tales followed its style, including stories of Sindbad in *1001 Nights*. Such stories sometimes used their different locales for satire, such as in *Don Quixote* or *Gulliver's Travels*. *Star Trek* was much the same, though more "social critique" than satire. Virgil's *Aeneid* likewise subverted and examined some tropes from the *Odyssey*, while also serving as a founding myth for the Roman Empire.

Sometimes the distance is temporal, rather than physical, whether we're pondering how the future might play out in *The Time Machine* or reminding us that "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there" like in *Back to the Future*.

Often, though, new technology will be the drive, with enthralling possibilities prompting people to experiment recklessly. Rather than exploring new lands, stories such as *Frankenstein* and *The Fly* transgress the bounds of society and force an exploration of new definitions of humanity. Robot narratives from *Metropolis* to *Ex Machina* question what makes us human, while tales of simulated worlds have made us skeptical of our reality long before *The Matrix*, going all the way back to Plato's Allegory of the Cave.

For a campaign focused on journeying throughout strange lands, especially in a time analogous to when our world's colonial empires were at their height, if you want to ensure you don't turn new lands into a series of played-out stereotypes, you might look to postcolonial literature, a genre that examines the effects of one culture dominating another, and critiques the way those dominant cultures would dismantle, minimize, and exoticize their colonies. Some works focus on the devastation caused by colonizers, such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Others reflect the complex clash of different cultural traditions, while emphasizing that these places are deeper than simply being former colonies, such as Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

Astra Incognita

The novel *Heart of Darkness* was a commentary on imperialism and racism, as a journey into a so-called "savage" land revealed viciousness in men of all origins. Meanwhile *2001: A Space Odyssey* began as an inquiry into a strange signal, but revealed the vastness of the universe and the possibilities for humanity's place in it. *National Lampoon's Vacation* was goofy but explored how a lack of control makes us feel humiliated, and that the real root of relief from our anxieties is not idealized "fun," but a sense that others understand you, that you're not the only person going through these travails.

In Zeitgeist, imagine a group of refugees fleeing a civil war in a Crisillyiri colony, trying to get back to the homeland through lands held by the Elfaivaran Ran. They're strangers in a strange land who then receive succor from those same Elfaivarans they once thought enemies, which stirs them to reexamine their beliefs. Consider a



unit of Danoran special forces, afraid of the unknown, traveling to defend the Dreaming wilderness, where they are so distant from the grappling great powers that they see how the arc of history and their place in it matters less than thriving in the moment.

Self discovery might be hard to do in a roleplaying game, though. Instead, discovery can lead to heroism. A Beran party sailing in a race could find islands that hold secrets which, if brought back home, could defeat tyrants and uplift the oppressed. Drakran astronauts could land on Urim and discover victims petrified by a crime lord back home, their consciousnesses cast to the plane of earth; with what gold they can bring back, the explorers could free hundreds from a stony curse.

But ultimately, this is a world undergoing changes of technology and culture. The party could stumble upon new science, new life, or even new art that they can be in control of, and use to make their mark on the world. This could be as simple as finding an egregoric column in an unindustrialized border state which they could exploit for riches if they can only conquer the locals. Or they might bring back from their travels offers of alliance with a culture on Caeloon that would shift the balance of power in the Avery Sea. They might join the bastion defending the spirits of the dead on Amrou, and learn magic from the cosmos beyond that will, in a century to come, lead to inventions that can mend the soul as we might stitch a torn sail.

Get weird. Imagine what the world could be, what it daren't become. Find the land where everyone agrees with you, and see how wretched—or wonderful—that is.

New Mechanical Options

In roleplaying games, rules for combat are highly structured, and the loss of hit points and the visceral consequences of failing a saving throw make for clear drama. But it can be harder to properly use game mechanics to maintain tension in non-combat conflicts. While players and their Narrator can always handle these situations narratively or with *ad hoc* dice rolls, those who want more structure can use these new mechanics as a baseline.

These rules cover four types of scenes common in Zeitgeist adventures.

Influence. Revolutionary parties can win the favor of prominent groups and persuade them to join their cause. Conspiracies can discreetly take control of organizations and sway the loyalties of social movements. The more influence you have with a group, the more you can call upon them for aid—perhaps even for combat allies and for magic items.

Inquiries. Through delicate manipulation or aggressive interrogation, when characters need to learn someone's secrets, they need to establish a connection before they can extract the information.

Pursuits. When a criminal runs, or a suspect tries to reach a secret rendezvous, characters need to balance keeping up with

their quarry with avoiding obstacles or staying out of sight.

Secret Missions. Suitable for heists, abductions, and infiltrations, these complex challenges require the party to work together while avoiding discovery.

Group Effort

These systems don't use normal initiative or rounds. Instead, time is a bit more like a montage, and each character who is participating usually gets to perform one **effort**, wherein they describe how they're contributing to the scene, and then make an ability check.

Don't worry too much about total time spent, as long as each character gets a moment in the spotlight. One character's effort might be a five-minute conversation, while another's undertakes a ten-hour stakeout, but each just makes one ability check. If a character wants to provide some special assistance—for example, using a spell—that might provide advantage, or sometimes even get an automatic success.

When to Use These Rules

Every genre of campaign can make use of each encounter type, but constables are likely to be doing a lot of pursuits and inquiries, while conspirators and revolutionaries perform a lot of secret missions.

But when should you use these rules, and when should the Narrator simply narrate, or call for a single die roll to speed things along? Ultimately it's a bit of a stylistic choice, and requires a consideration of what the group wants to spend its game time on.

If the Narrator has a cool action scene that might occupy the whole session, quickly advancing the plot through narration is fine. A single skill check could slightly tweak the scenario. For instance, in a situation where there's going to be a fight and possible chase at a smugglers' meet-up, maybe the party easily gets the rendezvous spot from a contact. Maybe someone in the group needs to make an Intelligence (Stealth) check to figure out the best way for the group to approach; a success lets them overhear clues to the wider operation, whereas failure spooks the smugglers and provokes a fight sooner.

But if the Narrator wants to give the players a chance to show off how they solve problems, or if they want to drive home how tough a task is, they can use some of the mechanics below. Maybe the Narrator wants the party's contact to be a recurring character whose loyalties are unclear, and so uses the Questioning rules. If the PCs succeed, the adventure progresses but the NPC looks unreliable. If the PCs fail, maybe the NPC gives them the location, but it becomes an ambush, or maybe he mentions there's a smuggling operation, but won't say any more. Then the ball is back in the players' court.

As always, no dice rolling is really necessary for any of this if your group has eager role-players, but calling for them can help make the game feel like the players are steering the narrative, instead of simply riding a rail from combat to combat.

Player Decisions and Flexibility

These rules are flexible regarding the specific ability checks and skills that should be used. Whether they want to interrogate a suspect by partying with him and earning his trust, or by dangling him off the side of a building, your players' choice gives your game a distinct personality. Certainly the Narrator can decide that, based on a given character's predilections, one tactic or the other might be easier, but generally we want the party to succeed and to continue the adventure's story. Failure in these sorts of encounters won't get the party killed, but might get them in a tricky situation.

It's important, though, that the Narrator maintains enough verisimilitude in the game that the players feel like their choices matter. In most situations, saying that carousing and threats on someone's life both require a DC 10 Charisma (Deception) check to get someone to open up is probably fine, but if the target is a member of a temperance movement, carousing should be harder, maybe DC 12. For an ascetic who has forsaken worldly pleasures, trying to carouse might require a DC 15 check, which represents the PC figuring out they need to try a different approach and recover from their initial stumble.

And if a player suggests that they're going to make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check and use cartwheeling to *confuse* the person into talking, that should never work, no matter how high they roll.

The rules should be flexible, but should still have some bearing on what is realistic within the context of the setting.

That said, the Narrator is encouraged to shake things up so the PCs don't always go to the same well. If a bard reliably beats DC 20 Deception checks, make sure the bard can show off their talent with lies each adventure, but don't forget to include challenges that can't be solved with trickery.

Statistics and Skill Challenges

Gamers have been rolling dice to kill monsters for over four decades, and game designers have gotten pretty savvy at tuning and balancing those encounters. With their precise mechanics and round-based action economies, any deft amateur mathematician can figure out the relative effectiveness of various character actions.

Non-combat encounters require more ad hoc Narrator input, and sometimes human beings' intuitive numeracy isn't up to the challenge of designing "fair" odds on the fly.

One of the most common scenarios where this happens is when the party needs to sneak past a guard. The Narrator decides the guard is only moderately attentive (DC 10), and calls for everyone to make a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check—thinking of it more as a way to represent the flavor of sneaking, rather than a "challenge." But if the Narrator has a single failed check lead to the guard sounding the alarm, your average party has enough non-stealthy characters that they probably have only a one-in-three chance of getting past.

The more dice the PCs have to roll, the more likely they are to lose. And if a single failed roll results in a failed encounter, more PCs actually can be a liability, not an asset. This can discourage teamwork.

Various games have tried to avoid this with highly codified "skill challenges," but a common pitfall is when the statistics and mechanics are too prominent, causing non-combat scenes to feel like exercises in dice rolling, divorced from narrative or roleplaying. Our intent with the optional mechanics in this chapter is to keep the focus on story and character, and to keep the amount of dice rolling low.

Peril Before Failure

A common mechanic we use is that failing one check simply makes the situation perilous, but doesn't represent actual failure yet. A person you're hiding from gets suspicious. A witness gets difficult and has to be coaxed to keep talking. Your ship gets caught on a sandbar so your pursuers get a chance to close the gap. It takes a *second* failed check to suffer a bad outcome. Often, the PC will need to decide between backing out or pressing on.

With this two-steps-to-failure conceit, players should seldom feel like they lost due to bad luck. The vibe should be more that they knew they were pressing their luck, so it's easier to own a failure.

Influence

While many tropes of fantasy adventures take place on the edge of civilization where the protagonists have few allies they can call upon, Zeitgeist campaigns normally occur in and between cities, where player characters can involve themselves with various organizations. Constables could make deals with crime syndicates. Conspiracies could wend their tendrils into a once-benevolent religious sect. Revolutionaries could befriend worker collectives or earn the sympathies of the soldiers tasked with apprehending them. Voyagers could appease merchant queens to get access to secret shortcuts.

