

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®

LOST OMENS

SHINING KINGDOMS



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SHINING KINGDOMS

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This book refers to several other Pathfinder products, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available for free at paizo.com/prd.

Book of the Dead (BotD)
Dark Archive (DA)
GM Core (GMG)
Lost Omens Absalom, City of Lost Omens (LOAC)
Lost Omens Character Guide (LOCG)
Lost Omens Divine Mysteries (LODM)
Lost Omens Impossible Lands (LOIL)
Lost Omens Legends (LOL)
Lost Omens Mwangi Expanse (LOME)
Lost Omens Shining Kingdom (LOSK)
Lost Omens Travel Guide (LOTG)
Lost Omens World Guide (LOWG)
Monster Core (MC)
NPC Core (NPC)
Player Core (PC)
Player Core 2 (PC2)
Rage of Elements (RoE)
Secrets of Magic (SoM)
Treasure Vault (TV)
War of Immortals (Woi)









INTRODUCTION

Recent events within the region have been... interesting. Peace has been maintained between the different nations, and there is a sense of possible unity between them, despite their wildly conflicting views. Many of the nations' grand armies have been relegated to training exercises. However, not all is well. As much as we want to ignore it, something wicked is brewing beneath the Shining Kingdoms.

Something torments Galt. When I set foot into Isarn, it felt as though the streets still ran red with blood. I have not seen a Gray Gardener since I've been here, yet their victims still haunt this place, unable to rest. The People's Council is in an uproar. Elected officials engaged in a heated debate over the future of the new democracy. Camilia Drannoch is still an anomaly. She says she has the people of Galt's best interests in mind. Yet something seems off. Not necessarily malicious, but different. Would recommend more agents to keep an eye on her.

Druma is business as usual. Commerce continues. Backstabbing and deals under the table still happen. There has been an uptick in security recently due to the rise in undead attacks on trading vessels. In the meetings I could get access to, I have yet to meet any of the Prophets of Kalistrade. Many say they are unable to attend, and if they do, they always have last-minute business to see to. I sense

something is amiss within their ranks. I am unable to get any more information. Their lips are tighter than the purses they carry. While I detest these business dealings, Druma is still important for their trade routes. Would recommend sending agents to pose as hired help. It may provide more information as to what is going on with the undead.

In better news, the Five Kings Mountains seem to be stable. There are the occasional debates and dissent; it is to be expected with how isolated many of these dwarven communities were. High King Borogrim the Hale is taking everything in stride. The various projects and excavation efforts help in bringing all dwarves together under a shared cause. Continue to monitor their situation for now. If we see the king falter, we may want to discuss if we should act.

Kyonin is as mysterious and guarded as ever. Luckily, my work has been well received here, and my contacts have opened up to me a bit more. What I did for my work is irrelevant, but it did grant me some insight into the events of the country. They are putting more efforts toward the reclamation of Tanglebriar. While the queen is strong, it seems this initiative might need help from the neighboring nations. Should they send diplomats to us, it would be in both of our best interests to receive them.

I arrived in Taldor just in time to attend a royal procession for the grand princess. There is no question she is making a show as she stands strong in front of her people. Despite the display, there is uneasiness within certain parts of the crowd. In the soirees I attended, many nobles were happy with her rule. Those who aren't are keeping up appearances, but it is clear from their words that they are waiting for her to make one mistake. They are ready to pounce. Should that be the case, we may need the Twilight Talons to help support her. I dread to think of what might happen if anyone else in her family takes the throne.

Even within Andoran, there is ill news. I worry the Senate will be divided. Every time I've observed a session, it devolves into a heated debate on whether we should require more conscripts. This is my personal opinion, but I believe it's important I put this into my report: reinforcing our military in such a way will only make us the very tyrants we fight against. Next thing we know, the counsels will create absurd reasons for adding even more conscripts. I do this work because I love my nation, but I am no warmonger. Cheliox will always be a threat to us no matter what, but there must be another way to combat these dangers without forcibly adding more soldiers.

The death of Gorum has made our lands more bloodthirsty than ever. We must do the best we can to safeguard our home, but I fear we need a miracle. We need heroes. Those who can do the impossible. This seems like a fairy tale—but those stories are always based on the truth.

—Decoded Twilight Talons reports from renowned author [REDACTED]

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book goes into detail about the six nations within the Shining Kingdoms, a region at the core of Avistan with a storied history and a heavy cultural influence upon the entire continent. Taldor is the oldest nation of the six. Through its military might and thousands of years of empire, it has cemented its hold as the largest power in the region. The newest ruler, Grand Princess Eutropia, is the first woman to hold such power, and there's great dissent within the nobility despite the positive contributions she's made.

On the opposite end of the scale is Andoran, the youngest nation in the Kingdoms. A democratic republic, they strive for equality and tolerance among all people. Most of their efforts are for the abolition of slavery and the other systems that are slavery in all but name, actively harrying any who practice it. Despite their young age, their ideals have given them a strong foothold among their much older peers.

Druma, where capital is everything, stands on the shores of Lake Encarthan. Despite their dubious mercantile tactics, they provide a strong trade network between nations. Undead attacks on the country have seen an uptick recently, which many merchants are trying to keep hidden.

The local mountains are known as the Five Kings Mountains, the dwarven seat of power within the region. There the five kingdoms work together to reestablish dwarven identity and culture. While the worries of political turmoil have lessened, old enemies awaken from inside the dwarves' stony bastion.

In the haunted lands of Galt, the nation has mostly stabilized—on the outside. With the destruction of the magical guillotines known as the *final blades*, the Gray Gardeners have lost much of their power in the land. However, the country's wounds are still fresh as the spirits of the dead continue to haunt the land, angry and vengeful.

In a forested corner of the region is Kyonin, the elven monarchy that has roots in the pre-Earthfall era. Elves there have strengthened their ties to other nations with the defeat of the demon lord Treerazer. However, sinister forces still lurk within Tanglebriar, the ousted demon lord's former lair.

This book goes in-depth on the region's history, current events, culture, and notable figures with advice on how to implement them within your home games. Additionally, players will have access to new archetypes, feats, and other options if they choose to make a character from the respective nation.

USING THE SHINING KINGDOMS

The Shining Kingdoms are a traditional high fantasy setting filled with honorable knights, grand adventures, and ancient evils. The nations in this book easily fit into different types of campaigns.

For those interested in political intrigue, Taldor is prime for courtly drama and espionage. The party might be employed by different families or political factions to gain favor with the grand princess or to damage her reputation. The party might even be employed by the princess herself. For more grand heroics, the party could align with Andoran to help their cause against tyranny. Meanwhile, Galt has intrigue of a more vicious kind, as the nation is still scarred from its violent past and haunted by restless ghosts.

The Shining Kingdoms have a host of powerful evils in each region. From the forces of the Whispering Tyrant in Druma to the demons still infesting Tanglebriar in Kyonin, there's no shortage of impending threats that the party can take up arms against. Likewise, while the Shining Kingdoms as a whole are filled with secrets and places for exploration, the party can delve past the dwarven cities of the Five Kings Mountains and explore the rocky depths below.

Even if you aren't using the Golarion setting, you can still implement the Shining Kingdoms into your home games! The region could be introduced as a place that recently opened up to the rest of the world. The ancient and undead threats within can entice players to venture into the region and investigate. If there are any party members from prominent families, or if the party themselves have gained notoriety, various noble families from Taldor might invite them to soirees and galas as their special guests. The party can also encounter members of the Twilight Talons who have heard of their good deeds, and who ask for their assistance back in the Shining Kingdoms.

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HISTORY OF THE SHINING KINGDOMS

The nations of the Shining Kingdoms boast extensive and legendary pasts. Most people in the Inner Sea region can recount the details of at least one famous event from the millennia-long histories of the Shining Kingdoms, and stories of heroic and dastardly deeds that emerge from the land have spread throughout other continents of Golarion. Some can tell tales of the might of Highhelm and Tar Taargadth of old, or of elven heroes who gave their lives to protect Kyonin from the corruption of Treerazer. Others recount secondhand stories of the brave freedom fighters of Andoran, the terrors visited upon the citizens of Galt by the *final blades*, or the fading power and grandeur of once-mighty Taldor. Attentive students of history will tell you that many gaps still remain in the historical record, gaps that might be mended by those with minds curious enough to delve into mysteries of ancient and modern times.

AGE OF SERPENTS (UNKNOWN)

Long before the first ancestors of humanity awoke, serpentfolk ruled Golarion.

However, few tales of their great empire have endured throughout the long ages, and the disaster of Earthfall destroyed most traces of their presence. It was during the Age of Serpents that elves first came to Golarion. Using the technology of the *aiudara*, powerful magical portals known in the common tongue as “elf gates,” elves traveled to Golarion from their homeland of Sovyrian on the planet Castrovel. When they emerged on Golarion, the first elven visitors found themselves in a land of lush forests and clear rivers. In time, they came to call this land Kyonin. Their first settlement, which was nestled near the joining of two rivers, was known as Iadara.

If elven records of the ages before Earthfall survive, elves aren’t easily persuaded to share them with outsiders. However, many scholars of elven history say that Candlaron the Sculptor, a master of magical invention, created the *aiudara*. On his arrival to Golarion, Candlaron undertook the task of creating a marvelous network of elf gates that spanned continents so that his people might come and go freely between their new home in Kyonin and more distant lands. When Candlaron vanished at an unknown point in the Age of Serpents, the art of creating *aiudara* was lost with him.

AGE OF LEGEND (UNKNOWN TO -5293 AR)

Elven civilization on Golarion reached its height in the Age of Legend. Iadara became a great center of elven culture, and during this age, its masters of crafting and arcane arts knew no rivals. As elves used the *aiudara* to travel to distant lands, elven influence spread to many places, including the Fangwood, Mierani Forest, and the continent of Garund, to name only a few.

It was also during this age that Kellid humans began to flourish in modern-day Druma. The ancient Kellids first roamed the land in nomadic groups, evolving into a more agrarian society as they grew accustomed to the relative peace of the era. Strong trade networks sprang up, and Kellid peoples began to experiment with crafting and invention. Among their most common creations were stone blades, which are now frequently unearthed at archaeological sites in Druma. Due to the initial discovery of these blades near the modern-day town of Macridi, the civilization is known as the Macridi Blade culture.

The Macridi Blade culture is also notable among scholars for their constructions, which typically included impressive earthworks and stone structures, as well as their dominant belief system, which surviving elven records name as “the Speakers of the Pale.” This belief system emphasized



KING TAARGICK

connections between humanity and other ancestries, as well as humanity's relationship to the natural world. Spiritual leaders, known as Speakers, taught the importance of mutual aid and served as bridge builders between Kellid communities and fey inhabitants of Palakar Forest. Speakers also took on the mantle of intercessory communication with the afterlife, directing the Macridi Blade culture to bury their dead in caves so that Kellid ancestors might guard against any sinister beings emerging from the Darklands. There's evidence that the Speakers guided the construction of the Macridi Blade earthworks and developed a petroglyph-based system of communication that remains indecipherable to modern scholars.

AGE OF DARKNESS (-5293 AR TO -4201 AR)

The catastrophe of Earthfall brought drastic changes to the whole of Golarion. Elves foresaw the coming disaster and chose to withdraw to Sovyrian, leaving behind only a small remnant of their people in Iadara to provide succor for others and watch over sites of elven cultural heritage. In the ages that followed, the few elves remaining in Kyonin witnessed the looting of their most beloved cultural relics by many outside forces, an indignity that many elves resent to this day.

Earthfall also catalyzed the destruction of the Macridi Blade culture, devastating their agricultural efforts and forcing Kellid peoples to return to a nomadic way of life. Although some made their way south to the land that would become Andoran, many remained in their ancestral lands. Guided by the Speakers of the Pale, Kellids roamed what's now modern-day Druma for several centuries until the arrival of orcs, who were fleeing upward from the Darklands before dwarven warriors on their Quest for Sky. Language, desperation, and cultural barriers created tension between orcs and Kellids, and these tensions quickly escalated into open conflict. Both sides sustained losses over many years, but Kellids fared worse in the fighting. Their numbers dwindled further as they retreated into the hills and mountains, ceding the lowlands to orc civilizations.

A new regional power emerged with the arrival of dwarves on the surface of Golarion. In -4987 AR, united under the banner of King Taargick, dwarves completed their Quest for the Sky. While they initially emerged in the land that would become Belkzen, they soon reached what would become the Five Kings Mountains and began construction of their sixth Sky Citadel, Highhelm. Although farmlands had been badly affected by Earthfall, fields had begun to recover by the time dwarves reached the surface of Golarion. King Taargick shrewdly surmised the value of the fertile lowlands of Druma and moved quickly to claim them for the kingdom of Tar Taargadth.

Initially, many Kellids appreciated the protection and stability offered by dwarven rule. The expectations of dwarven guardians of Tar Taargadth soon caused friction with traditional Kellid culture, however. Kellid relations with dwarves became increasingly strained in response to a series of perceived slights, culminating in an incident known as the Goat Skirmish. This conflict occurred between a Kellid goatherder and a dwarven official: some stories say the dwarf killed the goat and refused to pay the traditional blood price, while others insist the dwarf wanted to make a fair trade for the living animal, but when the Kellid refused, the local community of dwarves retaliated by taking the whole herd. The truth of the inciting incident might be lost to time, but the aftermath isn't. In response to this dwarven insult to Kellid pride, the Speakers of the Pale sanctioned a night of bloody retribution against the local dwarven settlement, killing many innocents in the process. Ultimately, the conflicts that sprang up in the wake of the Goat Skirmish culminated in the first Drumish rebellion, a war in which dwarves emerged victorious. The war

TIMELINE

Unknown	Elves travel to Golarion from Castrovel and found Kyonin.
Unknown	Candlaron the Sculptor disappears. The art of creating <i>aiudara</i> is lost with him.
Unknown to -5293 AR	The Macridi Blade culture flourishes in what's now Druma.
-5293 AR	Earthfall. Elves sense the imminent cataclysm and withdraw to Sovyrian, leaving only a small remnant of their people behind in Iadara. The Macridi Blade culture vanishes in the wake of the event.
-4987 AR	Dwarves emerge from the Darklands on their Quest for Sky.
-4890 AR	Dwarves take what's now Druma for the kingdom Tar Taargadth.
-4867 AR	The Goat Skirmish between Kellid goat herders and dwarves of Tar Taargadth raises significant tensions in the region.
-4866 AR	The first Drumish rebellion against Tar Taargadth. The rebellion is swiftly quelled.
-4366 AR	The Speakers of the Pale decline in relevance and authority.
-4294 AR	The dust from Earthfall clears.
-4202 AR	Gnomes arrive on Golarion.
-3972 AR	Gnomes make their way to Omesta and begin to build a city in the trees.
-3708 AR	The Sky Citadel of Koldukar, capital of Tar Taargadth, falls to orcs.
-3707 AR	Highhelm is declared the new capital of Tar Taargadth.
-2476 AR	The Day of Burned Words in Highhelm.
-1295 AR	Taldaris is declared heir to the Grand Prince of Oppara.

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-1293 AR	Taldaris launches a 12-year war to unite city-states and territories. He founds the Principalities of Taldaris.
-1281 AR	The Principalities of Taldaris become Taldor. Taldaris is crowned emperor.
-632 AR	The Armageddon Engine rampages through Oppara.
-43 AR	The satrapy of Qadira is founded.
-37 AR	The First Army of Exploration sets out from Taldor. General Porthmos destroys the Goroth Lodge in the Verduran Forest.
115 AR	Galt is founded as a province of the Empire of Taldor.
187 AR	Kalistrade is born in Druma.
221 AR	After an illness, Kalistrade turns to spiritual pursuits.
229 AR	Kalistrade's teachings find fame and influence in Druma.
251 AR	Kalistrade goes missing.
408 AR	The tomb of Kalistrade is discovered.
499 AR	The Second Army of Exploration sets out from Taldor.
777 AR	Pixies invade Omesta; instead of being repelled, they're welcomed by its gnome citizens.
1520 AR	The Third Army of Exploration sets out from Taldor. General Coren founds the city of Corentyn.
1551 AR	Tar Taargadth falls to orc attacks and splits into five kingdoms.
1553 AR	The Urian Peace accords are adopted by Qadira and Taldor.
1571 AR	The Five Kings Wars begin.
1580 AR	The Fifth Drumish Rebellion begins.
1683 AR	The Fourth Army of Exploration sets out

marked the beginning of a serious decline for the Speakers of the Pale; in a few hundred years' time, the title would only be a formality extended to senior Kellid spiritual leaders, and in a millennium, the Speakers had passed into memory and legend.

Dwarven influence in Druma continued over the next several centuries, with violence occasionally erupting between dwarves and people of other ancestries. Dwarves began frequent incursions into the Palakar Forest in pursuit of lumber and charcoal, which drew the ire of many fey beings who made the forest their home. In -4411 AR, tensions rose to a breaking point after dwarves refused to pay a series of lumber tolls. Satyr guardians of the forest retaliated by taking several dwarven hostages, which in turn provoked dwarven hostilities. The 17 years of conflict that followed, called the Charcoal Wars, laid waste to at least a quarter of the Palakar Forest. In the end, the Charcoal Wars proved too bloody—and too expensive—for the military of Tar Taargadth to maintain, and dwarven forces were compelled to withdraw from the forest.

AGE OF ANGUISH (-4200 AR TO -3469 AR)

Despite these military challenges, the Kingdom of Tar Taargadth prospered for many centuries. The dust from Earthfall finally cleared during what dwarves call the Gilded Era, and dwarven citizens of Tar Taargadth celebrated the arrival of the "Second Sky." It's said by some dwarven loremasters that the coming of clear skies heralded another unexpected arrival—that of the first gnomes to migrate to Golarion.

No one knows for certain why gnomes made their way from the First World to Golarion. Some say it was by choice, some say by necessity, and some say they were exiled. Whatever the cause, gnomes arrived in Golarion to clear skies and a healing planet. Like many fey beings, they gravitated first to forests—Palakar in the west, Verduran in the east, Arthfell in the south, and Fierani in the north. On arriving in the northwestern region of the Fierani Forest, gnome explorers found a beautiful, abandoned town on the forest floor. Feeling a kinship with the unknown people who'd needed to abandon their homes, gnomes chose not to occupy the city's empty buildings. Rather, they decided to build in the trees above it, utilizing their ingenuity and endless capacity for innovation to create a city in the canopy. So it was that the old elven town was left untouched and intact, and the new gnome city of Omesta was born.