The Influence mechanic provides a quick guideline for how much ability the party has to get a given group to do things for them, whether they're calling in a mage to perform a ritual too high-level for them, or trying to get their hands on a rare battle wand before assaulting a criminal stronghold. While such relationships and favors don't need to be tracked by numbers, players often direct their effort at wherever they see rules, and if a key element of a campaign is securing power, this mechanic lets players better understand their progress.

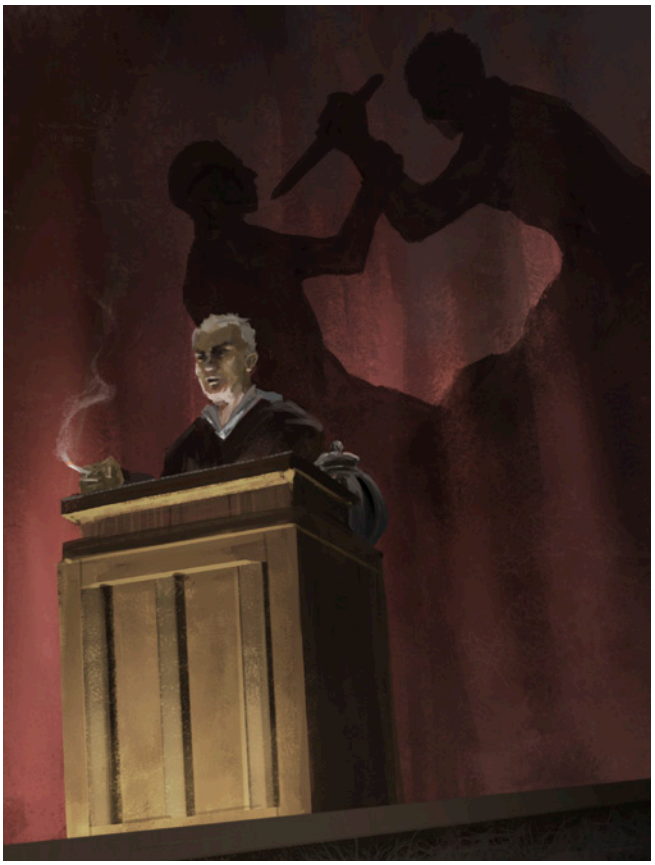
As with any rules for social interaction, these are just guidelines, and the Narrator should use their best judgment whether and how to use them.

Groups that Matter

The Narrator should choose a number of groups for which the party's Influence matters, usually no more than five or six. Beyond that, it's unlikely even a long campaign will have enough opportunities to develop meaningful relationships between the party and so many groups.

The groups might all be potential allies, or some might start as competitors or even villains. The Narrator should consider what the party could do to gain influence with each. Usually the party will be acting in the interest of the group, earning appreciation of its members, but they might instead acquire Influence by blackmailing powerful members or infiltrating allies into the group's ranks. It's possible sometimes to have a sudden jump in influence, such as by saving the life of a general or buying their way to the top of a mercantile organization.

Of course, as this is a game, the Narrator can think in terms of adventures that would increase Influence. The party might become aware of an array of possible troubles each group is suffering, giving the PCs a choice of how to pursue the various adventure seeds. Or in the course of a campaign the party might suggest to the Narrator



Note: Bonuses and Advantage

Most of these new systems use ability checks to represent the results of a prolonged effort over minutes or hours. Usually characters cannot benefit from *guidance*, bardic inspiration, *enhance ability*, or similar short-duration effects that provide bonuses to or advantage on ability checks. Aid from allies also does not usually provide advantage for these checks.

Impossible Missions

The baseline checks for most of these new mechanics are DC 10, which is a reasonable challenge for low-level characters.

If the task is daunting, perhaps use DC 15. And if the party is being actively opposed by a specific foe, the DC might be 10 + the foe's bonus with an appropriate skill.

For higher-level parties, the Narrator can increase the DC by 2 for every +1 increase of the party's proficiency bonus (for example, a baseline check would increase to DC 18 at 20th level owing to the proficiency bonus increase from +2 to +6).

Of course, the Narrator shouldn't *only* increase numbers, but also describe appropriately wild challenges. A stakeout isn't hard if you're just sitting on a roof and watching a dockside warehouse for hours. But if the local constables are looking for you, spotting the right info while laying low can be tough. Hobnobbing with nobles to get an invite to a party might not be a big challenge, unless you're meeting folks at a masquerade ball where you have to successfully pull off a half-dozen high society dances before anyone is willing to talk with you. And breaking into a museum vault might be a challenge, but doing so while dangling over a floor enchanted to sound an alarm if anyone steps on it is, well, not an *impossible* mission, but rather tough.

how they want to increase their Influence with a group.

The responsibility of the Narrator is to ensure that the events of the adventure can be significant enough to actually increase their Influence. For instance, simply catching a hundred common thieves won't get them much above Influence 1 with the Royal Homeland Constabulary. They need to handle a threat that's actually meaningful.

Influence Rating

Your Influence level determines how easy it is for you to call in favors from a given group. The examples used assume the party's influence is based on public prestige and renown. If the party is acting in secret, they have the same level of influence, even if people don't know them. For example, if a conspiracy has a few spies in an Ottoplismist militia, they might be Influence 2, and could get their spies to pull off favors on their behalf.

Rating 0. The party has no ability to call in favors. They might be wholly unknown, or seen as enemies or even buffoons.

Rating 1. The party can make use of the basic resources of the group, equivalent to as if they were a low-level worker in a business or a new military recruit. They don't have access to anything that would be a permanent cost to the group.

Rating 2. The party has some ability to pull strings and get maybe an hour of time from someone in the group. They might have accomplished a few noteworthy things to help the group, but most people don't know them personally.

Rating 3. The group is willing to stick its neck out a little for the party or expend some modest resources for them. The party has distinguished itself, and most members of the group know about their actions and talents.

Rating 4. The group will commit meaningful resources to help the party. The group pays close attention to the party, viewing them as a powerful ally or asset.

Rating 5. The party can get nearly anything the group can provide, though only occasionally, and potentially requiring a lot of time to prepare. The party is one of the top priorities of the group.

Rating 6. The party has the ear of the leader of the group, or actually *is* in charge, and they can get the group to do anything for them. Of course, the group can't turn on a dime, and many challenges are still best handled by talented player characters, not loyal underlings.

Influence and Favors

Calling in a favor represents the party expending its resources and good will to find people who are both able and willing to help. The higher their Influence, the easier and faster they can get what they want. The party is assumed to *not* be calling in favors during downtime between adventures; at most they can get one favor fulfilled during downtime.

The party as a whole can call in one favor per day from a given allied group. If they ask for a favor that lasts more than a day—such as if they're borrowing a magic item for a few days, or requesting a guide into the Dreaming for a long journey—the one-per-day limit doesn't refresh until the favor is over.

Of course, the party still has to be *able* to request a favor to get the favor. If you've got friends in the Danoran elite Porteurs du Mort, but you're way over in south Ber, you probably won't be able to get in touch with them to ask for help.

Use the following guidelines to determine the Favor level of what you want.

Example Campaign Groups

In the *Gears of Revolution* adventure path, the party could track its influence with five entities.

- **Flint.** The citizens of the city of Flint.
- **Risur.** The Royal Homeland Constabulary, the police, and the greater Risuri government and military.
- **The Unseen Court.** The archfey rulers of the Risuri Dreaming.
- **Criminal.** A criminal group, the identity of which was secret at the start of the campaign.
- **Philosophical.** An ideological group, the identity of which was secret at the start of the campaign.

The criminal and philosophical groups had a good likelihood of remaining unfriendly to the party throughout the campaign, but constables had the option to collude in secret or outright abandon their core duties.

Public Favors

Here are some sample options for help provided by public citizens of wherever the party operates.

- **Level 0.** Urchins to watch a street for you. A secretary to look through documents or handle your paperwork. A carriage-driver to provide you discreet passage around a district.
- **Level 1.** A ferry-man to give you discreet passage around the city. A craftsman to make a custom non-magic item for you (the PCs pay the normal price). A minor bureaucrat to bend the rules for your sake. A journalist to run a story.
- **Level 2.** A docker to create a distraction that will probably get him beaten up or arrested. A journalist to run a false story that could get him in trouble. A major public figure agreeing to talk with you for a few minutes.
- **Level 3.** A gang of thugs to commit some violent crimes for you. A small group of concerned citizens to rally and protest somewhere. A journalist to print an exposé on a powerful political figure.
- **Level 4.** A large crowd of protesters to block off a whole

building or street. A class of university students to come out and use their skills for the common people. A ship captain to smuggle in something for you.

- **Level 5.** A politician to take a stand for something that might make him lose his office. A city-wide search for a missing person. A local celebrity to put on a private show.
- **Level 6.** A city-wide protest. A call for all citizens to take arms against a threat.

Government Favors

And here are some examples of help provided by a government the party is affiliated with, the police, or the military.

- **Level 1.** An officer to investigate a lead for you, but not put himself in harm's way. Borrow something out of police evidence.
- **Level 2.** A few officers to canvas an area and report back. Holding a common merchant without cause overnight.
- **Level 3.** A bureaucrat to get a petty prisoner released or transferred. Blocking a street or bridge to inconvenience a prominent figure.
- **Level 4.** Arrest of a politically connected person, but then release them after their name is tarnished. A city-wide alert for officers to hunt a suspect.
- **Level 5.** The discreet pardon of a political prisoner.
- **Level 6.** The queen's court wizard to reveal one of the nation's arcane secrets.

Fey Favors

It's normally dangerous to ask for help from the fey, but if you have Influence with the fey, it's the fey who owe you a debt. That said, reckless requests could bite you in the backside. Similar favors might be available from a cabal of wizards, a demonic cult, or other strange creatures.

- **Level 1.** A tiny fey to deliver an item to a specific house without being seen. A dryad to hide someone on the run from the law.
- **Level 2.** A pixie to kill a person's pet and eat everything but its head. A nymph to lure someone off into the woods.
- **Level 3.** A hag to provide an uncommon illegal magic item (the PCs pay for the cost). A young treant to sneak into the city and observe a target on a *very* patient stakeout.
- **Level 4.** A powerful fey creature to abduct a factory owner and threaten him.
- **Level 5.** A fey lord (though not an archfey of the Unseen Court) to meet and provide information.
- **Level 6.** A member of the Great Hunt to chase down and a target in the wilderness and drive them to you.

Combat and Magic Allies

For any group, you can use these guidelines to request an ally to help you in battle or provide magical services, within reason. Certain groups might not be able to field certain allies.

- **Level 1.** One challenge ⅛ nonspellcasting creature (such as a Police Officer, see page 231) to follow you in battle.
- **Level 2.** One challenge ¼ nonspellcasting creature (such as a trained wolf). Or a noncombatant spellcaster capable of casting a 1st-level spell you need. *(The party pays for any expensive components used.)*
- **Level 3.** One challenge ½ nonspellcasting creature (such as a scout). Or a spellcaster capable of casting a 2nd-level spell you need.
- **Level 4.** One challenge 1 creature (such as a spy or a Police Squad, see page 231). Or a spellcaster to cast a 3rd-level spell.
- **Level 5.** One challenge 2 creature (such as a berserker). Or a spellcaster to cast a 4th-level spell.
- **Level 6.** One challenge 4 creature (such as a trained elephant or a military troop, see page 231). Or a spellcaster to cast a 5th-level spell. Or a small warship with a crew.

Requesting Magic Items

If the party wants to borrow a magic item from a group, they can call in a favor. If they just need the item for a day or so, use the following favor ratings. If they intend to keep it long-term, increase the rating by 1. If the item is particularly valuable, the group might send along a minder to ensure it is returned.

- **Common Magic Item.** This is a level 3 favor.
- **Uncommon Magic Item.** This is a level 4 favor.
- **Rare Magic Item.** This is a level 5 favor.
- **Very Rare Magic Item.** This is a level 6 favor.
- **Legendary Magic Item.** This is a level 7 favor.

The Narrator is encouraged to decide if the item has an interesting creator, physical detail, quirk, or minor magical property, which could reflect a novel provenance.

Time and Money

As a default, favors can get you about a half an hour's use of whatever you're requesting. It's easier to get a gunship to interrupt a smuggling meet in the local harbor than to have it pursue a pirate ship into the Yerasol Archipelago for a month.

If you want someone to help you for a few hours, increase the favor's Rating by 1. If the favor requires working for a day or more, increase the Rating by 2; and if a week or more, by 3.

Speed of Favors

Once you know the favor rating, compare that rating to your Influence to see how fast you can get what you want. If it's the only favor you request today, you get it fulfilled, in the noted time frame.

If the favor rating is...	Then your favor gets fulfilled in...
Less than your Influence	As little time as humanly possible.
Equal to your Influence	A few hours.
Your Influence +1	A day.
Your Influence +2	A week.
Your Influence +3	Never.

If you need to ask for another favor in the same day (or while a previous favor is being fulfilled), one PC needs to make a special **Influence check**.

To make an Influence check, the character rolls a 1d20 and adds their Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier. The DC is 8 + 2 per level of the favor.

Instead of asking for a second favor, you can ask to speed up your



first favor, getting it fulfilled one step faster, like in a day instead of a week.

Example. For instance, a party that has Influence 2 with a local government has already asked one favor today: to get a prisoner released. That prisoner then gives them some intel about smuggling going on at a wharf.

They realize they need a few police officers to stake out the wharf for a night. Normally getting a few officers is a Rating 2 favor, but since they need them for a few hours it becomes Rating 3. Since it's their second favor today, a member of the party has to attempt an Influence check (DC 14).

Even if they succeed, though, the favor Rating is 1 higher than the party's Influence, so the authorities won't have the officers ready until the next day.

If you narrowly fail a check to request an extra favor, though, your favor might still be granted, just in a lesser form. What the police might be willing to do, is fulfill a Rating 2 favor, like sending *one* officer to do the stake-out tonight. It's up to the players if they want that, and to the Narrator whether that yields anything useful.

Losing Favor

If the party screws up and damages a group's interests, or if they call for frivolous favors, waste people's time, or bring people into harm's way and get them killed unnecessarily, their Influence might wane. If the party actively betrays a group, they might drop to Influence 0.

Such a loss of Influence might be overcome with the right act of contrition, proof of trustworthiness, or new favor.

Inquiries

Key Skills: Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Persuasion

An interrogation might involve subtly getting a suspect to talk about himself, verbally intimidating or manipulating a prisoner into confessing a secret, or physically punishing a target until he breaks. To get useful information, the PC must establish and maintain a connection, and then extract information out of the target.

When running an interrogation as a skill challenge, the Narrator should first have the player explain or roleplay how they'll attempt to establish rapport, and then have them make a check. Then if they succeed they can explain what information they're trying to extract, and make a check for that.

Connection

Connection reflects the target's trust of the PC, or at least willingness to talk. In a casual conversation, a target might think the PC is just a normal person and have no reason to look for ulterior motives, and after establishing a connection with the PC he might be willing to share things he wouldn't with a total stranger. During a harsher interrogation, the PC manages to elicit the right level of confident defiance or fearful obedience that the subject talks without clamming up.

To establish a connection, the PC must make an ability check, typically against DC 10 + the target's Wisdom (Insight) bonus. If the PC has a genuine connection to the target, he might make a Charisma (Persuasion) check to keep the target happy. Intelligence (Deception) works if the target is faking a connection, or Charisma (Deception) can represent seduction. If the target is a mage or scholar, the PC might even use Charisma (Arcana, History, Nature,

or Religion) to make the target think they have much in common. Charisma (Intimidation) also works if the target has reason to think the PC can back up a threat, but this will usually leave the target unfriendly or even openly hostile after the interrogation.

The Narrator should consider granting advantage or impose disadvantage depending on the circumstances of the interaction.

If the PC succeeds their check, they establish a connection and can move on to "extraction." If they fail the check, the target cannot be coaxed to open up. The PC can try again, but the DC increases by 5. If they fail a second time, the target won't respond to further attempts unless something changes in their relation to the PC (such as if the PC saves the target's life).

Extraction

Once the PC has established a connection, they can make an ability check to extract information from the target. This is usually a Wisdom (Insight) check against DC 10 + the target's Charisma (Deception) bonus. On a success, the PC coaxes the target to reveal something useful, or discerns a key clue from how the target phrases their statements. The target might even tell a total lie, but the PC is able to see through it and figure out what's really true.

If the PC fails their check, the target gives up nothing and becomes a little wary. If the PC fails a second time, they lose their connection with the target, which counts as one failure on a "connection" check.

Variant: A PC might roll Wisdom (Deception) instead of Wisdom (Insight). A success here doesn't suss out the truth, but does at least figure out what the suspect is being deceptive about.

Good Cop, Bad Cop

When two or more characters coordinate in an interrogation, each PC can make a check to establish a connection, but usually they have to attempt different skills. As long as at least one PC succeeds this check, the whole team establishes a connection. Only if everyone fails does the DC for further attempts increase.

Once the team has established a connection, anyone can actually ask the questions, but they just make one Insight check to extract information, using whosever skill modifier is highest.

In the classic "good cop, bad cop" situation, the pair coordinate to get the target to open up, and then the character with a stronger Insight asks the questions. A variant is to have one person physically break a target, and then afterward a different interrogator asks the questions. Or the same mechanics could handle five PCs carousing at a bar, getting a suspect drunk and then encouraging him to brag about their secret mission.

Pursuits

Key Skills: Athletics, Deception, Perception, Stealth

Chases are a perennial challenge to plan for in RPGs, whether the scene is a prolonged tailing of a suspect, a brisk foot chase to escape the authorities, or a madcap carriage ride to rescue a hostage being spirited away to the docks.

There is no need to focus on the minutiae of distance, speed, and action economy. Instead, chases consist of three **stages**, with each stage being one narratively distinct location. During each stage, there are two rolls.

Torture and the Rule of Law

This is a topic the group should probably discuss before starting a constabulary campaign. Maybe everyone is all right with violent interrogations but not with outright sadism. Perhaps they'd prefer to have a more heroic tone, where all the "good guys" have to do is pretend to be willing to hurt a prisoner to get the required information. Or the group could desire a more grim take, recognizing the fact that throughout most of history and even today, many in law enforcement believe that hurting someone will get them to talk.

Just make sure to go no farther than any player is willing to deal with. It becomes everyone's responsibility to make sure a social and supposedly "fun" game doesn't cause friends to be uncomfortable around each other. Certainly the queen of Risur won't allow her representatives in the RHC to commit acts of barbarism, and modern scholars of investigation have discredited violence as an interrogation tactic.

Many groups will consider torture anyway, though.

First, whoever is in the lead poses a **challenge** of some sort, which the pursuer must deal with (usually by making an ability check). If the pursuer fails, they can modify the DC of the second check, deal damage to the pursuer, or otherwise stymie them.

Second, whether they're pursuer or pursued, the PCs narrate an **effort**, which is how they navigate the area. Then one PC makes a check.

If the PCs succeed two efforts, they accomplish their goal in the pursuit. If they fail two efforts, they lose the pursuit.

Running a Pursuit

Pursuits work a little differently depending on whether the PCs are the pursuers or the pursued. The PCs always make a check for their effort to navigate a stage, but if they're being chased, they force the pursuers to make checks to deal with whatever challenge they pose. If the PCs are the ones chasing, they make both checks.