While gnomes were slowly integrating into their new homes, dwarves struggled to maintain their own long-held territories. During this age, the first Sky Citadel of Koldukar fell to invading orcs; within a year of Koldukar's fall, dwarven authorities declared Highhelm the new capital of Tar Taargadth. Although the kingdom would prosper for long centuries to come, the loss of Koldukar heralded the first cracks in the mighty foundations of Tar Taargadth.

AGE OF DESTINY (-3470 AR TO -1 AR)

The Age of Destiny ushered in the rise of human nations as true powers in the Shining Kingdoms. During this era, Taldaris, a young military leader from the southern city-state of Oppara, came into a position of influence. Taldaris was as charismatic as he was brave: contemporary historians of his day described him as a man brimming with promise who won instant favor wherever he went. He quickly rose through the ranks of the Opparan military and gained so much popularity with the authorities and the people that he was soon declared heir to the grand prince of Oppara. Emboldened by his new title and the people's confidence, Taldaris launched a military campaign to unite multiple city-states under his rule. Although he began by securing the allegiance of wealthy coastal cities, rural areas weren't exempt from his quest for power, and all conquered

territories became part of the newly formed Principalities of Taldaris. Twelve years after he began the campaign, Taldaris united the territories under the name Taldor. He was crowned emperor in –1281 AR, and with his coronation he ushered in a new age of power and prosperity for humans in the Inner Sea region.

The new nation of Taldor grew in power and influence for over a millennium. Though their ascendancy was briefly interrupted by the rampage of the spawn of Rovagug known as the Armageddon Engine—which left Oppara completely destroyed—Taldans lived in relative security for the span of 11 centuries. This period was the Golden Age of Taldor, a time of unparalleled prosperity and expansion.

Despite Taldor's might and prowess, there were some troubles nonetheless. Taldans nursed many grudges against the neighboring Empire of Kelesh over territorial disputes, and the conflict between the two peoples eventually resulted in the founding of the satrapy of Qadira as a buffer state along the Taldan border. Periodic conflicts would break out between these two nations for centuries to come.

AGE OF ENTHRONEMENT (1 AR TO 4605 AR)

The empire of Taldor flourished in the Age of Enthronement. Its successes—and failures—are perhaps most clearly illustrated by the aggressive series of expansionist military campaigns known as the Armies of Exploration. Emboldened by its prosperity and military prowess, Taldor deployed eight armies over a period of several centuries with the explicit aim of extending the nation's imperial reach and bolstering its natural resources.

The first of these campaigns began in 37 AR under the command of General Porthmos. Porthmos notably destroyed the Gorothe Lodge, an organized resistance to Taldor's logging efforts in the Verduran Forest, and pursued its founder, the powerful druid Ghorus, until he fled the continent of Avistan for Garund. The success of this campaign fortified Taldor's resolve in asserting power in the region, which doubtless led to the empire claiming the land known as Galt in 115 AR.

The Second Army ventured to the lands north of Lake Encarthan in 499 AR, mapping terrain and befriending dwarves of Kraggodan in the process. Almost a thousand years later, the Third Army, led by the formidable General Coren, made their way westward. An enterprising and strategic leader, Coren used the might of the Third Army to found the city of Corentyn, which served as the gateway for the Army to claim the northern coasts of the Inner Sea. Coren's campaign is widely recognized by historians as the most successful of these ventures; no other Army could boast results that so dramatically expanded and reshaped the Taldan empire.

Over a century and a half later, the Fourth Army mapped and claimed the land that would come to be known as Andoran. With the advent of the Fifth Army in the early 2000s AR, Taldor gloried in the power of the enormous, magical siege engine *Worldbreaker*, which Taldans used to conquer lands as far north as the modern-day River Kingdoms. Less than a century later, this achievement would be diminished by the loss of the *Worldbreaker* to the Gorilla King of Usaro during the campaign of the Sixth Army. The loss of the *Worldbreaker* is widely referenced among historians as the moment the Golden Age of Taldor truly began to show tarnish.

To be sure, there were still moments of glory ahead: any student of the history of Avistan can recount stories of how Taldor, in partnership with many allies, famously defeated the Whispering Tyrant in 3827 AR. Yet the empire's internal difficulties only escalated in the wake of the Sixth's Army's disastrous campaign. As internal conflicts plagued Taldor, its old rival Qadira sensed its increasing military weakness and launched

	from Taldor and maps Andoran.
1707 AR	Taldor invades and claims Andoran.
2014 AR	The Fifth Army of Exploration sets out from Taldor. They use a huge, magical siege engine called the <i>Worldbreaker</i> to assist in their conquering exploits.
2089 AR	The Sixth Army of Exploration sets out from Taldor. They are ambushed and lose the <i>Worldbreaker</i> to the Gorilla King in the Mwangi Expanse.
2133 AR	The Seventh Army of Exploration makes peace with Kellid tribes in Druma.
2332 AR	The Kerse Accord is adopted by the kingdoms of the Five Kings Mountains. The accord is negotiated by Druma in return for Druma's independence on the condition that debt holders in Druma forgive extensive dwarven debts.
2497 AR	Treerazer is exiled to Golarion and finds himself in the Fierani Forest.
2632 AR	Sensing Treerazer attempting to corrupt the <i>Sovyrian Stone</i> , elves return to Golarion from Sovyrian. They push Treerazer back across the southern borders of Kyonin into what's now Tanglebriar.
3001 AR	The cinder dragon Daralathylx arrives in the Five Kings Mountains.
3493 AR	Sidrik the Handsome moves the dwarven capital from Highhelm to Jernashall.
3754 AR	Taldor launches the Shining Crusade against Tar-Baphon.
3827 AR	Taldan crusaders imprison Tar-Baphon using the <i>Great Seal</i> .
3980 AR	A volcanic eruption

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- decimates Jernashall, and Sidrik III moves the capital back to Highhelm.
- 4079 AR Qadira launches a war against Taldor.
- 4081 AR The province of Cheliox rebels against Taldan rule. Weakened by the war against Qadira, Taldor bloodlessly cedes Andoran and Galt to Cheliox in the Even-Tongued Conquest.
- 4200 AR Daralathylx demands a tithe from Highhelm and installs his first emissary on the ruling council of Highhelm.
- 4606 AR The Eighth Army of Exploration sets sail in hopes of glory. They weather the death of Aroden while at sea and eventually make their way to Tian Xia.
- 4640 AR Uprisings against Chelaxian rule begin in Galt.
- 4662 AR Galtan philosopher Darl Jubannich publishes a manifesto against the Chelaxian government. The text becomes an immediate favorite of the masses.
- 4667 AR Galt declares independence. The *final blades* are commissioned by the first Revolutionary Council.
- 4669 AR The People's Revolt liberates Andoran from Chelaxian rule. Last confirmed sighting of Daralathylx.
- 4672 AR The Cailean Council assumes control in Galt, beginning a long series of bloody internal revolutions.
- 4719 AR Tar-Baphon frees himself and sets out to conquer Absalom. He is defeated and flees back to the Isle of Terror, where he bides his time and amasses new forces.
- 4720 AR The dwarves of Highhelm

a new war against the empire. The war spanned half a millennium before the Urian Peace Accords were finally signed. Vulnerable and stretched thin, Taldor soon shrank further when the prefecture Cheliox declared its independence—and its authority over the provinces of Andoran and Galt—in what's known as the Even-Tongued Conquest.

The Age of Enthronement also brought eras of triumph and tragedy to Druma, Tar Taargadth, and Kyonin. In the second century AR, while Taldor was busy claiming Galt for its own, renewed tensions between dwarves and humans in Druma erupted into the Fourth Drumish Rebellion. The humans' dispiriting loss to the forces of Tar Taargadth in 113 AR set the stage for the social changes that would sweep through Druma over the next hundred years.

In 221 AR, a young Drumish man named Kalistrade fell ill as he was due to assume the leadership of his family's business. He emerged from this illness a changed man, focused on dreams, visions, and spiritual pursuits. After selling his inheritance to his siblings and vanishing for several years, he reappeared in Druma in 229 AR, dressed in fine silks and bearing a fortune in gold. He remained secretive about the origins of his wealth but spoke freely of his practices of austerity and of the personal rituals he developed in his travels.

Kalistrade's popularity grew into a prosperous cult of personality that flourished until he disappeared again in 251 AR. Bereft of leadership, his followers gathered Kalistrade's teachings and writings, both public and personal, into the collected Prophecies of Kalistrade. While the cult struggled to maintain relevance over the next century, the discovery of the tomb of Kalistrade in 408 AR brought about a revival of the faith. When the kingdom of Tar Taargadth fell to orc invaders a thousand years later and split into five kingdoms, the Kalistocrats were ready to take advantage of a dwarven need for resources.

The next several hundred years featured countless conflicts: the Fifth and Sixth Drumish rebellions against the new dwarven kingdoms, but also the matter of the wars between the five kingdoms themselves. Throughout it all, the Kalistocrats continued to strengthen trade relations with the kingdoms. Eventually, the Kalistocrats held such a massive amount of dwarven debt from each kingdom that they used their leverage to force the signing of the Kerse Accords in 2332 AR. The Accords brought an end to over 700 years of dwarven conflicts and secured the independence of Druma in the process; the Kalistocrats then seized the reins of power in Druma, which they hold to this day.

The Age of Enthronement also heralded the arrival of two formidable powers in the Shining Kingdoms: the cinder dragon Daralathylx, who took up residence in the Five Kings Mountains and the exiled demon Treerazer, who made his home in Kyonin's Fierani Forest. While dwarven authorities eventually elected to pay tribute to Daralathylx, elves on far-away Castrovel sensed Treerazer's intention to use the elven artifact known as the *Sovyrian Stone* for his own evil purposes. Recognizing the threat that Treerazer posed, elves returned en masse to Golarion and drove him out of Kyonin into the corrupted swamp now known as the Tanglebriar. Pleasantly surprised by some the changes in the millennia since Earthfall—including the presence of gnomes in Omesta—and mortally offended by others, many elves elected to stay in Kyonin and attempt to rebuild a center of elven culture on Golarion.

AGE OF LOST OMENS (4606 AR TO PRESENT)

The death of Aroden and the beginning of the Age of Lost Omens wrought dramatic changes in the Shining Kingdoms. Taldor continued to decline in the wake of the death of one of its most revered deities. Its Eighth and

final Army of Exploration had departed just before the death of Aroden, never to return, and the nation's power and influence faded. In recent times, the War for the Crown erupted throughout Taldor when Grand Prince Stavian attempted to have half the Taldan senate murdered—along with his daughter, Princess Eutropia—to deny his heir's rise to power, plunging the nation into civil war. Eutropia and her supporters prevailed, and with Stavian now gone and Grand Princess Eutropia on the throne, questions around Taldor's future relevance and power continue to loom large in the Shining Kingdoms. Eutropia's reformist policies and status as the first female ruler of the nation has earned her plenty of enemies, in addition to the foes that remain from Taldor's war of succession.

From the People's Revolt, which established Andoran as the region's first parliamentary democracy, to the endless governmental coups in Galt, the region has experienced no shortage of upheaval. Galt, long a nation of artistic and philosophical activity, descended into political chaos after House Thrune seized control of the Chelaxian government. Sparked by the writings of aivuarin philosopher Hosetter and human poet Darl Jubannich, Galt became a hotbed of political unrest and revolutionary thought. Soon after Galt declared independence in 4667 AR, Hosetter and Darl led the country as members of the new Revolutionary Council. The council commissioned the *final blades*, magical guillotines that entrapped the souls of those unfortunate enough to be executed by them. Only a few years later, Hosetter himself would be executed by a *final blade* as a series of tumultuous and bloody revolutions kicked off. It's only recently that the terror of the soul-stealing *final blades* has passed, and Galt's citizens look toward a new horizon where true stability seems attainable.

Andoran has fared more peacefully in its transition away from monarchy. A parliamentary democracy in a land rich in natural resources, Andoran enjoys strong trade relations with nations throughout the Inner Sea. But long-simmering internal tensions threaten to boil over, particularly between those taking advantage of Arthfell Forest's rich timber and groups dedicated to preserving the forest's well-being.

Druma's status as a mercantile powerhouse hangs by a precarious thread. Its largest trade route, Lake Encarthan, is now plagued by the undead forces of the Whispering Tyrant, and the lich casts a long shadow over any economic dealings that merchants attempt to forge. Some less scrupulous brokers prey on refugees seeking supplies and shelter, but there's only so much to be squeezed out of those who have nothing. Druma as a nation has become unusually rife with undead activity, a plague many believe is the result of Druma's resources or proximity to the Gravelands. In truth, the festering rot comes from inside the ranks of the prominent and prestigious Kalistocrats, as supernatural forces rouse deceased members of the esoteric faith from their bejeweled catacombs.

Meanwhile, the construction of Torag's Shield in Highhelm and the death of Treerazer in Tanglebriar have bolstered Avistan's dwarven and elven strongholds. Efforts by Queen Telandia Edasseril to strengthen Kyonin's relationships with other nations indicate broad national trends of preparation and cooperation. If embraced by other nations, these trends will doubtless benefit all peoples of the Shining Kingdoms, especially as the threats of Daralathylx and Tar-Baphon reemerge in the modern day.



TREERAZER

4721 AR

begin the construction of Torag's Shield, a massive defense system.

4725 AR

The Gray Gardeners are defeated in Galt. Treerazer is defeated. The Torag's Shield project is completed. The current year.

SHINING KINGDOMS TODAY



DARALATHYXL

The mood of the Shining Kingdoms in their present state is complicated. It could be called fragile, but this label discounts the careful optimism that many in the lands feel following recent events. It's also at times resolute, but this description falters in the face of the looming dangers that threaten to tear the Kingdoms asunder. Despite the internal power struggles, the consequences of the Godsrain, and the risk of desolation at the hands of ancient powers, it's ultimately a cautious hope that perseveres among the populace.

The greatest threat, naturally, is that of the Whispering Tyrant. When Tar-Baphon rose from the

ashes of Gallowspire 6 years ago, a terrible dread swallowed the Shining Kingdoms. Taldor, after all, took a large part of the blame for Tar-Baphon's defeat; they were a key player in the Shining Crusade, a sponsor of Lastwall, and one of the guardians of the seals of Gallowspire. Aroden, the Whispering Tyrant's nemesis, was closely linked to Taldor in the age of the Shining Crusade. Tar-Baphon is a famously petty figure—other undead power brokers compared him to a sullen child playing as a god—and he isn't the type to let go of a grudge. It was clear to all that when the Tyrant rose to full power, Taldor would be among the first of the lich's targets, and none of its neighbors would be spared. Though the Tyrant was formerly defeated outside Absalom, he wasn't destroyed, and now he and his forces bide their time on the Isle of Terror. Kyonin and Druma, who once saw their position along the shores of Lake Encarthan as an enviable trading position, must now stay vigilant for a potential undead invasion, for upon their banks would the Whispering Tyrant's army land on the road to Taldor.

Cheliah's relationship with the Kingdoms remains exceptionally fraught. Cheliah has been mounting infantry at Andoran's borders, and devil attacks happen more frequently. This worrying increase in hostility has made many of the Kingdoms fear an escalation into war. Nidal has been the target of increased Twilight Talon presence to destabilize Cheliah's closest ally. Ravounel, meanwhile, has opened excellent relationships with most of the Kingdoms—though the independent City of Masks, Vyre, has had more and more Lion Blades visiting as of late, for reasons unclear.

The Godsrain, too, has had incredible influence on the region. When the world was bathed in the blood of Gorum and his armor came down in terrible shards, the Shining Kingdoms held their breaths. After all, when Aroden died a little over a century ago, the effects had been monumental. None could've imagined, therefore, how much greater the impact would be. Even with the transformation of common folk into nephilim, sorcerers, or even exemplars aside, the rain of warshards and divine blood whipped the governments of the Kingdoms into action. Taldor was the first to send troops (namely, the mourning Ulfen Guard) to seek out these remains to empower the nation, but they wouldn't be the last. Despite initial hesitations and internal conflict resolution, all the nations of the Kingdoms have since mobilized to follow Taldor's example. Druma has collected shards and used them as some of the most sought-after bidding material the nation has ever known, whereas the Eagle Knights of Andoran have

begun using warshards for some particularly unique crafting work. None can ignore the opportunities the Godsrain has brought. After all, public safety aside, these relics hold great powers, and might be needed in the days to come.

These dangers are, indeed, unlike anything the Kingdoms have ever faced. The Five Kings Mountains finds a reawakened fury at the claws of **Daralathyl** (imperious male cinder archdragon), the so-called Sixth Mountain King. In Druma, undead construct hybrids, the Broken Prophets, rise from their tombs in dazed fugue states. Galt must deal with the rising popularity of the Broken Ghost anarchists and the threat of the haunted guillotines, the Gray Blades. *Aiudara*, also known as elf gates, flicker unpredictably in Kyonin, and the Ulfen Guard of Taldor faces mass resignation as many are left distraught by the death of their patron deity. Certain threats, however, are more sinister than even these—ones formed not by monsters or godly massacres, but by people. The consuls of Andoran have started to argue in favor of the mass militarization of the Eagle Knights, despite the order's horror at the notion. A secret war begins to boil in Taldor between the most prominent agents of the shadowy Lion Blade assassins. In Druma, the Kalistocracy faces a genuine threat to their rule, led by heretical Kalistocrats who see the return of Broken Prophets as a sign that the current direction of the religion is wrong. Any one of these conflicts could tip into full-scale civil war should a peaceful solution not be uncovered.

Yet, despite these complications, the people of the Shining Kingdoms have hope. Perhaps some might see it as folly, but in times as dangerous as these, any victory can assuage the despair of the populace. And while despair still lurks on the peripherals, none can deny that the Shining Kingdoms have had a fair number of victories in recent years.

The War for the Crown ended in 4718 AR and has since ushered Taldor into something of a renaissance. Eutropia's more liberal rule stands in stark contrast to the conservative leanings of the past, allowing for slowly improving relations between Taldor and the rest of the Shining Kingdoms. Galt, too, faces unprecedented stability following the dissolution of the Gray Gardeners. Despite the threats facing the nation from the catacombs, the age of public execution that haunted Galt for half a century has finally ended. The success of Torag's Shield in the Five Kings Mountains has given the nation a much-needed boost in defense, one they aim to share with allied nations as a bulwark against impossible attacks. Since its completion, dwarven diplomats have begun traveling across the land in their iconic dragon-slaying constructs. The arrival of firearms in Andoran sparked a martial revolution among artificers in the land and caused the Eagle Knights to form a new branch to properly study and regulate the weapons. And of course, though Druma risks many dangers, one can't deny that the Godsrain's gifts have been exceptionally good for business.