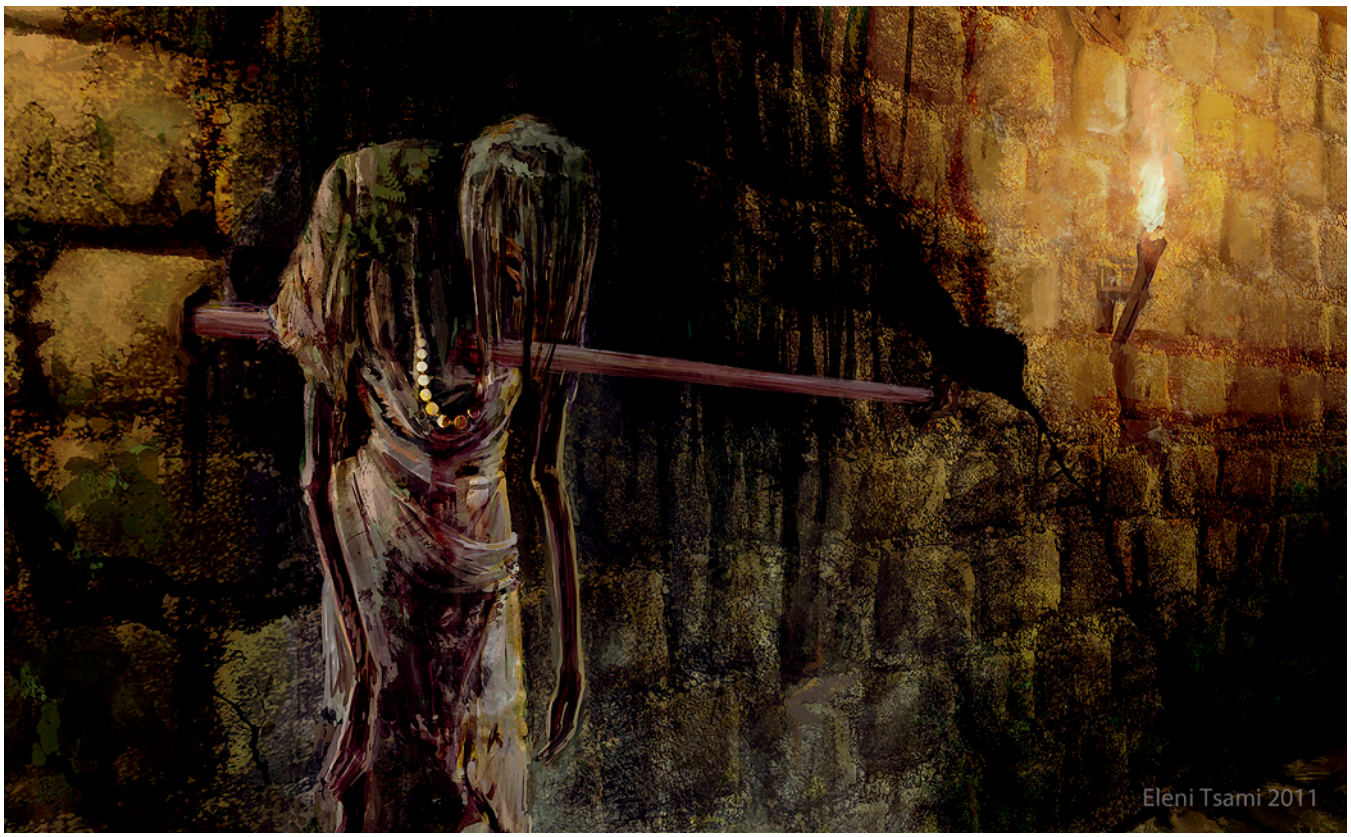
We'll provide some examples below, to help make it clearer.

Deciding Stages

Usually the Narrator will describe what new area the pursuit ends up during each stage, and might plan things in advance to have exciting environments and unique conundrums. But if the players are being chased, they'll have some leeway to decide where they're fleeing. The nature of the stage will determine what sort of effort can work to get through the area. Even if the PCs are in charge, though, the Narrator ought to exert some control and shake things up, so the same ability and skill won't be useful for every stage.

As an example, a criminal might steal a carriage and drive a merchant district (stage one), smash their way through the crowds of a riot (stage two), then slip into a shop that is run by the local syndicate (stage three).

Or if the party set off an alarm while undertaking a heist, they might first rush through the museum (stage one), dash down the rain-slick streets toward the nearest docks (stage two), and then try to reach a ferry they can escape on (stage three).



Posing Challenges

Each stage, whoever is being pursued can pose some challenge to their pursuer. Then the pursuer must make an ability check (usually DC 10) to avoid a setback. If there are multiple pursuers, they choose one person to make the check.

Here are some sample challenges and checks that could overcome them. Other checks might work, but could have slightly higher DCs.

- **Call for Help.** The pursued entreats a crowd to block the pursuer. Pursuer makes a Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to get through the crowd.
- **Lay a Trap.** The pursued sets up a snare or wounding trap. Pursuer makes a Wisdom (Perception) check to avoid or an Intelligence check with thieves' tools to disable.
- **Raw Athleticism.** The pursued sprints at high speed or leaps a wide canal. Pursuer makes a Strength (Athletics) check to keep pace, or perhaps Wisdom (Vehicles or Animal Handling).
- **Shake a Tail.** The pursued does something tricky to mislead the pursuer. Pursuer makes a Wisdom (Insight) to not be fooled.
- **Weave Through Danger.** The pursued goes somewhere dangerous. Pursuer makes a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check if on foot to avoid, but perhaps Dexterity (Vehicle or Animal Handling).

If the pursued is unaware of the pursuer, use this challenge.

- **Looking for Pursuit.** Pursuer makes a Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid being spotted, or perhaps Charisma (Stealth) to blend into a crowd, or Charisma (Deception) if there's nowhere to hide.

Setbacks for Failed Challenges

The two most common setbacks are damage and distance.

Damage. The pursuer takes damage. This is usually 1d10 if the pursued is up to 4th level, 2d10 to 10th level, 4d10 to 16th, and 10d10 beyond that. If there are multiple pursuers, usually the damage is split among them.

Distance. If the PCs are being pursued, they get a +5 bonus to their check for this stage's effort. If they're pursuing, they take a –5 penalty.

Wariness. If the pursued isn't aware they're being followed, failing to remain hidden makes them suspicious. During the next stage, the pursuer must make another check to remain hidden, this time with a –5 penalty. If they fail the second check, the pursued realizes they're being followed and reacts accordingly. If you think you might fail, it could be smarter to give up and try another way to learn about the target, instead of tipping off a potential enemy.

Navigating Stages

Whether they're pursuer or pursued, the party chooses one member to describe how they're moving through the stage, then make an appropriate ability check.

In the first example above, a criminal took a carriage, moved through a shopping district, then went to ground in a shop. The PCs might tail the suspect by first using Dexterity (Vehicles (wheeled)) to weave through traffic, use Wisdom (Perception) to find the man in the crowd, and then locate the secret passage to his hideout with Intelligence (Investigation).

In the second example, the PCs flee through a museum, down city streets, and then to crowded docks. The PCs could panic the museum patrons with Charisma (Intimidation), run fast with Strength (Athletics), then dive into the water and stay under until the pursuers move on, using Constitution (Stealth).

Outcomes

If the pursued succeeds, they escape. If the pursuer catches their quarry, usually that leads to a combat, with the pursued party being in a position where they can't keep simply running. If the pursuer is just tailing someone though, and they succeed, they can get some information from surveillance.

Multiple PCs

Usually it's simple to just have the party act as one, with a different PC getting the limelight during each stage. But if you want, you can track each PC's progress separately.

During each stage, the pursued group creates one challenge, as normal. If the PCs are the ones being pursued, they still only get to create one challenge. If the PCs are the pursuers, each character makes their own check to see how well they overcome the challenge.

Then each PC makes a check to navigate the stage. Track their failures independently, and if they fail twice, they lose the pursuit. If the party's all running away, this might mean one PC gets caught. If the party's chasing someone, the PC who failed falls too far behind and loses the trail.

In some cases, a PC might voluntarily accept disadvantage on their check—either to overcome a challenge or navigate a stage—to grant advantage to an ally who can't afford to fail.

Secret Missions

Key Skills: Deception, Investigation, Perception, Stealth, plus various tool proficiencies

While freeform ingenuity is part of what makes a spy mission or heist so exciting, it can be useful for the Narrator and players to have a general structure for how to resolve these scenes.

First the Narrator designs the mission by determining a variety of obstacles. Then the player characters have a chance to assess the challenge and prepare for the mission. Finally, for each obstacle they must devise a way to overcome it and achieve their objective.

The skill challenge has one phase for the Narrator—**design the mission**—and two phases for the players—**before the mission** and **during the mission**.

Design the Mission

To design a secret mission as a skill challenge, the Narrator should come up with a number of **obstacles**—usually at least two, but not more than the number of PCs. Additionally, players have the option to make things more complicated for themselves by adding obstacles, such as trying to frame someone else for whatever damage they cause. The more obstacles, of course, the more likely the party is to fail the mission.

The Narrator decides which obstacles will be apparent to the party, and which are hidden. For example, during a museum heist, it might not take the party any special effort to learn the layout of the museum, but the nature of any alarms would be hidden.

When to Use Secret Missions

Conspirators make regular use of secret missions, though with a few tweaks this same system could represent a multi-part mission by revolutionaries to dismantle the power base of a lieutenant of the main villain, or an undercover operation of constables.

These secret mission rules work best when you want a bit of role-playing of the consequential bits, but not to get bogged down with fine details. They are not meant to replace adventures, but rather provide a quick way to establish the party's competence and resolve a challenge that's better solved by cleverness than combat.

You might use them at the start of a session to quickly get the party to the action, such as by determining how they manage to sneak onto an Elfaivaran pirate's island lair, or how they got the schematics to the security system guarding the Ancient ziggurat of Urim. If they fail, the party might need to expend resources or owe someone a favor.

Or you could utilize a secret mission in the middle of a session when the party needs to accomplish a task that poses a bit more risk than a single skill check, but that isn't the main show. In this way, a secret mission can even fill in for spellcasters using magic to solve problems with a snap of their fingers.

Did the party locate a sunken treasure, but they can't cast water breathing magic and don't want to tip anyone off by buying potions? They might perform a quick heist to steal those items, or to commandeer a Danoran submersible. Do they want to ambush a Drakran crime boss, but don't know where his heavily-guarded munitions factory lair is, and they can't scry and teleport? One secret mission later, and they can have gotten leverage over some of his bodyguards who'll grant access through the factory's hidden back entrance, sparing them the need to fight through layers of security forces.