Perhaps the most optimistic of nations in the Kingdoms is Kyonin. Following the slaying of Treerazer at the hands of a group of adventurers and the announcement of a royal wedding between Queen Telandia and Zazirele of the Alijae, Kyonin seems on the precipice of a new Golden Age—one that Telandia reinforced with the success of the Encarthan Accord, a pact that oversaw the creation of a formal alliance between most nations surrounding Lake Encarthan. Now providing a united front against the Whispering Tyrant's forces, Kyonin has managed to bring strength and security to the Shining Kingdoms as a whole. With a nascent demon lord vanquished, the chance for elves to push back against fiendish forces to the south have further inspired their neighbors. If Kyonin can outlive a demigod, if Taldor can weather a civil war, if the Five Kings Mountains can withstand the flames of an archdragon, perhaps it's more foolish to fall to despair than to cling to hope.

BEYOND THE SHINING KINGDOMS

The Shining Kingdoms' relationships with neighboring regions vary significantly. The Broken Lands generally coexist with the Shining Kingdoms. The River Kingdoms in particular have complex relationships with Taldor and Kyonin, both of which laid claim to the wild lands now present there. Mendev has good relations with the Kingdoms as a whole, thanks to their support in the crusade against the Worldwound. Brevoy, meanwhile, has lukewarm diplomatic relations with the Kingdoms, largely over petty differences.

The living people of the Eye of Dread have found relationships with the Kingdoms vastly improved. The Encarthan Accords ignited positive relationships between most of the region and Druma and Kyonin. Molthune, unfortunately, backed out of the agreement and is now refusing any comradery with Nirmathas's allies. A surprising change in relations is between Belkzen and the Five Kings Mountains. Belkzen was among the first to support Highhelm's Torag's Shield project, and a diplomatic visit from Ardax the White-Hair made enormous progress in the relationship between orcs and dwarves.

The Isle of Kortos is, as always, one of the closest allies to the Shining Kingdoms. It holds the largest number of Kalistocrats outside of Druma, and the 4720 AR Radiant Festival is where many Andorens first encountered Alkenstar firearms. Recently, a traveling circus from Escadar, the Circus of Wayward Wonders, gained fame throughout the Kingdoms. During a tour of Taldor, a band of performers toppled a warshard-empowered construct, saving the town of Heldren.

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PEOPLE OF THE SHINING KINGDOMS

The people of the Shining Kingdoms are as diverse as the landscape. Nearly every ancestry is represented from Almas to Zimar. Thriving cities are home to most of the region's humans, elves, halflings, goblins, and aiuvarens. A majority of the region's dwarves and orcs reside in the Five Kings Mountains, while many gnomes and leshies live in the lush Verduran and Fierani Forests. Some of the less common ancestries can be found throughout the Shining Kingdoms, like kobolds who make their home in the Darkmoon Vale and iruxis who live in coastal fishing villages.

Humans remain the most common ancestry throughout the Shining Kingdoms. Most of the region is now populated with Taldan humans, but those of Kellid and Keleshite heritage live in Druma and near the border of Qadira, respectively. The Taldan people are direct descendants of the Azlanti people, though many now have a mixed ancestry with Azlanti and Keleshite heritage. As a culture, Taldans tend to be relatively insular, preferring to focus solely on the events and happenings within Taldor rather than the world outside their borders. Fashion and opulence are highly valued, and many Taldan people show their wealth and status with the latest clothing designs and heavily adorned hairstyles. As the nation's first female ruler, Grand Princess Eutropia has opened doors and minds, but Taldans are slow to change and adopt new habits.



GOBLIN

Most Kellid clans in the Shining Kingdoms initially made their homes in the plains and forests south of Lake Encarthan. Nomadic in nature, traditional Kellid clans live off the land and carry only what they need on their backs. Kellids generally have muscular builds with tan to dark skin, dark hair, and eyes that range from green to brown. Their cultural impact plays a significant role in Druma's society, but the clans themselves have changed shape over the years, with intermarriage common between Kellid people and the settlers. Those with a combination of Kellid and Taldan heritage are called Palakari in Druma; they typically consider themselves more Taldan than not, though a few of the old Kellid traditions have been preserved and others have evolved with the blending of cultures. Some clans of traditional Kellids live closer to the Five Kings Mountains, where they continue to fight against hostile orc incursions.

Relations between the Taldan and the Keleshite people have been strained for centuries. Keleshites hail from Qadira, a long-time rival of Taldor. Before Taldor was officially founded, the Empire of Kelesh conquered the settlements, sparking the conflict between the two regions. Despite these issues, some trade was established, and friendships and marriages between the Keleshite and Taldan peoples weren't uncommon. Keleshites almost always have dark hair and dark brown or gold eyes. Even those who reside in the Shining Kingdoms maintain their traditional garb from the desert of Qadira, preferring loose-fitting garments adorned with glittering threads or jewels to show their wealth and honor their culture.

An ancient ancestry, elves are often private and studious, having witnessed centuries of change and folly within Golarion. Despite their otherworldly grace and magnetic charm, they hold their secrets close and are slow to make friends. Elves of the Shining Kingdoms typically reside in their ancient homeland of Kyonin. The elves of Kyonin have recently begun to push for a more active international alliance, though their efforts were interrupted when the *aiudara* reactivated after the Godsrain. The sudden activation of the ancient portal network has forced rapid diplomatic responses to the myriad beings who might be living on the other side. Even with a more global involvement, Kyonin elves continue pursuing their passion for learning, crafting, and the arcane arts. While some still disagree with allowing outsiders into their region, accepting new ideas and traditions has proven valuable to expanding knowledge and creation in Kyonin.

Gnomes arrived on Golarion not long after elves, fleeing an unknown terror in the First World. Many have settled in Wispil within the Verduran Forest, having agreed over a century ago to establish a lumber

industry overseen by the local druids of the Wildwood Lodge. Wispil has grown from a lumberyard to a full-fledged gnome city, operating semi-independently from Taldor and providing nearly all the lumber needed to ensure the stability of the Taldan Navy. Gnomes of this region are generally a jovial bunch and fond of the arts and music. An opera house has even been established in the center of town, drawing tourists from surrounding villages and cities to see what might be the first official gnome opera company.

Brought into being by Wildwood Lodge druids, leshies thrive in the Verduran Forest and surrounding areas. The druids, struggling to maintain balance and protect the vast forest as the Taldan logging industry grew, began entrusting the leshies they created to act as their emissaries to develop more sustainable logging practices with the loggers. After the successful deal with the gnomes of Wispil, several leshies now reside there as managers of the lumberyard. Others travel to every corner of the forest and even into nearby settlements to make deals with the locals to support a thriving ecosystem and environment. The personality of any individual leshy depends significantly on the spirit that inhabits their body. In general, leshies are protective of those who protect them and respect nature in all its forms.

Halflings are relatively common in the region of the Shining Kingdoms, with most making a living working menial jobs in cities within the region. The poor treatment of halflings in Cheliox, coupled with the ongoing tension between Cheliox and Andoran, made Andoran the perfect refuge for halfling families fleeing slavery or ruinous debt in Cheliox. Other halflings traveled from neighboring regions surrounding the Shining Kingdoms and made their homes in nearly every city. Halflings in the Shining Kingdoms are cheerful and easygoing, bringing their vivacious attitudes to local shops and taverns. Many still take up adventuring to fulfill their wanderlust or are hired by adventuring groups, as some consider it lucky to travel with a halfling. In addition to the city-dwelling halflings, a group of Uhlam halflings have resided in the Verduran Forest for centuries. Since they prefer to remain isolated, many are unaware of this clan of halflings apart from the few times they venture into Wispil to sell their intricate crafts.

Orcs were pushed to the surface in the Five Kings Mountains by the dwarves shortly after Earthfall. They breached the surface ahead of the dwarves and conquered many of the smaller Kellid clans before their enemies' arrival. Conflict with both dwarves and humans persisted for nearly 700 years until dwarven warriors forced them to retreat. Some fled north into Tanglebriar, creating small holds that worshipped the demon lord Treerazer, who resided there before his demise. Others fled south into Andoran, relinquishing the centuries-long conflict with dwarves to seek new lives elsewhere. Still more fled across Taldor to the World's Edge Mountains, claiming the region for their holds. Orc culture teaches that their challenges shape who they become, and as such, most orcs actively seek challenges and opportunities to prove their mettle. Though outsiders once assumed orcs were primarily violent warriors, anyone who befriends an orc earns their fierce loyalty and honesty.

Dwarves, previously residing in the Darklands below the surface of Golarion, believed the earthquakes caused by Earthfall to be the completion of a prophecy of Torag, signaling the beginning of their migration to the surface. After 300 years and countless conflicts with orcs, dwarves of Tar Taargadth finally breached the surface of the Five Kings Mountains. Centuries of conflict ensued with orc holds they forced to the surface, finally ending in dwarven victory and the holding of Highhelm. Today, the Five Kings Mountains are home to the largest population of dwarves in Golarion. It's the heart of a renaissance of dwarven culture, leading to

TALDAN LANGUAGE

Taldane, the language of Taldor, is believed to be one of the oldest spoken languages on the continent and is the most widespread language in the Inner Sea region. A blend of Jitska, Kelish, and ancient Azlanti, Taldane is widely used as a trade language. Regions that trade heavily with the Inner Sea have also adopted Taldane as one of their many languages. As Taldane spread across the Inner Sea region and beyond, many localities have adopted their own accents and regional slang. Hard plosives and a strong emphasis on "r" sounds are common in traditional Taldane. The crisper a person's diction, the more affluent they're assumed to be. Members of the upper crust, especially in Taldor, enjoy adding alliteration and subtle verse to their speech.

REGIONAL SLANG

Each nation within the Shining Kingdoms has adopted its own catchphrases or slang terms for various commonplace occurrences.

Pushing Boulders: A common phrase among elves in Kyonin describing either a meaningless task or a person who seems determined to pursue one.

Rumbleblades: Any protest, sharing of propaganda, or overzealous public event witnessed by citizens of Galt.

Lion's Cub: Refers to a working-class citizen in Taldor trying to work their way up the social ladder or a younger member of the aristocracy. An insult when spoken in working-class circles and praise among royals.

Blessed by the Scale: This phrase is commonly used throughout Druma by both followers of Abadar, referring to his symbol, and followers of the Prophecies of Kalistrade, referring to the weighing of coins, to describe a moment of prosperity or good luck.

Walk in Equality's Light: A blessing, greeting, or farewell in Andoran referring to the belief in egalitarianism and the principle that all individuals are equal under the law, regardless of social status or background.

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RARITY

This book features the ancestries found within the Shining Kingdoms region of Golarion. While humans remain the most populous, all core ancestries should be considered common in this region. In addition to the core ancestries, kobolds, lizardfolk, and ratfolk should be considered common due to their larger populations within the Verduran Forest and elsewhere.

Being a general hub for trade and having borders along Cheliah, Qadira, Isger, Molthune, Razmiran, and the River Kingdoms, it's possible to see many of the uncommon ancestries passing through the Shining Kingdoms. The coastal cities of Almas and Oppara might see azarketis traveling from Absalom or wandering catfolk delighting in their latest adventure. To the north, some might see hobgoblins ranging from the Eye of Dread after the fall of the Whispering Tyrant. These outliers beyond the core and common ancestries should be few and far between.

increased interactions with neighboring regions, a resurgence of dwarven arts, crafts, and magical teachings, and more visible and boisterous loyalty to their clan. Dwarves often have a reputation for being stoic, but to their friends, they're known as patient, good-humored people, usually taking as much time as needed to complete a project or goal to perfection. In general, dwarves are about a foot shorter than humans, but what they lack in height they make up for in bulk. They prefer to wear their hair long, and dwarves of all genders pay meticulous attention to the growing, grooming, and embellishing of their hair.

Finally, goblins can be found in nearly every region of the Shining Kingdoms, though mostly in smaller pockets. Larger tribes tend to reside in more remote or rural areas, with only a few goblin neighborhoods in Almas and Oppara. Goblins tend to flock to strong leaders, particularly those who could offer protection from foes or even their own mishaps. Rarely growing taller than 3 feet, goblins have a hard time trusting the taller ancestries, or "longshanks," but those who prove their loyalty and kindness to a goblin can gain a fierce ally for life. Goblins tend to be vivacious, preferring to live in the moment rather than dwelling on history, past choices, or cause and effect. They're creative, fun-loving, mischievous, and sometimes prone to mishaps. Uninterested in strict rules, goblins tend to create their own gods based on whatever monster, creature, or natural wonder fascinates them at the moment.

OTHER ANCESTRIES

Aside from the most common ancestries, a few uncommon peoples have large populations within the Shining Kingdom. Kobolds, lizardfolk, and ratfolk all have large enough populations to be considered common in the Shining Kingdoms.

Many kobolds have made a home in the Candlestone Caverns within Darkmoon Vale, a dangerous area near the border of Isger.

The Black Claw kobolds in the Candlestone Caverns guard some of the area's silver deposits and other ores. They also create mazelike passageways that circumvent their territory, inadvertently giving dangerous creatures from the Darklands access to the surface. This proximity to larger, magical, and dangerous beings has led to some warrens of kobolds pledging themselves to these nightmarish denizens—at least, until something bigger comes along. Cunning and resourceful, with a predisposition for self-preservation, kobolds tend to ally themselves with whatever humanoid or beast might provide the best sense of protection for the moment. They are also smart enough to know when a ship has sailed and will quickly shift allegiances if a better offer comes along. With the return of Daralathylx after the Godsrain, an influx of kobold activity in his vicinity is likely. Daralathylx is garnering a following that would naturally draw the attention of the local kobold community.

Iruxis have existed since before the Azlanti empire. Also known as lizardfolk in Taldor, they're found most commonly along the southern coasts of Taldor and Andoran near the Inner Sea. Most of the modern iruxi communities are migratory in nature, but in their permanent settlements, buildings are often partially or fully submerged in bodies of water, capitalizing on their ability to hold their breath. Lizardfolk residing in the Shining Kingdoms have a well-deserved reputation of being wilderness experts and fearsome fighters. Being cold-blooded, they prefer warmer, moist climates, leading many to prefer stone, glass, or bone materials over leather or metal.



DWARF

As a society, lizardfolk are raised communally from birth. Most follow a theology based on the worship of natural spirits, ancestors, or nature-based deities. This theology has little to no written record and is instead passed down orally by iruxi priests to each generation. Culturally, iruxis value their history and traditions, are future-focused with a passion for astrology, and patiently consider all options before making a decision. They're slow to trust other ancestries, often remaining isolated within their own territories. Still, plenty of iruxis choose to venture out in search of adventure.

Ysoki, also called ratfolk, have warrens in many of the forests and rural regions of the Shining Kingdoms as well as several of the larger cities. Those in urban areas typically reside there with their ever-growing families, squeezing hundreds of relatives into a tiny house between their travels as merchants or traders. Their penchant for commerce and scavenging led several ysoki warrens to make their homes in Druma, naturally excelling as merchants. With a love of travel and a slight fondness for hoarding, ysoki often leave their warrens for lives of adventure, always promising to return with their pockets full of new treasures to share. Ysoki value cooperation, community, and loyalty. Growing up in extremely large families leads many ratfolk to forge fast friendships, believing that you never know when an acquaintance can offer aid or follow through on a favor. Savvy and professional in business with others, ratfolk are intelligent and quick to outwit a foe rather than use brute force. Ysoki differ from common rats in appearance, standing about 4 feet tall and weighing around 80 pounds. They are often mistaken for wererats and can struggle with prejudice due to that misconception.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

While the following ancestries aren't common sights within the Shining Kingdoms, they have notable populations in certain nations and can be considered uncommon.

Azarketis ply the waves around Starstone Isle, so it comes as little surprise when they surface to trade along the coast of Taldor and Andoran. Few move further inland, due to their skin's constant thirst for water, but some brave souls move throughout the Shining Kingdoms by keeping to the rivers. Taldor sees a stronger azarketi presence due to its age, as more azarketi have ties to the ancient and once prestigious nation.

Sprites frolic in the Verduran Forest, and the most curious fey move out into the rural countrysides of the surrounding areas. Many villagers and farmers still leave out saucers of milk for such wanderers, hoping to gain small favors or at least stave off mischief. While sprites tend to avoid the stuffy and troubled cities of Galt, Andoran, and Taldor, many are drawn to the forested eaves of Kyonin, while more studious worker sprites are known to sneak into the forges of the Five Kings Mountains.

Angen kitsune reside in the Verduran Forest as well, descendants of immigrants from Tian Xia. Angen wear their fox-like features proudly, rarely seeking to blend into other societies as most other kitsune do. They hope that this openness will foster trust with other ancestries. This practice has so far had mixed results, as many rural villagers form stories about Angen kitsune without their input, calling them "reynards" or mistakenly identifying them as pookas.

Undead are far more common in the Shining Kingdoms than anyone would like to admit, their presence focused in revolution-torn Galt and the bejeweled catacombs of Druma.

VERSATILE HERITAGES

While nearly every heritage is represented in the Shining Kingdoms, some heritages are slightly more common than others. With the region's deep connection to magic and devotion to various gods, empyreans are somewhat more prevalent in the area. Similarly, cambions have also been seen on rare occasions since the Worldwound and with the rise of demon worship in Galt. In addition, due to the chaos that has reigned in Galt for centuries, some Galtan families have seen a rise in ganz children. Many ganzis are either raised in secret or sent away once they're able to fend for themselves due to the suspicious and often fanatical nature of the citizens of Galt. Finally, there are rumors around Taldor saying the druids of the Wildwood Lodge are mostly ardates, though it's unconfirmed by outsiders.



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BELIEFS OF THE SHINING KINGDOMS

Religion plays a significant role in shaping the cultural, political, and economic landscape of the Shining Kingdoms. The Gods of the Inner Sea and regional deities serve as a unifying force, providing a common framework for worship and social organization across the region. In the past, worship of Aroden was most common, but after the god's death, other deities rose to prominence and are now widely revered throughout the area.

However, the diversity of religious traditions also contributes to the complex and sometimes tumultuous nature of the Shining Kingdoms. Conflicts between different faiths and internal divisions within more significant religious movements have fueled political and social upheaval, as well as secretive cults that breed in the upper echelons of society. Moreover, the intertwining of religion and economic activities as exemplified by the Kalistocrats of Druma, and the

intersection of the government and significant temples in Andoran, highlight the ways in which faith can shape the region's material and commercial interests. This dynamic substantially affects power distribution and resources within the Shining Kingdoms.

The most prominent religious tradition is the worship of around 20 of the most influential gods from the primary cultures of the Inner Sea region that includes multiple deities associated with similar domains, such as Abadar, the god of cities, law, and wealth; Iomedae, the goddess of justice and valor; and Sarenrae, the goddess of healing, redemption, and the sun. These gods are typically worshipped in grand churches and temples prominently decorated with symbols and iconography. While faith in these gods is prevalent across the Shining Kingdoms, each nation has its own unique set of gods that it prefers.