Similarly, while most obstacles must be overcome in the moment, some obstacles can be dealt with before the beginning of the mission. For example, if the party's stealing a relic only on display during a museum gala, they might need an invitation to get in. A character could simply try to smooth-talk their way in, but forging or stealing an invitation in advance could be a safer option.

Coming up with good obstacles requires finesse. Sometimes the group will all cooperate to prepare for the mission, but only send one character in. Other times they'll be working in different places to bypass multiple challenges simultaneously. Either is fine.

Ability Check DCs. A typical obstacle requires a DC 10 check, but if a PC attempts something that's suboptimal, this might increase the DC by 2. For instance, it's easier to acquire an invitation to a gala in advance (DC 10) than to bluff your way in without one (DC 12). Likewise it's easier to bypass various security doors in a museum when you're there (DC 10) than to figure out what keys you need in advance (DC 12). But sometimes the party has no choice, like if the group's locksmith can't attend the gala.

Before the Mission

After the Narrator has designed the mission, they narrate what the player characters know about the mission and its non-hidden obstacles. Then each PC can undertake one **effort** before the mission starts. The player narrates what they're doing and makes an ability check.

The most common efforts before the mission are to surveil and to prepare. Surveilling gets more information, which can reveal hidden obstacles or provide advantage in dealing with one of the obstacles. Preparing attempts to overcome an obstacle in advance, usually by acquiring the right tools—costumes, keys, passports, vehicles—or setting up favorable conditions—scouting an escape route, sabotaging an alarm, or getting the guards on your side.

Surveillance. A character looks for more information about the mission site, or the people involved, and then makes a skill check, typically DC 10.

They might try to examine a secure facility's defenses up close while looking innocuous with Charisma (Stealth), or gather rumors about a gala by hobnobbing in high society with Charisma (Investigation). A long stakeout to learn guard patterns could be a Constitution (Perception) check.

On a success, first, the Narrator should provide a clear hint about whether there are any hidden obstacles in the mission. Then the character chooses one of the known obstacles and grants advantage to any checks that are made to overcome that obstacle.

If a second character succeeds in surveilling, they learn thoroughly about any hidden obstacles, *and* they choose a known obstacle and grant advantage to checks to overcome it.

If a character fails, they can simply accept the failure, or they can try again, but this increases the DC by 5. For instance, they might try to gather rumors, but when no one talks they could try being more explicit, which puts people on guard. If they fail a second time, they suffer some complications (see below).

Preparation. A character chooses a known obstacle and narrates how they intend to overcome or solve it in advance, then makes a skill check.

They might craft costumes with Intelligence check with weaver's tools, purchase fake passports with Charisma (Deception), steal keys with Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), or position a sailboat for a quick getaway with Wisdom check with water vehicles.

Usually the Narrator rolls in secret to determine how good the character's preparations are, and the character cannot try again. Sometimes the character will know if they fail (such as if they try to steal keys) and, just like with surveillance, they can try again, but the DC increases by 5, and if they fail a second time they suffer a complication.

Success is revealed during the mission when someone tries to rely on the preparation to overcome an obstacle. If they fail, the character who's active in the mission probably gets caught with their pants down, but that doesn't mean they've failed. They can still try and improvise a solution, but this increases the DC by 5.

During the Mission

After each member of the party has taken an effort, the Narrator and players collaboratively narrate how they approach the obstacles of the mission. For each obstacle, one character takes the lead in overcoming it. They describe what they're doing, and if necessary they'll roll a check to determine whether they succeed.

If the character fails, they have the choice to either abandon the effort, which usually means the mission has failed, or to try again, which increases the DC by 5. If they fail on their second check against a given obstacle, they suffer a complication.

Ten Steps Ahead

A delightful trope in heist stories like *Ocean's 11* is when the situation looks grim, and the protagonists seem on the verge of failure, but then a flashback shows how some clever preparation means it's actually all going according to their plan. If you want to embrace that trope, a simple way is to use a non-chronological narrative. You run the During the Mission phase but flash back to the Before the Mission phase as appropriate. When a character is confronted with an obstacle, options include:

1. **Flashback.** A player reveals a Before-the-Mission effort during which their character prepares something that helps the group bypass that obstacle. For example, when trying to enter a gala, the narrative could flash back to a PC trying to acquire forged invitations—that PC can then make an appropriate check.
2. **Normal.** A character makes a check to try to overcome the obstacle. For example, when a character tries to distract the crowd so that it's possible for another character to steal a valuable relic on display at the gala without being noticed, that PC makes an appropriate check in the moment.
3. **Wait, That Didn't Happen.** When a character fails a check during the mission, another character can reveal a Before-the-Mission effort that could grant that character advantage on the check. For example, when a PC tries to bypass the security on the case holding the relic and fails the check, it's presented as a "worst case scenario." Another PC can use their Before-the-Mission check to grant the first PC advantage, allowing them to roll a second die and hope this one succeeds.

This mix of in-the-moment, flashbacks, and framing narratives can make the characters' efforts seem slick and cool. And if they try to solve a problem in a flashback and fail anyway, it can be played as an unexpected reversal when the characters realize their "clever plan" didn't actually work.

Some obstacles need to be dealt with sequentially, so while all the characters are present, one takes the lead. If the Narrator agrees, other characters might assist the lead character somehow (and grant advantage), but that's not always viable. Other obstacles might require the party to handle multiple challenges at the same time, forcing them to split up.

Deflecting Blame. A common player-imposed obstacle might involve deflecting the blame for something that happened to frame someone else. A character who takes the lead in this task narrates their plan, and then makes a check if necessary, usually against DC 10. Usually a character gets only one chance at this and cannot try again if they fail.

An effort to deflect blame is most likely undertaken during the mission, but sometimes it can be done before the mission. Trying to frame a priest for defacing a rival god's temple, might see a PC scrawl appropriate quotes from scripture with Intelligence (Religion). To make the public suspect the head of the constabulary committed a murder, before they undertake their assassination they might print false threats of his toward the victim using Intelligence (Deception), or even make those threats in person with Charisma (disguise kit).

Complications

Complications come if a character fails two attempts of the same action during a secret mission. The most common sort is that the

character's efforts leave a clue that—usually after the mission is over—can direct investigators toward the party. Sometimes the clue can be rather blatant and can cause people to immediately view the character as a threat.

For example, if during a museum gala heist a character tries to cause a distraction so that the guests and guards aren't looking while another ally snatches the relic, two failures means at least some people in the crowd figure out what the character was up to. If, though, the character trying to bypass the alarm on the case holding the relic fails twice, they might have to just smash it open, which immediately summons the guards.

The Narrator should try to make sure that complications don't result in automatic failure. The party might defeat a few guards in battle, which cows the rest for a moment, letting the characters flee. Or they might just need to overcome a new obstacle, and make an ability check (now with disadvantage) to outrun the guards and avoid a fight.

Another complication might be a loss of face, such as if a character is surveilling by hobnobbing at a fancy party and is seen as gauche for asking too-pointed questions. A complication could cause a character to suffer a level of exhaustion, or damage (something between 1d6 and 1d10 per level). As always make sure any mechanical penalty is justified by the narrative and story.

Nested Missions

It's possible to have a truly elaborate mission with a dozen obstacles, but in such cases it's usually better to break the endeavor into multiple nested missions. This might represent the group finding a way to overcome a seemingly impossible task by tackling it bit by bit through smaller missions.

For example, if the mission's goal is to recruit an enemy agent who knows the location of the main villain's secret base, the party might first need to draw him out, then force him into a compromised situation so he's desperate for help, and then turn him. However, each step could require its own secret mission:

- Draw him out by stealing something he wants so you can auction it.
- Make him desperate by framing him for betraying his own side.
- Then, when he enters a high-stakes card tournament to try to raise funds so he can go into hiding, enter a PC to outplay him while fending off the hostile agents trying to silence him.

It's not necessary to structure all these as skill challenges, but having the structure available can help you plan more complex adventures. You might even use other new mechanics—influence, inquiries, and pursuits—to structure how the party overcomes various obstacles.

Secrets of the Setting

Don't read this red-outlined section if you are playing in a Zeitgeist campaign—it might spoil some surprises!

Cult of the Steel Lord

Benedict Pemberton actually is the dragon Gradiax. Two hundred years ago he was spared by King Boyle and swore a pledge to never harm Risur. In the year 494 AOV he returned to the gnolls who worshipped him and revealed himself. The cult had kept safe an egg that had belonged to his long-dead mate, and they hatched it. His daughter, **Terakalir**, was born missing a leg, a wing, and an eye, but she was exceptionally clever, and Pemberton ensured she received an excellent education.

In 501 AOV, he attempted to replace Bruse Shantus's advisors with metal duplicants, a type of remotely-controlled construct he invented and Tinker Oddcog refined and perfected. His plan was to gradually gain influence with the Bruse, but when the duplicants were discovered he tried to salvage his scheme with an attack to decapitate the leadership. But the Bruse survived, and Pemberton directed his people to let the Berans salvage their pride and win a few fights, then sue for peace.

A Second Chance

Shantus learned that Pemberton was the dragon Gradiax, but swore his ministers to silence. He knew if the news became public, his people would insist on war to destroy the last dragon tyrant, and he did not want to see Ber ravaged by war.

During the Great Eclipse, Pemberton expended significant personal resources helping Risur's King Baldrey avert calamity, a move that earned him a bit of a pass on previous misconduct. He took time to plan and then returned to Karch to try again to lead his people. After being something of a hero, he no longer has a desire to merely conquer, but instead wants to become beloved by the whole world as a bringer of technological wonders.

Other Secret Dragons

Pemberton's daughter Terakalir has adopted the persona of **Teri Pemberton**. Risur's principal minister **Harkover Lee** was once the tyrant **Inacht the Hex-Eater**, but has loyally served the monarchy for two centuries. There could certainly be others if you want for your game.

Vekeshi Secrets

All Vekeshi mystics have witnessed a vision of Srasama's death. The information below should be presented to any PC with the Vekeshi Mystic character theme.

The Fall of Srasama

You have undertaken the Trial of Srasama. You traveled at night into the Dreaming, and after walking through the dark forest and being tested in your knowledge of Vekesh's song, you stepped through a flaming arch onto a day-lit battlefield five hundred years past. You looked beyond an Elfaivaran army to the enchanted walls of Alais Primos, bastion of the Clergy. The humans had stolen this land from Elfaivar, but now was the time to reclaim it.