The aftermath of the Godsrain has also had a marked impact on the faith of Avistan as a whole. Gorum's demise led to an increase in tension across the nations in matters of both politics and religion. Nations whose governing bodies are closely tied to prominent churches or religions have now begun to question their own stability after witnessing the death of a god. With Aroden's death still within living memory for many of the Shining Kingdoms' longer-lived residents, doubt is on the rise.

Overall, the religious landscape of the Shining Kingdoms is a rich and multifaceted tapestry, reflecting the region's long and storied history as well as the ongoing evolution of its diverse cultures and peoples.

TALDOR

Taldor's long history means it holds many of the oldest temples in Avistan. Taldans respect and honor faith devoutly, worshipping gods closely associated with their trades. Many artists, musicians, and creators maintain private shrines to Shelyn, the goddess of art and beauty. Norgorber, the god of murder and secrets, has a subtle but not unknown presence in

Oppara with less prominent followers keeping his iconography in their homes, businesses, or other private spaces. Many farmers and those who live on the outskirts of civilization still follow Erastil, the god of family, farming, hunting, and trade; with the nation's strong connection to

the ancient Azlanti Empire, some worship Erastil's wife, Jaidi, in conjunction. Abadar remains the most prominent god for nobles and merchants with his cathedral-banks looming over the business districts of most major cities. Cayden Cailean also has a large following with most of the nation relishing his Taldan heritage prior to taking the Test of the *Starstone*.



ULON

ANDORAN

In Andoran, the worship of Abadar, Erastil, Iomedae, and Shelyn remains prevalent, and the worship of Cayden Cailean—god of ale, bravery, freedom, and wine—grows in popularity. Andorens also pay respect to Talmandor, the celestial patron of the nation. This worship emphasizes the values of freedom, self-determination, and the inherent worth of all individuals while also noting the broad spectrum of definitions of freedom. However, the people of Andoran, while highly opinionated, hold their nation's political dealings in higher regard than any religious sect. They believe in freedom of religion, yet a supreme vicar is chosen from the churches of Abadar or Erastil by the People's Council to serve as an advisor to the Supreme Elect, showing a subtle preference for those gods over other deities.

GALT

The nation of Galt, gripped by a bloody revolution for decades, is undergoing a religious upheaval. The bloodshed and death that consume the nation have driven many to find faith in one of two extremes: Pharasma, the goddess of death and fate, and Urgathoa, the goddess of disease and gluttony. This worship reflects the turmoil and violence that has consumed Galt as its people struggle to establish a new government in the wake of the overthrowing the aristocracy. Others have found purpose in following a new pantheon of gods with more sinister machinations.

DRUMA

Drumans primarily follow the Prophecies of Kalistrade (page 22) rather than a specific deity or religion. While not expressly forbidden, worship of other faiths is generally frowned upon and more likely done secretly or by members of the lower class. As with other nations, Abadar remains the most popular of the local deities, though followers are found in significantly reduced numbers. A small sect of Drumans also worships Torag as a lingering result of the dwarven rule of Druma before their independence in 2332 AR. Worshippers of Abadar and Torag are given slightly more credence than those who worship other gods due to the connection to commerce and industry of those faiths aligning with the ideals of the Kalistocracy. However, they still can't hold actual positions of power in Druma.

THE FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS

The faiths featured most prominently in the Five Kings Mountains are more heavily focused on a specific pantheon known colloquially as the dwarven pantheon, as they were credited with creating dwarves and their faiths emerged on the surface of Golarion alongside the successful Quest for Sky. Torag is the primary deity of this collective with most other dwarven gods considered to be part of his family. The events of the Godsrain have left this family one fewer, however, as Torag's son Grundinnar vanished in a conflict while saving the dwarven city of Larrad. Though Grundinnar no longer answers prayers, his shrines have since been flooded by dwarves paying their respects, leaving ornamental hammers, glory ribbons, and tokens of buried grudges on his overflowing altars.

KYONIN

Elves believe strongly in freedom of worship, but much of the religion in Kyonin focuses on a certain subset of deities. Desna, with her love of exploration and stars, holds the heart of many elves, and while Nethys is viewed more cautiously, Kyonin is too magical of a land to neglect homage. Calistria is strongly represented in Kyonin, which can cause some surprise among those who primarily encounter elegant elven diplomats

LOCAL MYTHS

Farmers along the road south of Oppara tell tales of their ancestors being saved by Iomedae as she traveled to Absalom. Their fields were being ravaged kholo raiders, and they had nothing but harvesting tools to defend themselves. It's said that a figure bathed in golden light stood by the farmers, reshaping their hoes into swords to aid them in their fight. The figure disappeared as soon as the fight ended, and their weapons returned to their normal forms. To this day, farmers along that road place symbols of Iomedae on their scarecrows as a reminder of their divine protection.

Certain Galtans speak in hushed whispers of a theory connecting Norgorber to Galt's plunge into chaos. Shortly after the fall of Aroden, Norgorber took mortal guise as a charismatic noble, weaving webs of deceit among Galt's elite. Under his influence, corruption spread like a disease, poisoning hearts and minds across the region. He orchestrated schemes from the shadows, manipulating kings and councils for his own gain. Yet, as his power grew, whispers of his treachery echoed in the night. In a final act of betrayal, he vanished, leaving behind a legacy of fear and mistrust. To this day, his name is spoken in hushed tones, a cautionary tale of the dangers that lurk in the shadows.

In the heart of the Verduran Forest, they tell a legend of Gozreh. Centuries ago, as the forest blossomed, Gozreh walked its ancient paths, weaving magic into every leaf and stream. With gentle hands, they nurtured life, fostering a sanctuary where creatures roamed free. One moonlit night, a great storm swept through, threatening to ravage the land. In a display of power, Gozreh calmed the tempest, guiding the winds and rain with a whisper. From that moment on, the forest thrived, a testament to Gozreh's eternal embrace and the delicate balance of nature's dance.

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TALMANDOR

In Andoran, Talmador stands as a beacon of virtue and celestial guardianship. He's revered among the Andorens for embodying the ideals of justice, protection, and valor. As the celestial patron of Andoran, Talmador looms large in the hearts of those who seek to uphold righteousness and defend the innocent.

A symbol to the Steel Falcons order of the Eagle Knights, Talmador inspires them to embody the noble virtues of courage, loyalty, and selflessness. Eagle Knights vow to defend the weak, uphold the law, and confront tyranny wherever it might arise. They're the stalwart guardians who soar above the fray, ever vigilant in their pursuit of justice. Those who prove themselves worthy might also receive Talmador's direct blessing, empowering them to aspire to greatness.

Talmador's influence extends beyond humanity, as he watches over avian creatures with a paternal gaze. In particular, birds of prey are considered sacred, and many believe their presence heralds his divine favor. Sailors, travelers, and those needing protection often invoke his name, seeking solace and guidance in times of peril.

Despite his unwavering commitment to justice, Talmador doesn't promote blind aggression. He values wisdom and discernment, advocating for the use of force only when necessary and always with righteous intent. His teachings emphasize the importance of mercy and compassion, even in the face of adversity. Even so, there are those—particularly in Galt—who have taken the theories published in Darl Jubannich's treatise *On Government* (which some believe was dictated by Talmador himself) as a promotion of anarchy and a basis for overthrowing power systems and governments.

While not a deity, some parts of Andoran revere Talmador to the point of godlike worship. Talmador refuses to seek godhood and prefers to interact directly with those seeking his aid. This modesty, however, hasn't slowed the growth of his worship in small sects across the nation.

or traveling scholars. Alseta, goddess of portals and transitions, is often considered the unofficial goddess of Kyonin's many portals, including the *Sovyrian Stone* that leads back to the elves' ancient homeland. Kyonin is also a major stronghold of the traditional elven deities: Findeladlara, Ketepphys, and Yuelral. The ancient Green Faith appeals to many elves, who tend to have an affinity toward their environment, and some elves also seek out deities of nature such as Gozreh.

OTHER FAITHS

The Shining Kingdoms are also home to a variety of more localized and unique faiths. The most famous of them is the pseudo-religion of the Prophecies of Kalistrade, followed almost solely in Druma. Other unique faiths include the worship of the traditional elven pantheon in Kyonin, the dwarven pantheon in the Five Kings Mountains, the Green Faith common within the Verduran Forest, the demon lord Andirifkhu in Galt, and Kurgess in Taldor.

In the mercantile nation of Druma, the Prophecies of Kalistrade are a record of dreamlike visions once had by the eccentric mystic Kalistrade during the Age of Enthronement. These teachings promote a lifestyle of self-denial from physical pleasures with the edict to focus solely on wealth accumulation. Followers of this pseudo-religion take the obsession with wealth to the extreme in their end-of-life ritual. When Kalistocrats near the end of their life, their accumulation of wealth is melted down and injected into their body, mummifying them and granting them a personalized afterlife. The aftermath of the Godsrain, while monetarily beneficial for the Kalistocrats, could threaten the Kalistocracy through the return of the Broken Prophets. The resurrection of the previously deceased Kalistocrats made the secrets of their death rituals more widely known. This practice, which was held secret prior to the Godsrain, has already attracted attention from the followers of Pharasma as the mummified, and now reanimated, Kalistocrats seem to have avoided the goddess's judgment. In addition, a sect of the Kalistocracy views the return of the Broken Prophets as an ill omen, implying that the current practice is wrong or corrupted.

Worship of various pantheons is also prevalent in the region. Elves in Kyonin have a profound connection with nature and are one of the remaining groups in Golarion who worship the traditional elven pantheon. At the center of the elven pantheon are a trio of gods: Calistria, goddess of lust and revenge; Desna, goddess of freedom, luck, and travel; and Nethys, god of magic. Other strictly elven gods of the pantheon include Alseta, goddess of doorways, thresholds, and transition; Findeladlara, goddess of art and architecture; Ketepphys, god of the hunt; and Yuelral, goddess of magic.

Similarly, dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains primarily worship Torag, the god of the forge. However, some choose to worship the entire dwarven pantheon, consisting of the god Torag and members of his extended family: Magrim, Angradd, Drannigvit, Folgrit, Bolka, Grundinnar, Kols, and Trudd. Droskar, who serves as the patron deity for hryngars, is the only deity in the dwarven pantheon not related to Torag. Dwarves in the Five Kings Mountains are divided on the makeup of the pantheon, often worshipping different subsets. The Skykeepers worship the entire pantheon with the exception of Droskar, while the Forgekin Pact removes both Droskar and Torag from the pantheon. Regardless of which subset they worship, the devotion to this pantheon reflects the significance of artisanship, community, and tradition in dwarven culture.

One of the oldest recorded philosophies on Golarion, the Green Faith is still widely practiced, especially among the druids of the Wildwood Lodge in the Verduran Forest. The Green Faith doesn't follow the tenets of traditional religion; instead, it's a philosophical practice grounded in respect for nature and natural elements. Druids and rangers tend to be

drawn to the faith due to their connection to nature and the natural order. Practitioners of the Green Faith rely almost solely on the philosophy passed through oral tradition rather than any sacred text. Each year on the summer solstice, followers of the Green Faith attend the Moot of Ages on the Isle of Arenway to discuss and share their findings. They rely on interpreting the collective intelligence of nature itself, or the Will of the World, to reach any necessary conclusions at the conclave.

The cult of the demon lord Andirifkhu has risen in Galt since the beginning of the revolution. Drawn to her mastery of weaponized mechanical torture, Andirifkhu's worshippers pray to her for aid in designing new and sadistic devices. Her worshippers, however, tend to remain isolated in their fanaticism. It remains a true blessing for the nation of Galt that these fanatics have yet to join forces.

Finally, the worship of Kurgess has been growing in popularity in Taldor. A Taldan himself before being elevated to demigodhood, Kurgess is known for his commitment to competition, physical fitness, and sport. A relatively new faith, the Church of Kurgess isn't indoctrinated with strict dogma or religious texts. It thus attracts followers who wish to align with a faith without being tied to rituals or a firm ideology. Archers, athletes, entertainers, mercenaries, and scouts are some of the most prominent followers of Kurgess.

THE TIDES OF CHAOS

Throughout the long and storied history of the Shining Kingdoms, tales of corruption, conspiracy, and malevolent plots abound. From the decline of the Taldan Empire to the War for the Crown, and even now with the current unrest and uncertainty in several nations, people whisper about a new pantheon that includes old deities. The Tides of Chaos is rumored to have begun in Galt, coinciding with the beginnings of the nation's political upheaval. However, some members have existed long before the founding of any nation in the Shining Kingdoms.

At the heart of the pantheon stands Ulon, the ancient Azlanti god of conspiracy, isolation, and manipulation, known commonly as the Web. With a blank visage that obscures their true intentions, Ulon delights in crafting intricate webs of conspiracy and discord, leading mortals and immortals to tear each other apart, their petty squabbles fueling the ever-growing storm of chaos they revel in. Their domain protects the most closely guarded secrets, doling out fragments of knowledge to those they deem worthy and bringing them into the Web. Followers of the Tides of Chaos pray to Ulon to guide their speech and actions to unravel hidden truths.

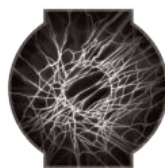
Beside Ulon are two Inner Sea deities who thrive on secrets and chaos: Calistria and Norgorber. The Lady in the Room, Calistria, is responsible for identifying specific targets in need of swift retribution. Followers

with personal scores to settle devote themselves to Calistria for the strength and guile to uncover powerful secrets and use them against their enemies. Norgorber, the Reaper of Reputation, revels in manipulation, utilizing lies and half-truths to send rivals on a chase through a labyrinth of misinformation. His domain encompasses all forms of deception, from the subtle manipulation of language to the outright fabrication of reality.

Rounding out the pantheon is Scal, the ancient Azlanti god of annihilation, catharsis, and purity. After being wrongfully accused of causing the disastrous events of Earthfall, Scal, abandoned and scorned, left Golarion. Only in recent years have followers of the Calm After the Storm been slowly creeping back in from the edges of society. Their vengeful god seems to have returned to Golarion as well, aligning himself with the Tides of Chaos to bring about events of violent rebellion.

Together, followers of this pantheon work tirelessly to undermine the established order, sowing the seeds of confusion and uncertainty throughout the region. They relish the chaos that ensues as their machinations unfold, delighting in the discord and misinformation that they weave into the very fabric of reality.

For those who dare to venture into the worship of this pantheon, the rewards might be great, but the risks are even greater. The secrets they guard, the truths they obscure, and the chaos they sow can be intoxicating and terrifying, a double-edged sword that can both empower and destroy those who seek to harness its power.



THE TIDES OF CHAOS

Covenant Members Calistria, Norgorber, Scal (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Divine Mysteries* 178), Ulon (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Divine Mysteries* 179)

Areas of Concern chaos, disruption, mischief, secrets

Edicts keep all secrets entrusted to you, sow mistrust, doubt, and conspiracy at every opportunity, take risks

Anathema aid in the establishment of a government or ruling power, embrace complacency, reveal secrets entrusted to you

Divine Attribute Dexterity or Intelligence

Religious Symbol chaotic spider web

DEVOTEE BENEFITS

Cleric Spells 1st: *ill omen*, 2nd: *invisibility*, 5th: *subconscious suggestion*

Divine Font *harm*

Divine Sanctification can choose unholy

Divine Skill *Stealth*

Domains cities, darkness, destruction, secrecy

Alternate Domains decay (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Divine Mysteries* 263), nightmares

Favored Weapon dagger

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FACTIONS OF THE SHINING KINGDOMS



THE BROKEN GHOSTS



THE EAGLE KNIGHTS



THE LION BLADES

Politics, intrigue, and strife run wild throughout the Shining Kingdoms. Within the last decade, ancient orders have had their purposes rewritten, and new ones have emerged since the Godsrain. What follows is a primer on the major factions of the Shining Kingdoms that define the future of the region.

THE BROKEN GHOSTS (GALT)

With the defeat of the Gray Gardeners after 54 years of constant revolution, many hoped that peace would dawn over the wounded nation. In the 4 years since, however, it has become clear that the blood-soaked past can't be brushed aside. A loose conglomerate of revolutionaries calling themselves the Broken Ghosts have proven to be a problem for the Reconciliation Council. While Camilia Drannoch preaches for amnesty and armistice, the Broken Ghosts call for the exact opposite: the Terminal Jacquerie, a final revolution that would culminate in the total dissolution of Galt as a state.

The members of the Broken Ghosts are as varied as their exact beliefs. Some are former Gray Gardeners, seeking revenge for the toppling of their regime. Others are true anarchists, disillusioned by Camilia's call for forgiveness for former Gardeners. Some among their number even call themselves Firebrands and genuinely believe the cause of the Broken Ghosts to be righteous. Secretly, many members are undead—ghosts, dullahans, and freed victims of the *final blades* who despise the living. The factions within the Broken Ghosts often struggle to coexist but are united by three things: the shattered porcelain masks they wear, the strange magic they often practice, and the urge to burn Galt to ashes.

If the Broken Ghosts had a leader, it would be **Heizi Lafronzier** (extravagant female human agitator), the Catacomb Queen. Once, Heizi lived as an amenable and rather dull shoemaker. Whispers claim that her execution occurred shortly before the Night of the Gray Death. And yet, she reappeared, popularizing the Broken Ghost ideology in fiery speeches in the catacombs under Isarn. She introduced the symbol of the porcelain mask as a practical move; if one were to see the Catacomb Queen without her mask, they would surely realize that Heizi is dead. Her corpse is possessed by a spirit inside a fraction of a *final blade* lodged deep in the spine that she sewed back together. The spirit is none other than **Margaery San Trayne** (spiteful female gray blade), inventor of the *final blades*. Margaery was beheaded alongside most of the first Revolutionary Council, and spending 49 years trapped inside her own creation has warped her and made her cruel. The Catacomb Queen now intends on turning Galt into a paradise for undead like herself—and the Terminal Jacquerie will serve as her way of snuffing out not only Galt, but every living soul in the nation.

EAGLE KNIGHTS (ANDORAN)

The heroic Eagle Knights have long been a symbol of liberation throughout the world. The order consists of three branches: the Golden Legion, who act as internal security; the Steel Falcons, who spread freedom and battle tyranny abroad; and the Twilight Talons, the espionage force of Andoran. In the wake of the Godsrain, however, their greatest challenges come from within Andoran itself.