A shadow fell across you, and then heat baked your back and the glow of fire above you drove away all darkness. You looked up past three pairs of flaming swords to the face of a towering woman, a warrior, a queen. Srasama strode past you, drawing forth ecstatic cheers of victory from the armies, for a god had come to answer their prayers and fight beside them.

She cut through the dome of golden light that warded the city, then dashed a stretch of wall to dust with a strike of her foot. The Clergy's army surged out to meet her. Every spear, every arrow, every silvery spell that would have felled an Elfaivaran warrior was turned upon the goddess, but she battled with an implacable might. At times four of her six swords floated beside her and continued to cleave through the human army while her other hands would cast forth explosive vegetation that choked the city, or spread healing rains upon her injured worshipers.

But the human army did not yield. No attention at all was paid to the thousands of invading infantry. With religious fervor the humans bent all their might upon Srasama. They were prepared, as if they knew to expect her when even her worshippers did not. Finally her immaculate skin was pierced, and a single spray of divine blood rained upon the battlefield.

In that moment, you saw doubt ripple across the armies of Elfaivar, fear that their god was imperfect. The faith that had carried them into battle faltered. And what was this god but faith made manifest? In their doubt, her divinity failed.

Spears pierced Srasama's legs, and she stumbled. Summoned specters swept across her back, stealing her strength, and her blades fell to the earth. A thousand cuts dragged her down, and men climbed upon her and drove their blades deep into her flesh. An inferno burned forth from her wounds, instantly killing hundreds and searing the souls of all who witnessed it.

The goddess screamed, and every woman in the Elfaivaran army screamed with her.

The world shook, and the scene shattered like glass and fell around you, returning you to the night. Even a glimpse of the goddess's death had nearly stopped your heart. For a moment the memories of faces drifted past you—every woman you had ever known, child, mother, crone, lover—all of them dead in an instant. You turned and followed them into darkness.

The Return of the Gulmohar

In that darkness you heard a slow grind like distant rolling thunder. When light returned, it was a far different time, in a solemn jungle clearing. Srasama's body lay in serene repose, still titanic, but draped in a shroud. You were alone, but just out of sight loomed the spirits of the millions who had died with their goddess.

Above the treetops the stone tower of a lighthouse rose, brick by brick, year by year. Its light beckoned someone to come and end this mourning vigil. An age passed. You heard on the breath of the wind the mantra of Vekesh. You knew patience that would carry you to the end of the earth.

And then a visitor stepped into the clearing. All you could see of her was a mask that hid her face, and that she wore no ring.

A spirit from among the vigil stepped forward to greet the visitor. She explained that the memory of Srasama endured. While the faith of soldiers in the holy war had faltered, the devotion of the vekeshi had not. And so the power of Srasama was for the vekeshi to claim, to finally enact the goddess's vengeance. The spirit offered a necklace with three amber beads.

The visitor reached out to take it, but hesitated. She looked around the grove, as if sensing the uncounted dead who watched.

The visitor spoke, her voice trembling. "Remembrance is not the same as faith. I have fought wars. And I have had vengeance. But who am I to wield your power? You should make that choice for yourselves."

With care, the visitor took the necklace and broke the strand, then gathered the fallen pieces of amber.

"Come with me."

She turned and walked into the jungle, and with her went every woman you had ever known, child, mother, crone, lover, all.

Your Charge

You have seen why the Elfaivaran people nearly perished five centuries past. And you have seen the choice that let the gulmohar return. These are two verses, but you must find the third in yourself. We are pledged to stop those who would harm innocents, and especially those whose ambition would lead the world to another holocaust. But when we are not called to act, we must ponder the paths before us.

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Remnants of the Demonocracy

Before the Great Eclipse, any demon that died would eventually reform, or else its malevolent spirit would possess a person, creature, or object. The Clergy sealed away countless demons in their war against the Demonocracy. When the faithful executed deities during the God Trials, however, the magic that had been created by those gods failed, and many demons escaped. Of those, there were three who had held high positions in the Demonocracy.

- **Namtar-Shamash**, the Pestilent Sun, was a purveyor of disease and corruption, said to draw his strength from a living skull where his heart should be, which caused him to be strengthened by all that was good and safe in the world. He was invincible in the light of the sun, healed by the prayers of his enemies, and spread disease through sacred prostitutes who themselves were immune to his plagues.

  Since escaping his prison in the sewers of Alais Primos, he has begun to gather followers in the Senesi Desert, and has taunted the Clergy by befouling the sacred oases of the goddess Velkali.
- **Ishara-Anaan**, Bride of Birds, was a seer and spymistress who drew power offering demonic pacts through her vast legion of white messenger songbirds. Her body was pierced with thousands of rings—reminiscent of marriage bands—to represent the souls who had bound themselves to her.

  She escaped her cell beneath a chapel run by monks with a vow of silence and fled to the Penance Peaks. She seems to have taken her own vow of silence, sometimes appearing as an eerie witness to people's oaths or professions of love. Her birds, however, sing for her, and have muttered in monster hunters' ears around the country, sharing sightings of fiends, warning of their powers, and whispering their weaknesses. The survivors of the monastery that once imprisoned her have vanished from Alais Primos one by one, only to later be sighted walking the mountainous penance shrine trail, refusing to say their purpose.
- **Ashima-Shimtu**, the Lady of the Forked Tongue, was seneschal of the Demonocracy and keeper of its greatest secret: a ritual called the *sacrament of apotheosis*, which channeled the loyalty of unholy legions to give demon generals godlike power. Triegenes himself captured her, and she was sealed in the Vault of Heresies, hung from twelve hooks, with a thirteenth hook through her lips to prevent her from spreading lies about the Clergy.

  People in Cherage reported seeing a woman with barbed chains trailing from her back near one of Han Jierre's enchanted lighthouses, which had sapped the free will of those caught in their light. Witnesses recorded her words:

> "Trigenes promised all could be redeemed. I thought I'd changed. But I feel it in the air: I cannot choose. I must do what *they* say is right! With no temptation to overcome, how can I be redeemed? This 'freedom' is worse than chains, a worse lie than any Ashima-Shimtu ever told, and I will tell it no more. I do not want this false freedom. If it's the only choice I am granted, give me death."

She has not been seen since.



Sample Conspiracies

People believe many secret societies are at work trying to shape the modern age, often with nefarious intent. While some groups like the Queen Bee Lodge are publicly known, these conspiracy theories go far beyond verifiable facts. Other groups might not even exist at all. Perhaps you will discover the truth in your Zeitgeist campaign.

Here are some of the most popular conspiracy theories.

Clear Waters

A hidden ceraunic wave station in the Yerasol Islands rallies whistleblowers around Lanjyr to abolish all national secrets. But some who do not understand electromagnetism believe these transmissions are compelling people's minds, which is provoking desperate Drakrans to confess to lies and reveal their most embarrassing secrets. It might just be some collective hysteria, or a rationale Drakrans use to excuse outbursts when they cannot bear the strain of the nation's spreading solipsism.

Or perhaps the Clear Waters just haven't gotten good at aiming their mind control beams yet.

The Heart's Rodeo

Spiritual gurus from the Malice Lands—who claim they can use trained malice beasts to consume the undesired emotions or thoughts of the bereaved or mentally ill—often trade on this kooky conspiracy. They say that rugged herdsmen used to lassoing cattle learned to drag the anxieties of people into the real world as monsters they call varmints, and if they slay those varmints, they can kill the idea that spawned them.

A few traveling shows play to these stories, but in Ber people fear the group are somehow connected to the beings called gidim who imperiled Ursaliña. Their real goal is to herd people like they herd livestock, because if they can turn sorrows into varmints, they can do the same to joys, to reason, to the desire for freedom.

L'église de Lisette

Arcanotechnologists—often courseurs and construct-crafters—have embraced the urban legend of a highly advanced artificial intelligence named **Lisette**. Said to combine arctech and a psychic gestalt, Lisette is being nurtured and trained by the temple of Ingatan in Elfaivar or the Danoran colony Rationalis, by technologists who style themselves the priests of a nascent goddess. They're said to kidnap the brightest minds in the world to add greater intellect to Lisette's gestalt. Other tales say that the goddess is being built to hold the mind of Empress Eloise Duffet-Jierre, to let her take control of all technology and rule the world.

La Liga de Oro

This sprawling gang in Ber consists of gentlemen and ladies who've turned scoundrel, engaging in bank robberies and train heists. They leave a token cut of their earnings for the poor and needy, but keep most so they can live the high life. But in popular imagination they are servants of an ancient fiend called **Egal the Shimmering**, lord of the Golden Legion, who led his people with the promise that loyalty would lead to wealth, and wealth would lead to freedom. Authorities who have raided Golden League lairs report finding altars covered with golden skulls.

Mandatum Mortuum

Spirit mediums, necromancers, and other thanatic sensitives serve the afterlife's many spirits. They recruit those who have lost those important to them, saying their duty is to carry out the will of the dead, however callous or amoral the requests may be; the living are far outnumbered by the dead, and so mortal suffering is outweighed by the needs of the afterlife. They oppose all witchoil and necromantic spirit-binding.

Those who serve loyally learn the truth: that they follow an undead egregore known as the Ghost Council, whose goal is to rally the dead and control the plane Amrou and its influence on the afterlife. Their endgame is to merge the Waking and the Bleak Gate, creating a world where all can exist eternally as spirits spread across multiple possession-vessels.

Nuevo Triunfo Vida

This public group in the Beran city Ursaliña is said to be agents of a sprawling international effort to create one world government, but with the guise of independence. Believers claim that symphony halls being built around Lanjyr are focal points of a global psychic web, and that by inviting world leaders to performances, the NTV can draw them into a gestalt—controlled by Risur's gnomish Queen Iain Waryeye.

The key clue is the name of her intended world governing body: the *Concert* of Nations.

The seafaring circus known as the Wayfarer Cirquelistes are frequent guests in Ursaliña, and they always seem to dock their ship at one specific spot off shore. Students from the Triuno are seen rowing to that location, even when the circus is not visiting, like they're guarding something. Constables had to save Flint's Navras Opera House from being burned down by a conspiracy theorist the last time the wayfarers performed there.