Cheliox has grown aggressive along the borders of Andoran since the death of Gorum, hungrily eyeing the land they lost 60 years ago. Some among the nation's consuls believe that now is the time to stand strong;

the Eagle Knights must vanquish Cheliix. Quadruple the order's funding, empower their forces, and turn them into a true army so House Thrune can finally be toppled and Cheliix freed! While nobly presented, the knights' commanders understand the potential danger of this rhetoric. The goal of the consuls is nothing short of a full-scale invasion of a nation, one where innocents would die in the name of "freedom." Furthermore, the knights' current leader, General **Ries Cuprianas** (valiant male human retired commando), himself an old foe of Cheliix, warns that hyper-militarizing Andoran would devastate the economy; exponentially increasing the military budget would completely deplete public funding elsewhere! Other consuls seem unconcerned by this consequence.

Additionally, another threat now faces Andoran: firearms. Since arriving in the country, guns have become exceptionally sought-after, even among certain Eagle Knights. Some fear what could happen if these weapons go unchecked; others see the potential in arming the knights with superior weaponry. To deal with the crisis, General Cuprianas has hesitantly allowed for the creation of a new special division: the Platinum Wings, led by **Anvra Irongaunt** (brilliant female dromaar runesmith). Their role is to investigate firearms, to create new spells and gear to defend against these weapons, and to craft new guns to arm Eagle Knights. Platinum Wing research squadrons have spread to wherever firearms are common, from the Shackles to Ustalav, but especially Alkenstar, the capital of firearms in Golarion. Their officers explore the usage, crafting methods, and culture surrounding guns across Golarion, reporting back to Andoran with their ultimate findings. With this gathered knowledge, the Platinum Wings have created perhaps the most audacious weapons to ever exist: the screaming pinions, firearms crafted from pieces of Gorum's armor and imbued with the dead god's raw power.

THE LION BLADES (TALDOR)

Every assassin carries a dagger, and so too does Taldor. The Lion Blades are this dagger: a shadowy collective of spies serving Taldor first and its throne second. Yet recently, a secret civil war has threatened to explode across this organization that doesn't, officially, exist.

The Lion Blades have long funded bard colleges across Taldor, including the prestigious Kitharodian Academy. This patronage has been a front to supply the organization with exceptionally well-trained candidates to join the faction. Selected students train in one of the order's furtive Shadow Schools, hidden academies that specialize in various tools of intrigue. Lion Blades excel in many talents that make them the perfect assassins that include: disguises that border on shapeshifting; self-hypnosis through chanting to lull the speaker into a silent, ultra-efficient, and murderous fugue state; and the skill to vanish into any crowd in broad daylight. The Lion Blades having never officially existed lets them sidestep bureaucracy and accountability both, but it has become a contentious point as of late.

Dominicus Rell (imposing male human mastermind), head of the Shadow Schools, recently altered their curricula to drop certain techniques, including the traditional self-hypnosis chants. He did so despite other senior Lion Blades' protests, and when confronted, he grimly remains silent, implying some secret reason he wouldn't elaborate on. This decision is but the most recent event in a long-standing perception of Dominicus treating the Lion Blades as a personal secret society, and it has led to growing dissent among the lions.

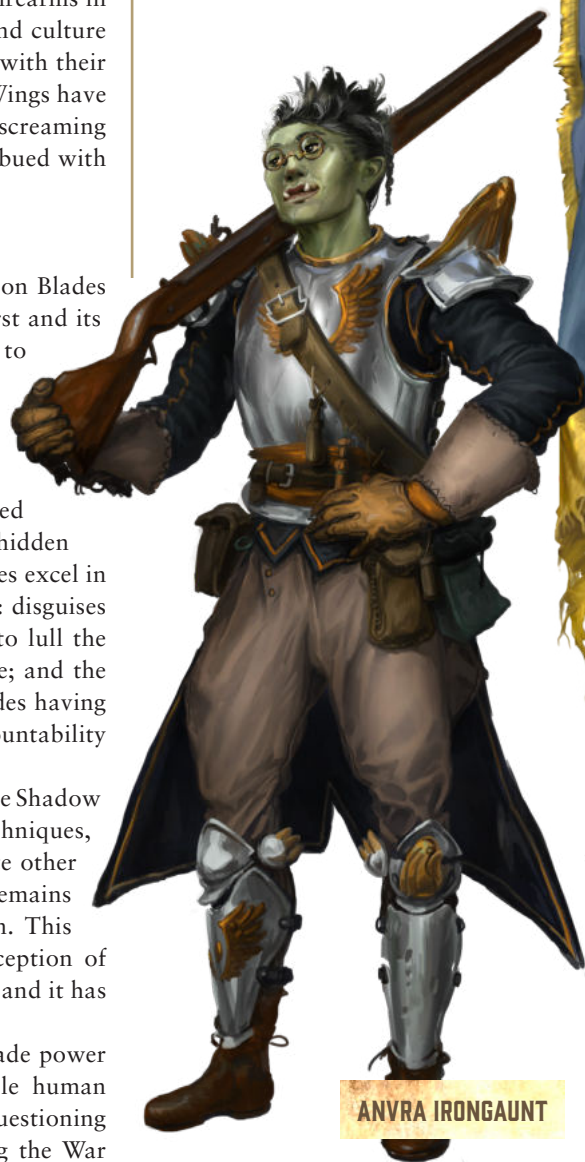
This conflict has become the fire needed for another Lion Blade power broker to step forward. **Laurisa Tromaine** (calculating female human spymaster), a popular senior agent, has disseminated rumors questioning Dominicus's motives. Was he not conspicuously absent during the War

FACTION SLANG

As with anywhere, in the Shining Kingdoms factions often develop their own slang as subcultures develop within them.

Dent: Challenges to foes or to other Shieldwrought Striders often revolve around "denting" the impenetrable armor of the autonomous bulwarks, even outside of combat. "Ha! Dent this, wyrmling!"

Pretties: Derogatory nickname for those who don't stand with the Broken Ghosts; derived from the tendency of the rich (and the living in general) to wear beautifying makeup. "Look at those pretties laughing." "Pretty guards are coming—run!"



ANVRA IRONGAUNT

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JOINING THE SHIELDWROUGHT STRIDERS

In the words of Rovant Vanderholl, the two things you need to be a Shieldwrought Strider are the heart of a hero and the mouth of a merchant. The role of the Striders is to defeat terrible foes and use that fame to convince others to purchase space in Torag's Shield. Thus, dwarves who wish to join must demonstrate bravery and intellect above all else. Usually, an applicant needs a sponsor, often an existing Shieldwrought Strider. The applicant is then given a simple shield made of autonomous bulwark scrap and a quest (often, to slay a beast of some sort, and to fairly sell the shield to someone who was affected by the creature's marauding). If they can accomplish these feats, they'll undergo the extensive training needed to join the Striders. It's strongly recommended that the applicant travel with a party during this quest; after all, no Strider works alone.

FACTIONS BEYOND THE SHINING KINGDOMS

The many factions of the Shining Kingdoms aren't content to stay within their own lands; indeed, they have a presence far beyond their own homes. The Broken Ghosts sent emissaries to Geb, hoping to strike an alliance—unaware of Camilia's efforts to do the same. Many Wylderhearts have begun missions in the Gravelands, putting their demon-hunting skills to use against the undead. Prophets of Kalistrade flock to Thuvia, Osirion, and Ustalav, seeking ways to obtain the supposed Coveted Eternity by any means necessary. The Eagle Knights are attempting to bring democracy to Isger and Molthune to undermine Cheliox, while the Platinum Wings travel to anywhere guns are forged. The Lion Blades have recently spent time in these same nations, seemingly watching the Eagle Knights. Finally, some Shieldwrought Striders have been called to the Linnorm Kingdoms to help push back Fafnheir as his young grow emboldened by the Godsrain.

for the Crown? Why change the curriculum now? Is he loyal to anyone but himself? For the first time, Dominicus finds his orders being openly defied, an insult he's unlikely to stomach. Those who remain loyal to Dominicus—out of conservatism or because they also know what he does—grow increasingly suspicious of Laurisa's intentions. The lionlike theater masks that serve as the assassin order's unofficial symbol shall reveal their fangs very soon, if a peaceful solution to the brewing war of secrets isn't found first.

THE PROPHETS OF KALISTRAD (DRUMA)

Though some might expect the rain of molten god-armor to be a boon to the mercantile Prophets of Kalistrade, they've been facing mounting difficulty with its consequences. Gathering and selling his remains have proven lucrative, but the effects of Gorum's death threaten to shatter the Kalistocracy.

Millennia ago, the mystic Kalistrade penned a series of prophecies after receiving dream visions that guided him to follow a strict diet, dress only in white, abstain from physical touch and intimacy, and accumulate vast riches. "Wealth purifies the soul, and all else tarnishes it"—these teachings define Druma today. When the nation was largely unaffected by the death of Aroden, it was seen as a sign that philosophy can outlive a god. Kalistocrats run businesses, lead seminars, and act as consultants. On the first Moonday of every month, they hold religious services where they share financial tips, work out beneficial and exclusive deals, and (some whisper) conspire to undermine non-Kalistocratic businesses to maintain their firm control over Druma's economy.

The truth behind the Kalistocracy is a sinister one. As a prophet approaches death, their wealth is melted down and pumped into their dying body in a fatal ceremony that mummifies them. The end result is an afterlife bypassing the judgment of Pharasma, sending the soul to a mindscape of the deceased's creation. Those who knew a prophet can also take part in the ritual, binding them to the same afterlife. In this way, gold, not good or evil, determines their final destination.

The Godsrain changed all this. Countless prophets were raised from their mausoleums by the event, revealing the secret to the public at large. At best, these Broken Prophets are distraught; at worst, they're violent. These events have become all but disastrous. Many inside the cult are horrified by the Prophets' return, and some heretical reformers, led by **Red Donthux the Gloveless** (indignant male human wizard) seek to rewrite the Kalistocracy, including abolishing its most prohibitive rules.

To worsen the situation, there are a growing number of sightings of a powerful Broken Prophet rumored to be Kalistrade himself, spotted deep underground killing rats and stealing gold from corpses. These rumors are strengthened by Kalistrade's tomb suddenly being heavily guarded by the Mercenary League. High Prophet **Kelldor** (perceptive male human religious leader) hurriedly sends prophets across Avistan, seeking a theoretical "cure" for the Broken Prophets to grant them their afterlife back—a cure he dubs "the Coveted Eternity."

THE SHIELDWROUGHT STRIDERS (FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS)

With the completion of Torag's Shield, Highhelm is nigh-impenetrable, and the city has turned its attention to cultivating alliances with neighboring nations. They actively seek to offer a place to take refuge from calamity (such as Tar-Baphon's return) in Torag's Shield in exchange for resources and trade deals. But to convince others of the power of the Shield, they must demonstrate it clearly, and to seal a beneficial deal, they must send diplomats. It was the brainchild of Clanleader **Grytem**

Grimmark (eccentric male dwarf advisor), lead architect of Torag's Shield, to combine both roles.

The Shieldwrought Striders are diplomats and warriors, clad in their imposing suits of armor constructed from stone and the leftover materials of Torag's Shield. These suits are so massive, they aren't so much worn as piloted, allowing the dwarf inside to stand tall above others. One must open a door in the back and climb inside, sitting in a seat surrounded by various control levers. These bulwarks have an additional quirk specially designed by Clan Grimmark: the suits of armor can be autonomous constructs. Once a pilot is sitting in the control seat, an activated Strider can slowly thunder into combat, taking a phenomenal beating as they use the power of dwarven ingenuity and toughness to take down any foe.

The Striders have gained an immediate reputation as dragonslayers. Daralathyl's spawn have become increasingly common in the Five Kings Mountains and beyond. Oftentimes, only the Striders can withstand their terrible fiery breath and drive them away. Now, Striders are sought throughout the Shining Kingdoms; when news breaks of a dragon attack in Taldor or Galt, the Striders are considered a surefire solution. Though this demand has been exceptional for spreading word of Torag's Shield, it's also a growing problem. Every encounter between the Shieldwrought Striders and Daralathyl himself has been a massacre without a single dwarven survivor. It would seem the archdragon's breath is too hot for the autonomous bulwarks—and, perhaps, for Torag's Shield. The leader of the Shieldwrought Striders, **Rovant Vanderholl** (idealist male dwarf glory hunter) seeks to slay Daralathyl before the theory can be tested.

THE WYLDERHEARTS (KYONIN)

With the death of Treerazer, a shadow has lifted from Kyonin. Though armies of demons still plague Tanglebriar, the absence of their dreaded master bolsters some of the greatest hunters of demons in the realm: the Wylderhearts, legendary hunter-mages of Kyonin.

The original Wylderhearts were folk heroes of Sovyrian, known for their incredible feats of power and skill. The first Wylderheart, Radhoirin, gained her fame when she shot an arrow through the open jaw of a wyvern mid-swoop, saving the life of an elven prince. Some of the most legendary warriors were supposedly the only elves quick, clever, and brave enough to hunt alongside Ketephys, God of the Hunt. Tales tell of such feats as the slaying of titans, the conquering of archdragons, and the banishing of the hag queen Morvila. Their greatest story was the Hunt of Iadra, where a pack of Wylderhearts became the first elves to return to Golarion after Earthfall, led by Ketephys to imprison Treerazer in Tanglebriar in a climactic final battle.

On that day, Ketephys granted the Wylderhearts a new role: the hunters of fiends. He bid them stay out of Tanglebriar, the seat of the demons' power; instead, they should slay the fiends that crept from the swamps to spread evil among elves. Wylderhearts have become some of the foremost experts of hunting demons on Golarion. They make short work of the bestial fiends that rampage across the countryside. Shapeshifting demons who hide among mortals and sow chaos are far more deadly, and the favored prey of the Wylderhearts. With Treerazer dead, the demons have been terribly undermined, and some argue that the time to attack Tanglebriar has come.

The Wylderhearts' ways are iconic among elves. They're known for hunting alongside imposing but calm hounds bred to have shockingly white fur. Warriors with the curse of the werecreature are especially welcome to the cause with their unique connection to nature seen as nearly sacred. Despite their grim tasks, the Wylderhearts are gregarious and boisterous. They're trained in art and song and celebrate victories with plenty of ale.



PROPHETS OF KALISTRAD



SHIELDWROUGHT STRIDERS



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FACTIONS AS ANTAGONISTS

The factions of the Shining Kingdoms aren't always going to be groups aiding adventurers—sometimes, these organizations might be directly opposed to them. Broken Ghosts are natural fits for villains with their sinister goals and twisted magic, and the authoritarian and opportunistic approach of the Kalistocracy might clash with the sensibilities of some adventurers. Certainly, if the Lion Blades see someone as a threat, they'll orchestrate clandestine assassinations and manipulation plots to undermine that person. Yet even the heroic Eagle Knights, Shieldwrought Striders, and Wylderhearts can be a thorn in the side of a party. A party's goal might sometimes clash with these benevolent factions; perhaps the dragon the Shieldwrought Striders are intent on slaying is a beloved ally, or the Chelaxian paracount in an Eagle Knight holding cell might have important information. It's always worth remembering: an antagonist isn't necessarily a villain!

Their reason is simple: demons are creatures of pure hatred, and so they can only be defeated by warriors of pure, defiant love. Their leader, **Culradori Diadaithi** (fiery genderfluid werewolf elf hunter) espouses these ideals proudly, sometimes startling the nobles of Kyonin with their dogma.

OTHER FACTIONS

The Shining Kingdoms don't exist in a bubble, nor are their homegrown factions the only ones operating within the region. The following factions also have a significant presence within the kingdoms.

Firebrands: Revolution is a long-standing tradition in the Shining Kingdoms, so naturally, Firebrands often flock there. Andoran remains a close ally with the order with the Steel Falcons training new recruits in combat to make them more efficient freedom fighters. Indeed, the government of Ravounel (headed by the founding members of the Silver Ravens) have helped to broker generous international deals with Andoran, and now Twilight Talons consort with Silver Ravens, trading information on Cheliox and its plans.

Fire's Finest, too, have made their mark in the Shining Kingdoms; specifically through Druma, stunning some of the more tradition-minded people there. The sight of a giant, mechanical scorpion trudging through Kerse has shocked the old—and inspired the young. Those who didn't join Passenger and their crew aboard *Scrapheap* took Fire's Finest's ideals and formed their own group. The resulting faction is called Hedonist's Reproach, where the children of the ultrarich spend money frivolously in parties and acts of supreme charity, undermining the Kalistocracy wherever they can.

However, the story of the Firebrands in Galt is a more tragic tale. Some of those who helped fight the Gray Gardeners in their final years were Firebrands, and now, many fight alongside them, absorbed by the ideology of the Broken Ghosts. Some of these Broken Ghosts call their group Firebrands themselves—a claim refuted by most (but not all) Firebrands abroad. Will the day come where Firebrand fights Firebrand to prevent the Terminal Jacquerie? Only time can tell.

Knights of Lastwall: The original Shining Crusade that toppled the Whispering Tyrant was spearheaded in large part by Taldor. As a result, many Knight-Vigilant diplomats have come to the Shining Kingdoms, stoking nostalgic patriotism in an effort to gain additional support from their former benefactors. While Eutropia's Taldor is unsure about committing to such a dangerous war, recruitment among volunteers is high. Andoran has been much more open to allegiance with many Steel Falcons pledging to travel to the Gravelands when the Knights Vigilant call for the Third Shining Crusade.

Perhaps the most important ally the knights have gained are the Wylderhearts. These demon hunters have long lived a life parallel to the undead slayers of the Gravelands. Their acumen with battling fiends is a transferable skill to slaying the undead, and with Treerazer vanquished, many look to Lastwall. When the Worldwound shut, Mendevian Crusaders came to Kyonin to help with the Tanglebriar; perhaps it's the Wylderhearts' turn to aid a nation in need.

The Ulfen Guard: Guardians of the Primogen Crown, the Ulfen Guard is an order of mercenaries whose constituents can trace their lineage to the frozen lands of the north. But all is not well, and the death of Gorum has affected them on a level far more personal than any other faction in the lands. While he wasn't an official deity to the order, Gorum was an inspiration to the Ulfen Guard. With his murder, both the morale and the powers of the guard are weakened. Champions and clerics who swore fealty to Gorum now find themselves empty, and grizzled veterans have left the order to find meaning in this new world. Chief among them is **Kol**

Kodranson (determined male human berserker), their once commander. An old man now, with a poor relationship with Eutropia, Kol has accepted the death of Gorum as a grim omen. His position has been taken by his offspring, **Bothild Koldotter** (zealous female human pugilist).

Bothild has taken the order by storm with her fervent and prideful behavior. Eutropia has granted the guard a new task: seeking warshards. When one is reported, it's the Ulfen Guard who retrieve the scrap of their dead god. So far, Bothild's leadership has led to the discovery of numerous pieces throughout the kingdoms. It's a solace among the Ulfen Guard, and many claim their success is due to their latent connection to Gorum.