Queen Bee Lodge

The lodge is a popular organization based out of Beaumont in Danor, where high society folks can find relief from the stresses of modern life and acquire a bit of personal martial defensive training. Their iconography has shown up in many new Danoran buildings, and Revanchists presume the lodge with its wealthy members is firmly in favor of the Concordat.

But since membership is limited, people have invented all manner of tales about the group, including that it is poisoning people to drive them to violent madness, that the titular "queen" is actually a resurrected gulmohar using the society to enact revenge for the Great Malice, or that the founder of the lodge is in fact a giant hyper-intelligent bee lairing in a hive in the city's sewers.

Sestra Proyekta

Many in Drakr scoff at the idea that it's possible to build a vehicle that can fly to the stars. Surely all the money being spent and brilliant minds being recruited for the **Planarnaya Kompaniya** must be working on something else. And that something, Project Twin Sister, is an effort to shift the world to another timeline, one where perhaps the Great Eclipse never happened, or where it turned out differently.

Believers in the conspiracy cite all sorts of inconsistencies between their recollections and the recorded history. A panic over the possibility of time being changed prompted Drakr to organize Risur and Ber in an international ban of *personal revision hourglasses*. Anyone seen using one is clearly a member of the conspiracy. But, according to brave reporting in a news journal that the government denounces as a tabloid, not all members of the Project are sinister. For the right price, some can reach into that other reality and bring back messages from loved ones who perished here but live there, or they can ferry people in trouble to that world as refugees, where a utopia we were denied welcomes all who are in need.

The Silent Wheel

While it is public knowledge that Queen Iain Waryeye of Risur wants to find a way to help Risuri fey live in harmony with modern technology—fey who so often complain about the screeching of spinning wheels—there is a deeper goal, meant to destroy Risur's ancient bond with its Dreaming neighbors. According to this conspiracy theory, the Dreaming can be altered by the beliefs of people in the Waking, and so if the Risuri people can be convinced that fey and technology *ought to* coexist, they *will*.

This seems harmless enough, but if that change can work, what else could people be persuaded of? Risur has many old obligations and pacts with the fey, and people think the Queen would like to be rid of them. All it takes is to make enough people believe that the fey are just *dreams*, that they're not real, and eventually they'll cease to exist.

The Secrets of Egregores

The nature of the egregoric columns is a tightly-guarded secret known only to well-connected organizations and esoteric scholars.

Classified files speak of unusual psychic energies emanating from Urim. When Vona's sunlight strikes the aureate asteroids of the Shattered Golden Chain, there is a tiny chance that the reflected rays travel down to the planet and hit at a perfectly straight angle. When this subtle planar conjunction occurs in the presence of strong collective thoughts and emotions, the rays create a shaft—invisible at first—that lasts at least for a few hours, sometimes far longer.

Egregoric columns are like psychic echo chambers, drawing minds together. They are typically 30 feet in radius, and are believed to have no measurable "top" or "bottom," stretching skywards and earthwards even through solid barriers.

Every egregoric column requires external thought to sustain itself; many wither away within a day. But if one is created in a populated area, it can become effectively permanent unless controlled, gradually becoming visible as a column of faint golden light.

Occultists classify columns in four strengths, I through IV, based on the overall power of the spawned egregores. The entire planar system was under category IV during the Great Eclipse.

Egregoric columns are mighty fonts of psionic power, for within them egregores can spawn. Egregore-crafting is their main appeal, but they are also useful for any form of psychic research: psychic rage reservoirs, imbuement of Clericists as godhands, spirit mediumship, *genius loci* communion, and more.

Crafted Collectives

A group of seven or more can merge into a gestalt inside a column simply by mutually experiencing powerful thoughts and emotions on a common concept, over the course of several uninterrupted minutes. It is possible to add a new member to an extant gestalt by bringing both inside the column, and having the entrant fixate (willingly or otherwise) on the relevant spawning concepts, likewise for several uninterrupted minutes.

Sometimes the formation of an egregore is accidental. These feral hiveminds are hostile and violently fanatical to their birthing concepts, though unlike in the Great Eclipse they cannot expand simply by overwhelming the mind of anyone nearby. Most, thank the gods, are not clever enough to drag people back to the column that birthed them.

Things are different if people knowingly band together, decide on a common concept to strongly think about, and focus their minds and souls with steely discipline. Emotion-heightening malice beast parts help some subjects, but others find it difficult to focus on the proper sentiments under such influence. If their will is strong and their composure sharp, their psyches fly out of their bodies and combine to create a bespoke egregore.

Many of these egregore-crafting attempts fail, spawning just another feral specimen of squandered intellect.

Plots and Possible Futures

Barring actions that player characters in your games might take, here are some likely events in the next few years.

Ber

In Ber, the identity of the dragons Risur protected two centuries ago is revealed, and when Risur declines to admit fault, relations between the two nations turn bitter.

Benedict Pemberton (head of the Cult of the Steel Lord and now revealed to be the dragon tyrant Gradiax in disguise) tries to offer a hand of friendship, but Bruse Corta Nariz is able to take advantage of broad international resentment toward Risur to unite Crisillyir, Danor, and Drakr in an embargo of the steelmarked gnolls of Karch. This in turn draws Elfaivar's ranimandala into a loose alliance with Pemberton.

Crisillyir

In Crisillyir, an Ottoplismist militia in the northeast overthrows an unpopular local governor and bloodily purges the city Cadute of Meliskans. The hero of the revolt, **Tulasi Gilberto**, parlays public support to be granted a seat in the national congress. She travels the country rallying the most militant Ottoplismists and creating a broad sense that Elfaivar is a looming threat that Crisillyir must prepare to fight.

The demon **Namtar-Shamash** sends emissaries to tempt the bloodmarked gnolls and other rebellious peoples of Ber. Clergy inquisitors who would intervene are distracted by a mysterious all-hands manhunt ordered by the Arch Legate for a mid-ranking defector who fled to Elfaivar.

Danor

In Danor, President Duvall's apaisant faction is soundly defeated in an election, but he manages to retain his office with unexpected revanchist support. Empress Duffet-Jierre accuses Duvall of using mind control magic, and calls upon Ber's Executores dola Liberta to investigate.

With Duvall embroiled in controversy, Duffet's Imperium annexes the Malice State of Nikhal. Refugees fleeing the conflict suffer from memory gaps; when asked to describe what happened, they mention details of conflicts that occurred centuries ago.

Meanwhile, Beaumont is gripped by anarchist protests seeking to devolve the nation into numerous smaller, independent states. When a massive summer storm sweeps in from the Yerasol Archipelago, strange beings from other worlds imperil the city.

Drakr

In Drakr, Chancellor Heid dies under mysterious circumstances. A rapid reshuffling of clan and industrial alliances leads to Trekhom mayor **Losevskaya Fyodor** becoming the new chancellor. Empowered by sympathy for the martyred Heid, she looks set to enact major, meaningful reforms that will give more political power to population centers rather than clans.

Then gigantic armageddon beasts begin attacking Drakr's southwestern region known as the Stena. The convenient timing lets the clans demonstrate their military value to the nation, and since they're already mobilized, Armiger-aligned forces march onward to claim territory near Orithea in the Malice Lands, nominally to "defend the locals against armageddon beasts." This short war is brutal due to modern weaponry, and international condemnation deters other military conflicts for a few years.

Elfaivar

In Elfaivar, the ranimandala generally stick to a plan of sitting back while their enemies implode. They consolidate their gains after Adin's reclamation, hoping to appear an appealing and stable ally in this time of uncertainty. Internal conflict rises as Adin's supporters whip up nationalist desire for another invasion of Crisillyir, but the ranimandala deflects that toward a less complicated conflict with the slaver state Shaha. A fey dragon from Ber agrees to help, and the gnolls of Karch offer Pemberton weapons.

Risur

In Risur, Queen Iain sees the fraying peace as a chance to bring leaders on board with her Concert of Nations. Though Ber, Crisillyir, and Drakr are angry at Danor for failing to fulfill its Concordat repayments, Iain manages to convincingly frame Empress Duffet-Jierre as responsible for this, as well as many other Lanjyran woes.

But as she wrangles the various nations to align against this mutual enemy, the Last Ravens thieves' guild in Flint manages to snatch the power of one of the fey lords of the Unseen Court. The Queen's support at home starts to falter, and if her servants in the RHC can't bring the thieves to justice, her coalition will fall apart, and the period of relative peace that Risuri leadership has provided may come to an end.

A Different Cosmology

If you played the original adventure path and your group chose planes other than the ones detailed in Chapter Five (which is likely because we, um, sort of retconned things to get the set we liked), here we suggest some ways to change the setting as presented in the rest of the book, as well as some alternate game mechanics for popular planar choices. To be certain, the bigger changes are likely societal, not mechanical.

Societal Changes

For instance, losing Ostea wouldn't alter the progress of the past two decades much, but without Teykfa and Ascetia, the nations of Lanjyr might have moved to war more quickly. Without Urim, far more extraplanar creatures would be on the Waking, particularly the Gidim who would be constantly probing for ways to mine the population's delicious thoughts.

Removing Jiese makes mass production of technology much harder, which would mean fewer trains and steamships and firearms, though individual inventors and tinkerers could still produce such devices in small batches.

We divide these worlds into four main styles.

Utopian. The planar arrangement we chose for this setting book is close to what was proposed as a utopia, minus the healing beer of Dunkelweiss and the admittedly silly musicality of Iratha Ket. If you want a cleaner "happy ending" for the adventure path, you could tone down some of the social strife and steer adventures toward exploring the other planets, albeit with the occasional conspiracy back at home trying to take power and corrupt a city or nation.

Technocracy. The planes that held sway during the Great Eclipse tended to promote industry and rationality, and a few from the Gyre could assist that. Baden made flight magic easy.



Mojang would dramatically simplify agriculture and increase its output, at the expense of biodiversity. Ratios would temper irrationality and steer people toward logic. Egalitrix would lead to larger and more competitive industry, which could mean just capitalism, but probably a grand military-industrial complex while could lead to regular oppressive uses of force.