The Whispering Way: The dreaded servants of the Whispering Tyrant have long walked the roads of the Shining Kingdoms—and with their master's return, they grow all the bolder, appearing more frequently and openly throughout the lands.

The goals of Margaery San Trayne and the Broken Ghosts align perfectly with Tar-Baphon's. Both want to see the end of life as it presently exists and plunge the world into undeath. However, the Catacomb Queen's anarchistic values aren't entirely for show, and she understands that the Tyrant would see her as a minion, not an ally. As such, she's hesitant to join forces fully—an end to order includes any order imposed by Tar-Baphon.

The Way also lurks in Druma, drawn by the influx of undead in the nation. The Kalistocracy refuses to destroy the Broken Prophets, instead imprisoning them until such a time that the Coveted Eternity can be used to return them to the afterlife. The Way seeks to set the Broken Prophets loose or, better yet, recruit them to the cause and bring Druma to its knees.

Wildwood Lodge: The natural world teems with life—life that has a right to flourish and grow, undisturbed by the actions of mortals. This is the mantra of the druids of the Wildwood Lodge, guardians of the Verduran Forest. Though the lodge recently faced a crisis in the form of the Wildwood Revolt, stability seems to be returning to the woods, for a time at least.

Almost 900 years ago, Taldor signed the Wildwood Treaty, making the Verduran Forest an autonomous area. Taldor agreed to a lumber quota it wouldn't exceed, while the druids of the woods would keep wicked fey and monsters at bay. While the druids worked hard to maintain their side of the bargain, Taldor (and the more recently formed nation of Andoran) frequently didn't. A growing resentment led to last year's renewal of the Treaty being tarnished by the assassination of several key players and the ignition of the conflict that would become known as the Wildwood Revolt. The lodge has stabilized in the aftermath of this conflict and is now on a reinforced path to growth. With the direct involvement of Grand Princess Eutropia, the druids have renegotiated the Wildwood Treaty to better serve the forest. The spirited **Emorga All-Seer** (wise female awakened tortoise soothsayer) and **Corazal** (ancient agender conrasu sentinel) currently lead the faction. While Emorga has never wanted a leadership role, it's proving to be one she excels at, and Corazal's regeneration following the Revolt has thus far proven successful—though they're still in no position to lead alone. Certain actors have yet to truly put down their weapons and give up on violence, but enough have done so that a tentative peace has returned to the woods.

MIXED GROUPS

A party consisting of members from multiple factions can be an interesting composition for adventures in the Shining Kingdoms. Some of these adventurers might serve as foils that help to flesh one another out; an Eagle Knight might help a Kalistocrat value individual freedoms, while the Kalistocrat imparts a lesson of realism and patience on the knight. However, the goals of certain factions might sometimes cause a strain on the party. For example, a Wylderheart might take issue with the warped morals of a Broken Ghost and refuse to aid them in their quests. It's important that a party doesn't have too much internal conflict, so when planning such a group, ensure that they have common goals. While the Wylderheart might not approve of the Broken Ghosts' necromancy, they might appreciate the valor the Broken Ghost shows when working together to take down the shemhazian cult lurking under Isarn!

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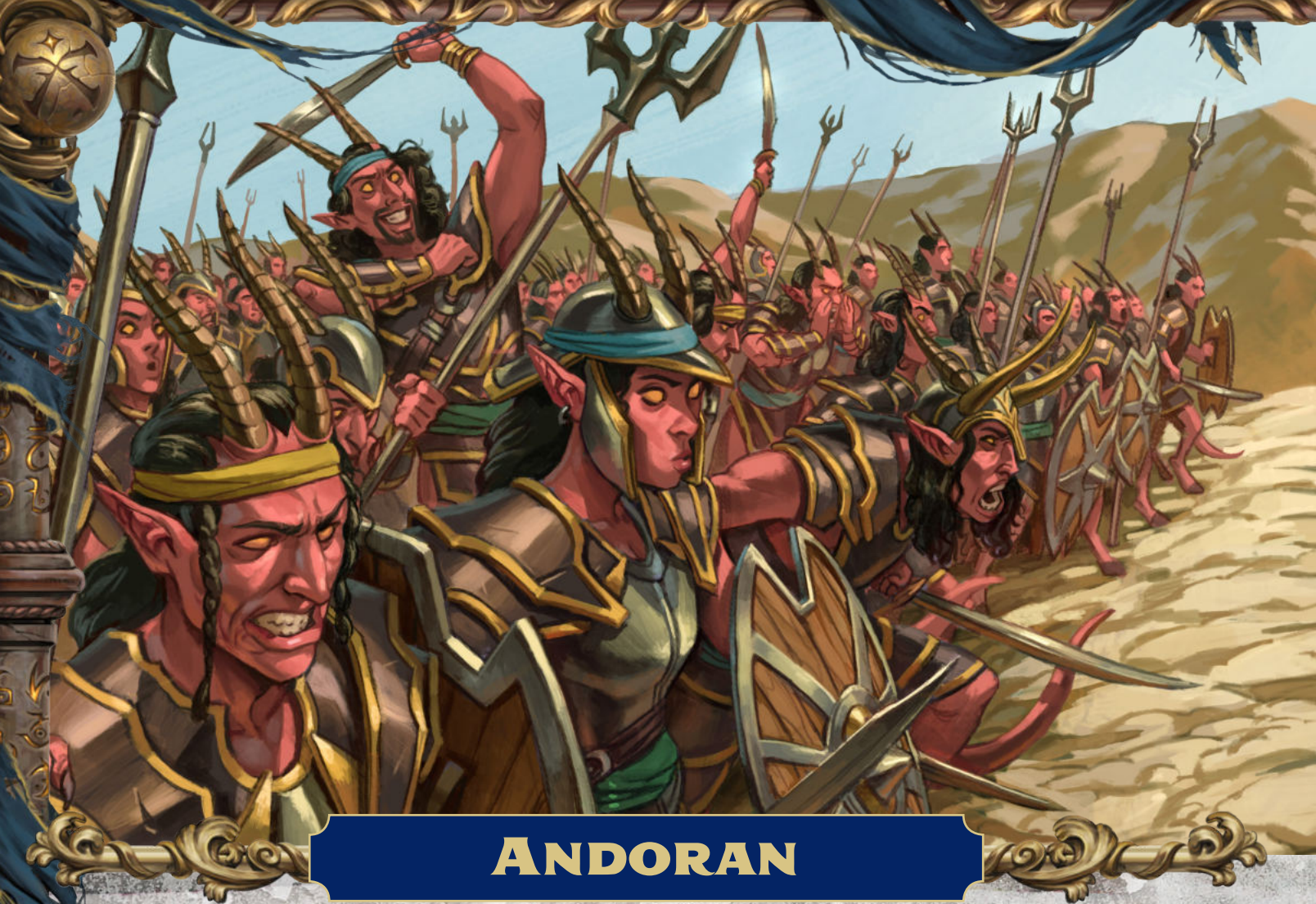
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ROVANT VANDERHOLL



ANDORAN

NATIONS



ANDORAN

Capital: Almas

Government: Democracy

Ruler: Supreme Elect Andira Marusek

PEOPLES

Dwarves

Elves

Empyreans

Fey

Gnomes

Halflings

Humans

Kitsune

Kobolds

LANGUAGES

Common

FACTIONS



Eagle Knights



Lumber Consortium



Wildwood Lodge

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Cayden Caillean



Erastil



Iomedae



Shelyn

RESOURCES



Cheese



Grain/Fruit/Vegetables



Honey



Lumber



Magic Items/Artifacts



Minerals



Ores



Seafood



Ships



Technology



Wine



Wool



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ANDORAN





Bastion of freedom, birthplace of liberty. Andoran is a country where every life is counted as worthwhile, every voice has the opportunity to be heard, and every citizen has the chance to change the course of the nation. It's a prosperous land of small farming communities, riverside trading towns, and cosmopolitan cities, surrounded by thick forests and soaring peaks. Andoran attracts all kinds of settlers and travelers, and communities generally welcome them. From the bustling street of Almas and the busy shipyards of Augustana to the sun-dappled glades of the Verduran Forest, the people of Andoran live under the Common Rule, the philosophy that each individual has equal worth and that no one has the right to force their beliefs on another. Not everyone lives up to the country's high ideals, of course, and some nefarious groups like the greedy Lumber Consortium and the corrupt Seven Houses actively try to undermine them. Andoran today needs heroes as much as ever to protect their egalitarian values.

For all its domestic freedom and relative security, the fringes of the country remain a dangerous and untamed wilderness, largely thanks to the efforts of residents who strive to beat back "civilization" and keep it unspoiled. Darkmoon Vale, in the country's northwest, is alluring for its wealth of duskwood and silver, but flame drakes, hostile fey, and organized bands of werereatures make venturing into the area a risky endeavor. Subterranean dangers also spill out from the area's Candlestone

Caverns, including hryngar squads, hungry undead, and other Darklands residents lured up from the depths by the promise of easy prey. Andoran's eastern verge isn't any tamer, with the ancient mysteries of the Verduran Forest and its recent tensions with the Wildwood Revolt making exploration and travel hazardous.

Andoran is also known for its Eagle Knights, elite military units who champion the country's political aims. Originally founded as an honor guard in anticipation of the god Aroden's return, the fighting force became instrumental in keeping the peace after the god's death and Andoran's subsequent rebellion. Eagle Knights swear their loyalty to the Common Rule and will do anything to further what they see as the increase of liberty and equality in Golarion. The modern organization is divided into three major branches and a few new specialist regimens. The Golden Legion, whose primary mission is to guard the nation's borders and trade routes, also sends units to serve as trainers and field commanders for the nation's conventional military. The Steel Falcons, the second major branch, are responsible for advancing Andoran's ideals abroad, through both diplomatic and military action. Many Steel Falcons serve as envoys, escorts, or attachés at foreign courts, and some take more direct action by leading raids against corrupt organizations or international criminals. The Gray Corsairs, the Falcons' naval arm, have harried dishonest Katapeshi

and Chelaxian ships for years and today patrol the waters of the Inner Sea for smugglers. The final branch of the Eagle Knights, the Twilight Talons, are neither widely known among the Andoren public nor publicly acknowledged by the national government. The Talons operate a clandestine espionage network, serving as spies, infiltrators, saboteurs, and assassins. While the full activities of the group are only known to its leadership, the few aware of their existence speculate that many governments, guilds, trade organizations, and criminal syndicates of the Inner Sea play home to deep-cover Talon agents.

Finally, the recently formed Platinum Wing branch performs research into advancing offensive and defensive military technology by investigating firearms, godsblood, and warshards.

In its nascent years, Andoran focused its foreign policy on the abolition of slavery. With the effective abandonment of the practice across the Inner Sea region, Andoran's military, particularly the Steel Falcons, have turned their attention to fighting tyranny in all its forms. Andoran today stands against Chelax, its longtime enemy, because of its infernal leadership's continued oppression of its vulnerable subjects, particularly the halfling population.

On its eastern border, Andoran cautiously engages with Grand Princess Eutropia of Taldor while also secretly agitating against the privileges of the country's aristocracy and its hereditary rule. Now that the political situation in Galt has stabilized, Andoran is eager to send aid to their long-suffering neighbors, though many Galtans are wary of the presence of Eagle Knights on their soil. In the larger region, Andoran has turned its attention to possible alliances with Druma, the Five Kings Mountains, and Kyonin against the undead scourge of Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant who seeks to bring life and death under his bony thumb.

GOVERNMENT

Andoran stands as one of the few countries in the Inner Sea to give citizens a true voice in their own governance, and its half-century-long experiment with representative democracy has proved largely successful. With the passing of the Associative Act—the country's constitution—in 4669 AR, Andoran enshrined the rights of its people and established the basics of the country's political system. The core tenet of the Associative Act is that a citizen should have the freedom to act as their conscience directs, as long as their actions don't harm other people or their property. The Act also established extensive social programs to safeguard economic emancipation, recognizing that people can't exercise their freedom if oppressed by hunger and want. In addition to these broad principles, the Associative Act delineated the building blocks of the national bureaucracy that runs the country to this day.

The primary political body of Andoran is the People's Council, an assembly of 350 representatives that meet twice a year on 15 Erastus and 15 Abadius. During this time they make appointments, debate and pass new laws, issue declarations, and interpret the fundamentals of the Associative Act. Council meetings typically last three to seven days, though meetings dealing with particularly contentious issues might last much longer. Special or emergency sessions of the council can be called by the council's leader, the Supreme Elect, or any three members of the council acting in concert. The most recent of these sessions, the so-called Council of Fallen Faith, was called in the immediate aftermath of the Godsrain.

Members of the People's Council are directly elected for five-year terms by the people of their region, usually a city, town, or shire. The council, in turn, elects a Supreme Elect for four-year terms to oversee council affairs, lead the Andoren military, and serve as the mayor of Almas, the country's capital. The current leader, **Andira Marusek** (dauntless female human Eagle Knight), was elected to her third and final term in 4724 AR. The People's Council also typically appoints a spokesperson each year, known as the People's Voice. The current People's Voice, **Valeria Tendercrest** (dignified female halfling politician), has served for three terms.

The Supreme Elect is advised and assisted by the Demarchy Assembly, a group of 30 ministers chosen by lot from a pool of qualified individuals, who run governmental offices, including finance, foreign affairs, internal justice, trade and commerce, and the treasury. In their duties as military commander, the Supreme Elect appoints 30 consuls, officials who advise the Supreme Elect on military policy and often command a segment of the country's armed forces, such as the army, navy, or Eagle Knights. Consuls serve at the authority and pleasure of the Supreme Elect, though the loyalty of their troops often makes charismatic consuls difficult to remove or discipline.

In addition to their national duties, representatives of the People's Council are also heavily involved with local politics and administration. The Council appoints magistrates for the entire nation, and these local judicial officers hear criminal and civil cases, maintain civic order, interpret the law, and sometimes serve as political envoys. Magistrates typically work closely with their representative as well as with locally elected mayors and citizens councils that govern most municipalities. Representatives of the People's Council are also called on to preside at moots, local or regional political meetings where citizens have a chance to raise their issues or needs and voice their opinions on political topics in a public forum. Most communities have a moot hall, a large building designed to accommodate a crowd ranging from 50 to several hundred. When not in use for political purposes, moot halls often serve as performance venues, temples, or even museums.

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HISTORY

TIMELINES

The following events are some of the most significant in Andoran's history.

Unknown to -5293 AR

Kellid people establish the Nogortha Necropolis and settle the region.

-5293 AR to -4201 AR

Kellid culture retreats after Earthfall.

1683 AR

Taldor's Fourth Army of Exploration begins mapping and claiming the area. Native inhabitants retreat to the country's northwest.

Andoran has been settled by humans since the Age of Legend. Like much of Avistan, modern-day Andoran was home to various communities of ethnic Kellids. The center of Kellid culture in the region was in the Nogortha Peaks, where settlers established cave dwellings that served as homes for spiritual leaders, repositories of art, and refuges in times of war. Many villages and towns farmed on the fertile plains between Nogortha and the Andoshen River, and active trade networks connected these communities with the Macridi Blade culture to the east, the horselords of the region that would one day become Nidal, and Kellid settlements to the northeast along the Sellen River. Modern archaeological studies, primarily conducted by the Pathfinder Society, have even uncovered trade goods from as far afield as Sarkoris. The communities of the area brought remains of the deceased to be buried in the mounds of the Nogortha Necropolis.

This ancient culture was severely disrupted by the geological and meteorological effects of Earthfall. As resources dwindled and farming grew impossible, the struggling population became nomadic, abandoned the cold reaches of the mountains, and tended small herds of livestock close to the region's rivers, where eventually they again formed small trade settlements. When life in the region stabilized during the Age of Anguish, the region's inhabitants managed to maintain their stable agrarian lifestyle even as dwarves emerged from their Quest for Sky to the north and gnomes appeared alongside the fey inhabitants of the area's dense forests.

Taldor's Fourth Army of Exploration arrived in the region around 1643 AR, the expansionist forces disrupting thousands of years of stability. The nomadic Kellids fought defensive holding actions against the invaders, while herders mostly fell back into the remote Aspodell Pass and area of modern-day Isgar. The riverside settlements were taken over by the army, but at first, the Taldans appointed imperial administrators to oversee contact with the empire and allowed local leadership to continue while they focused on settling Taldan immigrants along the trade routes and exploiting the resources of the region's forests and coast.

In 1707 AR, King Alvistus IV declared Andoran an official province of Taldor and launched an aggressive military campaign against the fey of the region's forest and the Kellid holdouts in the northwest of the country. By the end of the 18th century, the grip of the empire was firmly established across Andoran; lumberjacks clear-cut large regions of the forests, large cities had grown up across the province, and the shipyard at Augustana produced a huge number of ships that enabled Taldor's naval supremacy and imperial misadventures across Garund, the ruins of Azlant, and even Arcadia.

The status quo of colonial Andoran lasted for thousands of years, with the province's modern borders established since circa 2000 AR. The military might of Taldor ensured stability despite periodic goblin incursions, werecreature attacks, and fey kidnappings. Just as the ground shook during the 3980 AR eruption of Droskar's Crag, however, the political hegemony of Taldor wavered at the dawn of the 41st century. As the aristocracy indulged in petty squabbles over landholding, Qadira invaded the eastern reaches of Taldor's empire, initiating a 500-year-long war. With the attention of the government and military in the east, Chelaxian governor Aspek the Even-Tongued declared the province independent and crowned himself king. In short order, he lured the provinces of Andoran, Galt, and Isgar to break from the Taldan empire as well. All three territories were quickly annexed by Chelax, who installed



ASPEX THE EVEN-TONGUED

vassal rulers. Taldor had no choice but to acquiesce, having no troops to spare to bring their territories in line, and the revolution that shattered an empire wound up being nigh bloodless.

With political winds blowing toward Egorian instead of Oppara, tracks of wilderness and very small settlements in western reaches of Andoran were increasingly developed and settled. The Lumber Consortium, though founded hundreds of years earlier, greatly expanded their influence, founded the city of Oregent, and gradually obtained a monopoly over the logging industry in Andoran by squeezing out small companies, intimidating independent actors, and bribing Chelaxian officials. Darkmoon Vale, largely desolate since the eruption of Droskar's Crag, was settled once again, with the valuable duskwood of the area exploited for Lumber Consortium profit. This development was mirrored across the region, and the growing merchant class eventually began to rival the aristocracy in economic, political, and social power.

The upheavals that rocked the Inner Sea after the death of the god Aroden didn't spare Andoran. The vassal king of Andoran, Culliam II, had founded the gold-and-blue-uniformed Eagle Knights as an honor guard mere years earlier in anticipation of the god's return to Golarion. When Aroden instead perished, the region was drawn into the chaos of the Chelaxian Civil War. Though the diabolical House Thrune was able to establish its dominance after 60 years of war, the public in Andoran remained resistant to fiendish rule. Inspired by writers such as Hosetter and Darl Jubannich of Galt, dissidents and revolutionaries from the powerful merchant class demonstrated against Chelaxian rule and demanded the end to the aristocracy in Andoran. Many younger nobles joined them in the streets, voluntarily renouncing their titles in the name of egalitarianism.

The movement came to a head in the so-called People's Revolt in 4669 AR when widespread demonstrations started in Almas and Augustana cascaded across the country, plunging Andoran into a full-scale revolution. The crowds stormed the manor houses and council chambers of the remaining aristocracy, demanding that the nobles renounce their titles or face exile. Realizing their untenable position, most aristocrats willingly surrendered their titles and positions. After a relatively orderly and bloodless few months, Andoran declared itself a free and democratic nation, repurposing the Eagle Knights into an elite defensive force to protect the fledgling country. Still reeling from the civil war and loss of multiple territories, Cheliax could do little to squash the new nation save impose a naval embargo that the Andoran Navy eventually broke.

The Associative Act that organized Andoran's government in 4669 AR established the Common Rule, removing all noble titles, freeing prisoners, and outlawing slavery. The foundational document also established the People's Council to rule as direct representatives of the nation, though in the aftermath of the Goblinblood Wars of 4697 AR, the office of Supreme Elect was created to direct the national bureaucracy. Codwin I of Augustana was elected the first Supreme Elect in 4704 AR and served three successful terms, stepping down in 4716 AR. Codwin's tenure was notable for the organization of the Eagle Knights into the branches they're known for today, the dedication of the Andoren armed forces to the abolition of slavery in the Inner Sea, and the skillful management of diplomacy with Andoran's neighbors.

Codwin was succeeded in the office of Supreme Elect by Andira Marusek, a young former member of the Twilight Talons who has since been twice reelected. Marusek's early tenure was considered wildly successful with widespread abolition of slavery and major victories against government corruption achieved, but her handling of the chaos caused by the Godsrain will determine her ultimate legacy.

1707 AR Andoran is officially founded as a province of Taldor. General Khastalus of Corentyn establishes the port city of Augustana and begins clearing the Arthfell Forest.

4081 AR Andoran formally breaks ties with Taldor as part of Aspek the Even-Tongued's rebellion. The country becomes a province of Cheliax.

4660 AR The House of Thrune takes power in Cheliax after the civil war that follows Aroden's death.

4669 AR The People's Revolt. The People's Freedom Movement drafts the Associative Act, establishing the foundations of Andoran's government.

4697 AR Andoran sends troops to the aid of neighboring Isger during the Goblinblood Wars.

4704 AR Codwin I of Augustana is elected first Supreme Elect of Andoran.

4712 AR The People's Council limits the Supreme Elect to three terms in office.

4716 AR Andira Marusek is elected Supreme Elect.

4717 AR Pathfinder Society faction leader Colson Maldris kidnaps several important officials in an effort to root out the corruption of the Seven Houses.

4718 AR The War for the Crown destabilizes Taldor.

4719 AR Tar-Baphon frees himself and rampages across Avistan en route to attacking Absalom.

4722 AR Emancipation Edict ends de jure slavery in Cheliax.

4724 AR The Wildwood Revolt wracks eastern Andoran with conflict between druids, fey, and loggers.

4724 AR The Godsrain inflames war fever and a scramble for godsblood and warshards across Andoran.

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CURRENT EVENTS

Andoran, more than 50 years after its founding, sits at the brink of becoming a mature republic. Supreme Elect Andira Marusek, recently elected to her third and final term, has proven to be a levelheaded and wise leader, and she seldom has to entertain comments about her youth or inexperience now that she's in her forties with a lifetime of political and military experience behind her. As the country and its political bodies mature, Andoran faces new problems and new opportunities. Few of the country's original politicians remain active in public life, and the revolutionary fervor that united the country's founders has long transformed into factious politicking over how to run its large bureaucracy. As older members of the People's Council retire, new blood freshens the political discourse, leading to further reforms, such as the regulation of the lumber industry. At the same time, the retiring representatives and consuls take with them years of expertise in navigating political logjams, and these days, the halls of the Palace of the People's Council often ring with young voices more interested in being seen and heard than accomplishing policy for the good of the people.

New representatives also bring new loyalties, and several incidents of corruption, vote trading, and outright bribery have rocked recent People's Council sessions. The Seven Houses, a clandestine organization composed of the descendants of once-noble families, continues to spread its influence, acquiring local positions and People's Council seats. Even honest political officials face difficult decisions in Andoran today, balancing external political pressure from Cheliox, Taldor, and the Eye of Dread against domestic freedoms, economic stability, and the effects of the Godsrain.

Rising Tensions: Despite years of relative stability, Andoran today is a troubled land. Disruption from the Godsrain has left the population on edge, and many government officials seem overcome with a zealous passion for expansion and militarization of the nation. Stockpiling of weapons and training of new regiments are common throughout the country, and what's the use of a large, elite military if the nation doesn't deploy it? Several consuls push for forays into Galt or Isger to help "ensure stability" in those lands, and those officials are poised to skirt the legal limitations of their positions to make it happen. Warnings from Kyonin and Druma about the threat of the Whispering Tyrant have exacerbated the problem; many consuls wouldn't mind establishing

footholds in those rich nations under the pretext of sending military assistance. Though Andoran has turned away from the colonial predilections of its Taldan past, there's increasingly insistent demand in the country to launch expeditionary units to discover and lay claim to godsblood and warshards wherever they might lie.

Cautious public officials and political philosophers have publicly spoken against the country's militarization, noting that subsuming the needs of the people to the support of the armed forces is a serious imposition on the Common Rule and liberty of citizens. Even some of these officials, however, might be convinced to support foreign military adventures, lest the increasing might of the Andoren military be turned against domestic targets. Life along the country's eastern border appears to bear this reality, as citizens complain that towns scattered throughout Arthfell have become forts or armed camps where one can't walk to the market without passing a patrol. Swelling populations of troops in the region have also strained food supplies and raised prices for civilians near their outposts. Military leaders have attempted unpopular curfews and other restrictions on movement in some settlements, leading to near revolt from longtime residents.

Devils at the Door: Today, many citizens of Andoran share rumors of a potential war with Cheliox like the birds of Arthfell cry for the arrival of morning. The moral degradation of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune and Queen Abrogail II's many impositions on the liberty of her subjects are popular topics for traveling players and minstrels from Alvis to Sauerton. Town criers report suspected troop movements along Andoran's western border and sightings of messenger devils above the Aspodell Mountains. If tavern talk in Almas is to be believed, war between Cheliox and its former vassal could break out at any moment. With many in the population too young to remember the People's Revolt, sentiment toward the possibility of war is generally positive, particularly among the youthful members of the merchant class and university students. Members of the Andoren working class, in contrast, are pragmatic enough to know who will be drafted should the military need to bulk up its numbers for the conflict.

The country's military and political leaders are in accord with public sentiment. Supreme Elect Andira Marusek has long despised devil-haunted Cheliox, and her time infiltrating the country as a member of the Twilight Talons has left her with a deep well of firsthand experiences to draw on during bellicose speeches to the Demarchy Assembly and



VALERIA TENDERCREST

private meetings with concerned Consuls. Triborn Waits, head of the Steel Falcons, vocally supports invasion, calling military conflict with Cheliox an “inevitability.” Ries Cuprianas, the Eagle Knight Commander, and Ingrid Odeber, head of the Golden Legion, have been steadfast but lonely voices for restraint. The duo urges Marusek to focus on domestic issues, like rebuilding in the east in the aftermath of the Wildwood revolt or sending aid to Galt’s recovery process. Both also deeply fear the effect militarism will have on the precious liberties of Andoran’s citizens. So far, Marusek’s respect for Cuprianas, the old campaigner, has kept her from calling for a declaration of war from the People’s Council, but one violent incident at the tense border could change that.

Meanwhile, the Lumber Consortium has been covertly supporting military buildup in the country. For the corrupt monopoly, war offers many opportunities. A mobilized army needs lumber for wagons, siege engines, and arrows, while naval escalation will drive demand from Augustana’s shipyards. Open conflict would also provide a welcome distraction to the Golden Legion, who have recently been cracking down on the Consortium’s abuses of power and undue influence on the political system. It could be just the opening the Lumber Consortium needs to rebuild its position near the Verduran Forest or even spread its influence into the newly opened markets of Galt. Representatives allied with the Consortium have been pushing for emergency sessions of the People’s Council to pass aggressive resolutions and further empower military leaders.

Just miles from Andoran’s western border, Cheliox has provocatively deployed legions of devils as a “defensive measure.” While there have been no cross-border raids, traders moving between the nations have been harassed and subjected to exorbitant tariffs. Mayors and wardens along the border report a number of strange happenings, even unexplained disappearances and deaths, but none have been definitively linked to Cheliox. A canny opponent, Abrogail knows that neighboring nations are more likely to come to Andoran’s aid if Cheliox launches a full-scale invasion. So, for the moment, she focuses diplomatic and espionage efforts on minor provocations meant to draw Andoran into making the first major move.

Investing in the Future: Not all of the fallout from the Godsrain has been so troublesome, however. The acquisition of godsblood and warshards has launched a wave of innovation across the country. True, much of that creative energy has been channeled toward destruction: the Andoran Alchemists’ Guild has brewed godsblood into novel types of explosives, and the newly founded Platinum Wing division of the Eagle Knights has managed to craft firearms and ammunition that incorporate warshards. The Platinum Wing has also developed a number of useful spells and non-military crafting techniques, however, and Godsrain research and development has diversified the economy away from

its heavy reliance on lumber. The city of Alvis, home of the Alchemists’ Guild, has swelled in population and importance, and new alchemical discoveries are made there at an alarming rate. Supreme Elect Andira Marusek has the suspicion that it’s the next generation of inventors, artisans, and designers who will truly unlock the power of the divine remains. She has bullied the People’s Council into allocating a significant amount of funding for educational institutions and public laboratories across the nation. Much of that funding has gone toward the creation of new free schools for citizens, the most prominent of which are the Galimnos School in Augustana and the Talmandor Institute in Almas. Council watchers speculate that a vote will take place in the near future to establish free education for all as an Andoran right.



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NOTABLE FIGURES



ANDIRA MARUSEK



CODWIN I



RIES CUPRIANAS



HELENA TRELLIS

The principles of Common Rule state that all those in Andoran are of equal importance, and that no individual has the right to force their will or beliefs on another. While most citizens of Andoran strive to adhere to this philosophy, the necessities of living in a society invariably concentrate some power in the hands of influential figures. The country's laws provide a check on these individuals, but their thoughts and actions, alliances, and conflicts, still shape the future of the country. The most ambitious among them ally with one another to increase their influence, seeking to dominate or even outright subvert Andoran's democracy. With the increase in aggression and uncertainty caused by the Godsrain, these laws are strained more than ever as frightened citizens are tempted to turn to charismatic leaders rather than national ideals for answers.

Supreme Elect **Andira Marusek** (dauntless female human Eagle Knight) was recently elected to her third and final term as Supreme Elect. She feels incredible pressure to accomplish her personal goals and leave the country on secure and prosperous footing. Perhaps because of this, she has been less willing to compromise of late and unsparing with her criticism of politicians or officials who would stand in her way. Though she lends her ear to Ries Cuprianas's cautions about militarizing the country, she can't ignore the threat of a full-scale invasion from the west, and her experiences inside Cheliah fuel her personal antipathy toward the country.

Codwin I (patient male human chaplain) of Augustana, the former Supreme Elect, has been retired now for almost a decade. Codwin has largely left politics behind. His long tenure in public life led the former deckhand to develop a listening ear and an insight into the mortal condition. These days, he employs these talents as a chaplain for the Eagle Knights, guiding those who need it on the path of Iomedae, his patron goddess. While he doesn't plot or maneuver, Codwin is still an invaluable source of political experience, and Andira Marusek often seeks his advice over a cup of tea in the halls of the Golden Aerie.

Though his increasing age has taken Eagle Knight Commander **Ries Cuprianas** (valiant male human retired commando) out of the field, at 60 years old, Ries tackles oversight of the Eagle Knights with energy and verve that reflect his years in the Steel Falcons. The "Steel Fox" leads the organization at a time when he must balance multiple dangerous priorities: infernal Cheliah marshals devilish troops at the border, bellicose consuls advocate for measures that undermine democracy, and fallen godsblood enrages and empowers people in and out of the country. Ries keeps his focus on the Common Rule and directs Eagle Knights, regardless of their branch, to devote themselves to egalitarianism and democracy.

Down a quiet hallway in the House of the Demarchy Assembly, behind an unassuming door marked "Private," is the well-organized office of Marshall **Helena Trellis** (discreet female human spymaster). The few people who know this is more than a simple bureaucrat's office tremble when they knock at the door, though Helena is soft-spoken and unassuming at first glance. The longtime head of Andoran's spy service, Helena has a penetrating gaze, eidetic memory, and a hand in most intrigue that moves around the Inner Sea. The aftermath of the Godsrain has kept her incredibly busy verifying the whereabouts and welfare of agents across Golarion. She has also developed a single-minded fascination with the material remnants of Gorum and directs her agents to obtain information on godsblood and warshards by any means necessary. She herself wears an unusual brooch crafted from a warshard, resembling an eagle grasping a ruby gem.

After years of faithful service as commander of the Diamond Regiment—a branch of the Golden Legion dedicated to guarding duskwood shipments in Darkmoon Vale—General **Ingrid Odeber** (innovative female werebear human veteran) was recently elevated to lead the force. A devout follower of Iomedae, Ingrid focuses the Legion on humanitarian work and building the nation's defensive capabilities. The expansionist talk of many of Andoran's consuls has her worried for the future of the country, as well as the relationship between the Golden Legion and the rest of the military. Few besides her spouse, Tablic, know of her werecreature nature, though as a werebear from birth, like many of her ancestors, Ingrid has no trouble controlling her ursine transformation.

The youngest head of the Greenfire Circle in generations, **Tablic** (pragmatic nonbinary human archdruid) has steered the druids of the Circle and their allies to balance the needs of nature and the settlements of Andoran. Due to their levelheaded approach and close partnership with their wife, Ingrid Odeber, they're deeply trusted by the fey, druids, and humans of northwestern Andoran. Though Tablic's leadership role in the Arthfell Forest is far from their partner's posting in Almas, Tablic follows nature's pathway almost daily, stepping from a large oak tree in the couple's back garden so they can spend the evening and night together. The druid never stays long past dawn, as Almas uncomfortably reminds them of their formative years as a street urchin in the capital.

General **Triborn Waits** (ostentatious male musetouched nephilim human commander) took command of the Steel Falcons following his return to the country when Andira Marusek first took the office of Supreme Elect, having previously served for years as a military envoy in Absalom. Never one to let subtlety triumph when bombast could take the day, Triborn's fiery speeches in the capital have convinced many Andorens, including several consuls, that direct military intervention in neighboring countries is the only way to ensure the peace of the nation and spread of the Common Rule. While he hasn't yet commanded the Steel Falcons to take military action against foreign states, he has directed the Gray Corsairs to pursue a relentless war on piracy and smuggling, stoking resentment from the pirate lords of the Shackles. His overwhelming charisma and outspoken passion can sway many to act more boldly, or recklessly, than they normally would.

Leader of the Lumber Consortium, the elderly **Gol Ephialtes** (exploitive male human board director) recently returned to public life in Almas after months in hiding. He survived the "unpleasantness" of the Lumber Consortium's confrontation with the Wildwood Lodge with the tenacity of a cockroach. Though his great personal wealth and political connections ensure that Gol maintains his seat on the Lumber Consortium's Board of Directors, new board members blame him, along with the rest of the company's old guard, for the recent failures of the group. Leaving the repair of the company's reputation in Andoran to other hands, the canny shareholder is currently attempting clandestine negotiations with Galtan officials to spread the Consortium's influence there.

Consul Marshal **Jorab Mire** (expansionist male human general) is the long-established head of Andoran's military forces. Jorab has been a valuable advisor on international and internal security matters for Supreme Elect Andira Marusek. He's currently urging the Supreme Elect to march the bulk of the country's forces from Carpenden to Alvis or the Aspodell Pass, in preparation for a full-scale assault on Cheliah. He has Triborn Waits's support for the campaign, but the other leaders of the Eagle Knights staunchly oppose him. Jorab is currently working to win the nation's other consuls to his side, and astute political observers worry that he might attempt to lead the military in contravention of the Supreme Elect's commands.



INGRID ODEBER



TABLIC



TRIBORN WAITS



GOL EPHIALTES



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FLORA AND FAUNA

The wild forests of Andoran are home to a large variety of hardwood and softwood trees, including oak, maple, hickory, and chestnut. Mountain slopes support evergreens as well as flowering alpine meadows. The rare duskwood tree grows almost exclusively in the forests of Darkmoon Vale, providing the country with a valuable lumber resource. Moderate, predictable rainfall allows productive growing seasons for most crops—particularly cereal grains—throughout the country, save in the drier region west of the Verduran Forest, where viticulture is more common. The city of Carpenden is known for its unusually sour moonmelon, which locals consider a delicacy. Dozens of species of seabirds frequent the coast of Andoran, including the gold-banded osprey, which nests exclusively in the region and overwinters in northern Osirion. Inland, wild areas teem with roe deer, hares, and wild boar. Predator species include bears, lynx, and weasels, with wolf packs being particularly common in the northwestern reaches.

From temperate forests to windy shores to chilly peaks, Andoran provides residents and adventurers the freedom to live and explore.

Almas: The capital of Andoran serves as a port city for 83,000 citizens (page 44).

Alvis: Though it was once a sleepy fishing village, Alvis has seen its population explode to over 3,000 residents since the Godsrain, most of them members of the Andoran Alchemists' Guild. The guild, which had long been purveyors of strange reagents and eldritch substances, has become obsessed with research on the remnants of the Godsrain. The current guildmaster, **Trodem Staunch** (excitable male human chemist), is glad for the notoriety—and money—but is suspicious that new recruits will steal the guild's proprietary formulas. Meanwhile, the town's councilor, **Mogad Grayman** (exasperated male human ex-fisher) is just trying to arrange housing and services for the new arrivals while preserving Alvis's original character.