Without Caeloon to support people in trying times, Mavisha to maintain the allure of mystery on the horizon, and Av to keep dreams and nightmares on the other side of a mirror, the world would be a bleaker place. Rebels might yearn for self-expression and exploration, with Ber and Elfaivar finding unlikely allies among Crisillyir's Meliskans against the domineering industry of the rest of the world.

Pastoral. Keeping Apet makes interplanetary adventure infeasible, and Reida means the world won't change much for a few millennia. A mix of Etheax's patience and Metarie's technology disruption, coupled with removing Jiese, could render the campaign world almost unrecognizeable over time. Perhaps two decades in, though, the changes are still being resisted.

Instead of airships being launched, steamship fleets would be dismantled, and Crisillyir's Ottoplismists could be turning to druidic magic instead of gunnery. Risur's Queen Iain would be beloved by the fey, though Flint's thriving community would be grappling with the desire to find some new way to drive progress: perhaps a *service* economy. Across the sea, Danor could be pulling against the leash of the Concordat, the last bastion of a technological revolution it sees as vital to its identity.

God-Empire. We're not sure why you'd want to inflict such a cataclysm on this world, but who are we to judge epic-level PCs wanting to hold onto their power even if millions of people suffered. Bonilathe's lizard-spawning storms and Elofasp's monstrous insect hives could produce some truly fantastic monsters to battle, and Apo would rapidly tear apart even highly civilized areas with spontaneous spheres of annihilation. Far from enforcing a Concordat to cripple Danor, the nations of Lanjyr would likely be cheering technologists whose inventions can keep civilization intact and possibly create the weapons needed to overthrow the greatest tyrants the world has ever known.

And while Hunlow is an evil sentient sea, he loves pirates, and could be the greatest ally the rebels have. You'd want to figure out what dominions each PC claimed for themselves, and personalize the dystopias they all would have created.

Mechanical Changes

Some alternate game mechanics might arise from planar linking.

Baden's Ghostly Flight. Reduce the spell level by 1 of spells directly related to flight, such as *fly* and *levitate*. Magic items of direct flight have their rarity reduced by one step. Airships are much easier to enchant and hold aloft, requiring only small amounts of air planarite. At the Narrator's discretion, other benefits related to magical or supernatural flight are similarly improved.

Dunkelweiss and Restorative Beverages. Hangovers can be cured with ten minutes of brisk exercise. Drinking of any amount has no negative long-term health consequences. Indeed, a night of intense carousing functions as the spell *lesser restoration*.



Elofasp's Bestiary. Training large beasts becomes easier. See the Monster Tamer class from E.N. Publishing's *Masterclass Codex*.

Etheax's Patient Flames. Everyone can use the cantrip *produce flame* as a ritual that requires ten minutes. The duration is an hour, but still ends if a character attacks with it.

Additionally, effects that rely on or produce intense emotion like berserker rage require ten minutes to activate, but have their duration extended by ten minutes.

Fourmyle Jaunting. Every character can teleport short distances, as *misty step*, by spending an action. They cannot teleport to a spot they could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). They also cannot teleport if they're being held, nor can they teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

After using this ability, a character cannot do it again until they complete a long rest. At the Narrator's prerogative, characters who are especially focused on teleportation might be able to recharge this power after taking a short rest.

Jiquus Determinism. The Narrator sets aside the rulebooks, tells the players who their characters are, and then narrates a story. Players are allowed to state how their characters feel, but never how they act. Players are not allowed to leave even if the Narrator quits.

Obliatas and the Devouring Light. All undead are affected by sunlight the same way vampires are. There's an additional small star orbiting somewhere in the system.

Ratios Logic. Increase the DC by 5 for Intimidation checks and Persuasion checks using appeals to emotion. Likewise, emotions become harder to understand, so also increase the DC by 5 for Insight checks.

Thrag's Rapid Reincarnation. Do not pick Thrag. What the hell is wrong with you?

The Truth About Axis Island

There is a word that is not written in this book, a word that twenty years ago every person in the world knew, but now all but a handful have forgotten.

People do not notice that they cannot remember quite what happened during the Great Eclipse. Librarians will not be bothered that, after reading an old newspaper from that time, they feel a compulsion to tear out a small section of the text and destroy it.

If you know the truth about Axis Island, some part of your mind is protected by the magic of the Axis Seal, and you can remember this word, and those it referred to. You might have been on the island at some point, or you were given the truth by the druids of the Axis circle.

The Axis Seal Ritual

In the primordial dawn of the world, what would become the Waking floated in a sea of many planes, its borders unprotected against incursion from hostile and maddening entities. An alliance of primitive peoples led by ancient orcs gathered the magical energies of several worlds and crafted the Axis Seal, a vast plate of solid gold.

Beneath this seal they placed icons and complex geometric patterns that linked a handful of safe slivers of the multiverse to their own world. When the ritual was complete, these slivers were pulled from the primordial sea and left to float in the heavens as a star and its orbiting planets.

The plate acts as a seal for a portal to the rest of the multiverse, and impedes travel to worlds other than those in the local system.

The ritual's completion shattered the continent, created the Yerasol Archipelago, and destroyed the ancient civilization. It lay forgotten until a group reopened the seal in 502 AOV. They changed what worlds were linked to ours, hoping to force civilization to follow their ideals. But they were sabotaged.





The Voice of Rot

An immense serpentine being that the people of Risur knew as a fey titan called **The Voice of Rot** was once a godlike embodiment of death in the frigid north of Drakr. Some forgotten adversary plucked out its eye and drove it across the sea, where it claimed the High Bayou as its domain. For millennia it abided, awaiting a chance to feed on the death of the world itself.

When the Axis Seal was opened, the Voice of Rot's mad cultists ensured those who sought to meddle with the forces of creation could not close the seal. Destructive energy poured forth, and with the golden plate out of place, the world could not find its sun. Instead the Waking and all the worlds bound to it drifted toward a dark graveyard of the multiverse.

The Voice of Rot slithered to the precipice of a cosmic gyre and awaited the end of the world. But so long had it lived as a fey being of the Dreaming that it could not claim its victory unless it defeated a new adversary. Thus were King Baldrey of Risur and his allies given a chance to scour the gyre for other dying worlds and retrieve their essences.

The Strange Hour

Here, at the crux of the story, the truth becomes hard even for you to remember clearly. Somehow it seemed Baldrey and his allies were both in the gyre fighting the Voice of Rot to keep the world from being physically obliterated, and simultaneously flying above the open seal on Axis Island, contesting with another group to control the ritual.

It was then that millions around the world felt themselves being drawn into an ideological battle, lending support to either side. King Baldrey triumphed, and new worlds were bonded to the Waking that would create a brighter future, one designed to give the most freedom possible for people to understand their circumstances and choose how they wanted to live their lives.

But in the moment of victory, somehow an essence of that unspeakable word was tied to the ritual as well. Things that should be written are fouled by obscurity, and it is possible that the Axis Seal might be opened again. Perhaps even it would be better if it were. Would you not like to remake the world, to make it better?

Let me ask you: what if one day you woke up, and the whole world agreed with you?

Graftower
Tunda Peninsula
Bafingrad
Knutpara
Arrovia
Orbal Coast
MALICE LANDS
Pretha
Oritlhea
Eastern Pisgent Mountains
Nikhal
Gulf of Crodiel
Hameçon
Portus Altus
Western Pisgent Mountains
Marie
Marius
Methia
Keskay
Beaumont
Povas
CHERAGE
DANOR
AVERY SEA
Axis Island
Shale
Granit
The Wetlands
SLATE
Flint
The Stena
TREKHOM
DRAKR
Koffimsov
The Mirkwood
Mirsk
Morteshka
Lukala
Shandan
Stawl Mountains
Bhad Rhyzhavdni
BORDER STATES
Nalaam
Pass
Forza Flauros
Cadute
CRISILLYIR
Mare Blakoleu
Mare Schaaro
ALAIS PRIMOS
Sid Minos
McDruid Island
Manhill
Bole
Ancient Thicket
The High Bayou
Favela
Citado Cavallo
Pezarillo
Vendricce
Mare Audacitas
Anglas
Redenzion
Mazara del Vallo
Prejo Vizzuto
Ruta Cornelius
Sawyer
Isle Iandia
ELFAIVAR
Otto
Corov
Denzil
Kanta Mahala
Kirimpulang
Akravan
Port Perrault
Portlandis
RUMAH TERAKIR
Valence
Shaha
Maccam
Karch
SEOBRIGA
Tierra de las Bestias Malecado
Renza
Abismo Condendado
Reo Pedresco
Ursalina
Shantre
BER
RISUR
Stormsail Coast
Ya-Topee
Yerasol Archipelago
0 100 200 300 400
Miles



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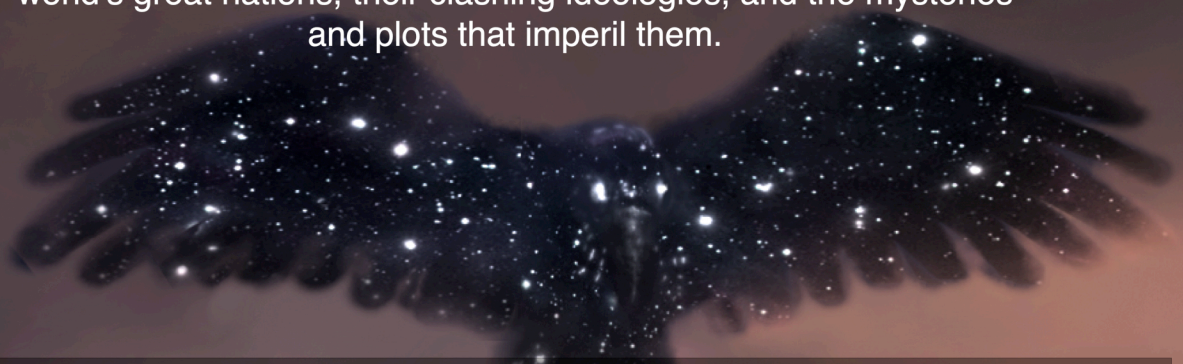
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