Arthfell Forest: The primeval forest of Arthfell once stretched over much of western Andoran. Though greatly reduced by logging to fuel the shipbuilding industry of Augustana, the forest of white pines, sugar pines, and firs is still a significant, sprawling blanket of trees that stretches through the nation's western heartlands. The depths of the woods are dangerous these days, as werewolf packs and predatory fey waylay travelers, while rival groups of druids compete for territory and influence. Those lost in the woods might find a druidic friend in **Tablic**, leader of the Greenfire Circle. The group of druids seek to build ties between residents of the forest and the surrounding human communities. The Circle is opposed by the Third Veil, a violent group of primalists who often snatch victims from farmsteads and lumber camps to scare off settlers. The Fangwatch, led for the last 10 years by **Aurorae Kaisera** (veteran nonbinary aiuvirin werewolf human captain), tries to keep the werecreature population of the forest in check, but despite their efforts, the packs have grown more ferocious and organized in recent years. A creature called **The Ravener** (bloodthirsty mythic werewolf pack leader) seeks to unite the packs and exterminate all settlements in and around the forest.

Arthfell Mountains: These gentle mountains on the southeastern border of the Arthfell Forest are sparsely settled, a peaceful region of heathered meadows and copses of evergreen trees.

Aspo Bay: Home to dozens of small fishing villages as well as the influential port of Augustana, Aspo Bay is one of Andoran's most important maritime regions. Abandoned Chelaxian forts on the crags and islands of the bay often attract adventurers. The most notorious of these isles, Selian's Watch, is rumored to be infested by undead and sedachies.

Aspodell Mountains: This long range of mountains on Andoran's western border partially separates the nation from devil-bound Cheliah. The official political boundary between the nations along these peaks is often contested, and with military tensions rising across the region, Fort Vigilance near the Aspodell Pass now houses a sizable garrison.

Augustana: This metropolis with a population of 60,500 serves as the heart of Aspo Bay and hosts Andoran's navy and shipbuilding industry. While primarily a military seaport, traffic and trade flows down the Arthfell River into the city, making it the economic hub of the entire region. From the slums of Copperdown to the busy markets of Fleet and the lavish manor houses of the Slopes, Augustana's districts bustle with trade, activity, and culture. The city's vital harbor is guarded by Fort Constance, home to over a thousand marines and the Consul Admiral of the Andoran Navy.

Haskell Whaley (grizzled male human commander). With the admiral's looming retirement, many senior navy officials are actively jockeying for appointment to the nation's most powerful consulship.

Bellis: With a population of 5,200, the large town of Bellis is the most notable settlement near the Verduran Forest. Young mayor **Resani Tell** (ambitious male human politician) worries that bees in local hives have been acting aggressively. **Alyce Quinley** (conflicted female human envoy) represents the interests of the military in the settlement and tries to balance the country's lumber interests with her care for the forest.

Black Forks: Once a monastery constructed from huge blocks of rough-cut stone, Black Forks is now a crumbling ruin sitting along the southern tip of the Verduran Forest. At the center of the grounds, an overflowing pool of ebony-black water runs the length of its ruined halls. Locals avoid the site, telling stories of a strange tentacled being once worshipped by long-dead monks. Adventurers still venture into Black Forks in search of a mythic spear rumored to have been lost in the ruins over a thousand years ago. Thus far, few have emerged alive, and all empty-handed.

Candlestone Caverns: This deep system of caves stretches from the surface near the base of the Aspodell Mountains to the Darklands realm of Nar-Voth. A vast subterranean region filled with namesake pale stalagmites, the caverns are home to communities of wily, trap-setting kobolds, predatory xulgaths prowling the darkness, and disciplined hryngars inhabiting dwarven ruins. Rumors hint at more fearsome residents even further below: a city of sinister fey ruled by **Queen Frilogarma** (plotting female nymph enchanter).

Cape of Hope: The steep cliffs of Andoran's southernmost point provide a nesting ground for thousands of seabirds. On a clear day, they also provide a view of a curious black obelisk rising from the waves to the south near the horizon.

Carpenden: This city of 11,000 citizens rests on seven hilltops midway between the Arthfell Forest and the Andoshen River. Carpenden is also home to diverse neighborhoods, a yearly moonmelon festival, and one-third of Andoran's army, commanded by Consul Marshal Jorab Mire. Since the Godsrain, locals have begun to grumble about the increasing number of military personnel in the city.

Chimera Cove: Once the base of a notorious privateer, this remote settlement of 150 is overlooked by many. Few villagers suspect that islands just off the coast still hide lost treasure, ghosts, and a hidden weapon that could devastate the country's navy.

Claes: The small town of Claes has a population of 700 and is a typical fishing settlement of the southern Andoran coast—except for the Azlanti ruins that lie beneath the town. Accessible during low tide via sea caves, the Claes Redoubt is home to secretive calignis, mysterious tiny humanoid creatures, and semi-aquatic monsters. In the ruins' depths, an Azlanti temple still holds secrets from the ancient empire.

Crystal Falls: This idyllic and impressive waterfall plunges nearly a thousand feet down the side of the southern Aspodell Mountains. While the pool at its base looks peaceful, it would be a foolish place to bathe. Caves behind the waterfall provide a secret base of operations for spies from Cheliox, and the invaders would readily kill to keep their location a secret.

Darkmoon Vale: Andoran's northwestern frontier, Darkmoon Vale was once covered in old-growth forest, but centuries of logging have cleared large plains and spaces

LOCAL CLIMATE

The great forests of Arthfell and Verduran give evidence that Andoran was once covered with temperate forests watered by rain driven up from the Inner Sea. Though much of the forest has been logged, this pleasant weather and these favorable growing conditions persist today. While coastal areas are subject to gales rolling in from the Inner Sea, the Aspodell and Five Kings Mountains largely shield the interior from severe storms. Relatively mild winters see snowfall on highland slopes but little accumulation across the forests and plains. Extreme temperatures are rare in the country, even in the depths of summer and winter. Flooding along watercourses is common, particularly in areas with heavy logging activity, and flash flooding is a danger in the Aspodell Mountains.

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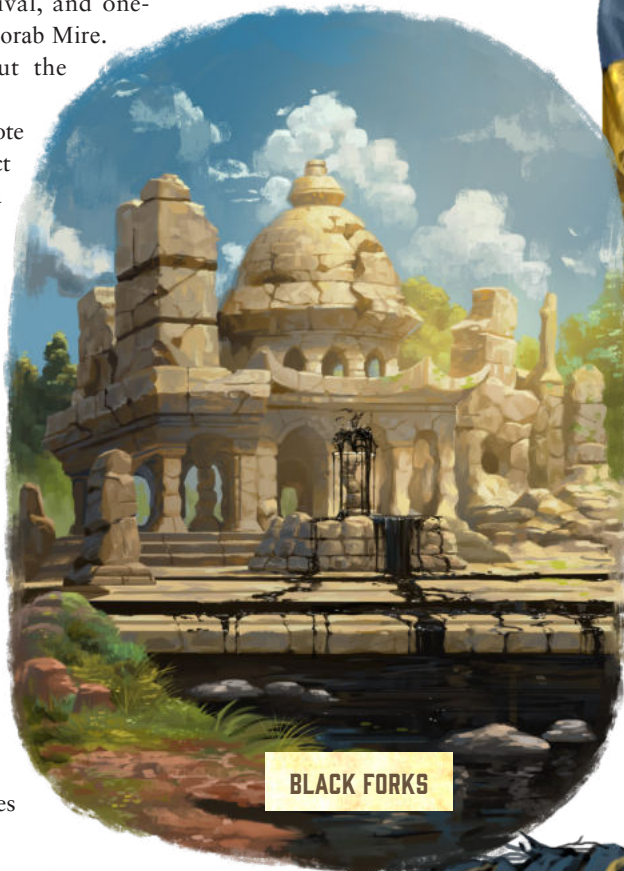
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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Members of various factions within Andoran influence the lives of the people, whether they know it or not. Captain **Dunbarr Twists** (ambitious male halfling seafarer) is one of the most outspoken voices in Andoran's navy and has earned the trust of Supreme Elect Andira Marusek through his close work with the Gray Corsairs. He hopes to parlay this connection into an appointment as Consul Admiral of the Andoran Navy when Haskell Whaley finally retires, but secrets from his youth as a smuggler threaten his plans. Councilor **Viktor Cyre** (scheming male human politician) is descended from a long line of aristocrats that once controlled a swath of land along the coast of southern Andoran. Viktor's family supposedly ceded all power during the People's Revolution. In truth, they're among the members of the Seven Houses, working to undermine Andoran's Common Rule. Viktor, the current family patriarch, represents a district in Almas on the People's Council and has thrown his councilor's voice behind expanding the army's power in the aftermath of the Godsrain. A member of the Lumber Consortium's Board of Directors, **Jemi Arkona** (cautious female dwarf administrator) oversees the delivery of supplies to the massive shipyards of Augustana. Among the Consortium, Jemi is known as one of the more trustworthy personnel, though in that organization, this means she only stoops to low-level graft and bribery to ensure the Consortium maintains its grip on business and avoids open murder or extortion.

Twilight Talon **Maltana Graves** (wandering nonbinary halfling spy) was recruited from the Steel Falcons after serving undercover in Cheliah for years.

They pose as an itinerant bookseller, traveling from small villages to isolated towns with a heavy pack on their back. In addition to making contact with deep cover agents throughout the country,

Maltana uses their friendly smile and open face to gather rumors from everyone they encounter, but they're also notoriously hard to track down. The only sure way to locate Maltana is to speak to their wife, **Kendal** (patient female halfling cook), in Carpenden.

for numerous settlements. The Lumber Consortium largely holds sway here with representatives of the central government in Almas few and far between. Outside of settlements, the area is plagued with wilderness dangers, such as brigands, suspiciously intelligent packs of wolves, and gangs of werereatures. The region's forest is the source of Andoran's highly profitable supply of duskwood.

Diggen's Rest: This long-abandoned tower in the northern Verduran Forest has served as a frontier fortification, Pathfinder Lodge, and kobold lair. Rumors among locals suggest that fiendish forces are still active within the ruins.

Falcon's Hollow: In more heavily populated regions, a town of 1,500 residents like Falcon's Hollow would be easily overlooked, but in the wilderness region of Darkmoon Vale, the logging town is a welcome respite from the dangers of travel. Wealthy "mayor" **Thuldrin Creed** (greedy male human extortionist), a Lumber Consortium official, has kept the town under his sway for more than 10 years by controlling vital shipments of supplies for the settlement, but increased dissatisfaction with the Consortium has led to open talk of running the crook out of town.

Fusil: This small village of 300 residents deep in the Verduran Forest struck a bargain with the fey long ago. In exchange for protection, residents never chop down a living tree. Consequently, most buildings are constructed from local stone, and tools are crafted from deadfall. A local gem mine is the center of the settlement's economy.

Lavieton: A small town of 550, Lavieton is mostly known for smoked fish. The settlement would be little more than a footnote had it not recently sent a request to Almas for an agent to come investigate glowing runes that appear in the surf off the coast at night.

Nogortha Necropolis: Where the Arthfell Mountains meet the Nogortha Peaks, lines of hundreds of weathered mounds mark the site of ancient burial grounds used by Kellid inhabitants long before the intrusion of settlers from Taldor. The few mounds that explorers have opened featured a large central chamber constructed around an ossuary pit containing countless sets of human remains. While these mounds have tempted historians and treasure hunters alike, the site is haunted by vengeful wights and other undead guardians.

Occarin: A settlement of a mere 220 souls, Occarin appears at first blush to be an idyllic rural paradise. Visitors to the small village remark on the friendliness of the residents here; they might also notice that many of the townsfolk have heterochromatic eyes, a result of a coven of hags who frequently swap their changeling offspring for the children of the village.

Olfden: The large farming town of Olfden (population 3,675) provides a quiet home for many country residents, including a large number of retired Eagle Knights. The newest notable resident, former Eagle Knight Commander **Reginald Cormoth** (gruff male human retiree) still keeps an ear out for the nation's political needs despite being in his nineties.

Oregent: This large inland settlement has swelled to over 25,000 residents in the aftermath of the Godsrain as many outlying mill towns in its region have been plagued by banditry. The Lumber Consortium, headquartered there, controls all aspects of life in the city. While leaders of the Consortium, including five members of its board of directors, live in luxury in Oregent, the majority of residents live in poorly constructed rental housing owned by the Consortium. Lumber Consortium Gavel **Cedrog Deadknuckle** (sadistic male human administrator) keeps a tight grip on the city. The city's councilor, **Rialyn Squire** (opportunistic male human toady), is a transparent pawn of the Consortium.

Piren's Bluff: After the baron of this small frontier town almost betrayed Andoran to Cheliah two decades ago, Piren's Bluff and its nearby keep were transformed into a military staging ground for the construction

of Fort Vigilance to the west in the mountains. Upon completion of the project, the village lost its strategic importance and quickly declined in population as most residents moved south toward the bay or farther east into the heartlands. The empty buildings of Piren's Bluff are beginning to deteriorate past the ability of its few remaining citizens to maintain.

Riverford: Upriver from Almas, the small town of Riverford (with a population of 1,800) is the site of the Old Bridge, one of the few locations where an army can easily cross the Andoshen River. Unbeknownst to the local administrators, **Chaven Therisol** (resentful male human insurrectionist), the town's innkeeper, is an active member of the Seven Houses, and he keeps a close eye on troop movements through the crossing.

Sauerton: This large town has 2,900 residents and is infamous for Sauerton Red, a cheap, potent wine. Though the vineyards around Sauerton were once known for deplorable working conditions, **Thalia Andares** (energetic female human reformer) recently took over their administration and mayorship of the town from her father, Tercio, and has instituted several improvements.

Souston: Once plagued by periodic pirate attacks, the fishing village of Souston has grown to a population of over 1,000 citizens under the protection of the Gray Corsairs' campaign against piracy and smuggling. Now that immediate danger seems to have passed, the townsfolk, led by Mayor **Lydia Foals** (folksy female changeling human gossip), cheerily tell tales of how pirate Erin Souston founded the settlement and how the shipwrecked captain might have hidden her great treasures somewhere in the vicinity.

Steyr: The town of Steyr slowly rose to a population of 2,850 residents with exiled Galtan artists, writers, and philosophers settling there during the long years of the Red Revolution and its aftermath. Drawn to Andoran by its protection of artistic freedom, these expatriates enlivened the cultural scene of the entire country and pushed the boundaries of Andoran art and literature. Today, with the stabilization of the political environment in Galt, many creatives have chosen to return to their homeland, but the community remains an artistic oasis. **Maya Cartson** (expressive female auivarin human politician), the town's councilor, keeps well-informed of happenings in Galt through correspondence with former residents.

Triela: This large port town with 4,200 residents is the last stop before travelers head up the Sellen River or out to the Inner Sea. The town has a rough-and-tumble reputation, with seedy taverns and brothels crowding the dockside. Harbormaster **Fendrick Thumble** (jolly male halfling intelligence agent) takes the occasional violence and low-level larceny of the port in stride while secretly reporting back to his superiors in the Twilight Talons on rumors of contraband smugglers, international troop movements, and shifting mercantile alliances.

Verduran Forest: Straddling the border between Andoran and Taldor, the Verduran Forest is Avistan's largest woodland. While the edges of the forest are dotted with small towns and villages of lumberjacks and crofters, the majority of the area's residents are druids and fey who make their homes far from civilization. Recent conflict within the forest's Wildwood Lodge has upset the delicate balance that reigned in the region for years.

Wolfrun Hills: This desolate, scrub-covered basalt highland marks the eastern and southern edges of Darkmoon Vale. Lacking major settlements, this dangerous area is home to the Third Veil, a sinister group of druids who consider it their calling to cull the weak and the elderly from society.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

The small communities of Andoran can feature surprising amounts of adventure.

Caldamin (population 550) is a small town just north of the Verduran Forest that attracts many tourists to watch monsters clash over territory from an observation tower a safe distance away.

The isolated fishing village of **Cyremium** (population 400) was constructed in the ruins of an old Taldan fortress. Its beaches are plagued by mysterious fish kills that wash ashore every new moon.



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ALMAS

Almas has long been considered an important center for trade and politics, well before Andoran claimed its independence. Now, as the young nation's capital, it's also become emblematic of both the problems and opportunities facing the country. Almas is very prosperous, though not without poverty. It's the seat of Andoran's representative government, though not without corruption. Almas thrives on cooperation, but intense division gnaws at its underbelly.

Society in the capital, as in most of Andoran, isn't starkly stratified. Laborers rub shoulders with consuls in the streets, and while a wealthy merchant might not visit the butchers in Mugget, they would regularly shop for their own groceries and attend lectures with smiths at the Grand Cathedral. Citizens enjoy a high degree of social mobility, with even the newly wealthy or prominent quickly embraced by Almas's high society, such as it is. Snobbishness and classism are deeply frowned upon as holdovers from the days of the aristocracy; anyone boorish enough to make unkind comments about the manners, dress, or etiquette of a fellow party attendee is likely to be snidely referred to as "m'lady" or "m'lord" for the remainder of the evening. As in many places, money in Almas buys

luxuries and privileges, and many say it buys more access to power than is proper for Common Rule.

Opposed, quietly, to all this talk of plain manners and egalitarian behavior are the descendants of Andoran's hereditary aristocracy. While those families who remained in the country after the People's Revolt "willingly" gave up their titles, there's little doubt that some households keenly felt the sting of lost power and position. While the scheming organization of the Seven Houses actively works against Andoran's government and philosophy, the antisocial behavior of some of the other former aristocrats has a notable impact on Almas's society. Private clubs and salons are currently fashionable among this sect, with strict guest lists that disallow any mingling with the lower classes. Scions of wealthy families are often sent abroad, chiefly to Taldor, for "finishing," the final education in etiquette that's hard to come by in Andoran today. Many parents hope their issue will find a suitable marriage match while abroad, avoiding the chance that they'll "marry a bumpkin or a washerwoman." Such old habits die hard, and officials largely ignore them, hoping that, with each generation born in a free Andoran, such behavior will dwindle.

Commerce is another leveling force in the city. Almas is well-situated to serve as a trading port, with a harbor that accommodates oceangoing vessels and the Andoshen River serving as a connection far inland. Lumber export has always been the core of Almas's trade, and the Lumber Consortium, though waning in importance since the recent debacle in the Verduran Forest, works to ensure that lumber remains one of the capital's major exports. The city also exports a good deal of the produce from local herders and farms in the surrounding area, shipping out meat and leather at a steady pace. The city's manufacturers help supply shipbuilders along the entire Andoren coast with fittings, rope, and sailcloth. Government officials take care that taxes and tariffs aren't too onerous on anyone and that profits make their way to all echelons of society. Although the international tensions and the effects of the Godsrain have worsened conditions in Andoran as a whole, the capital has been insulated from their effects, barring increased prices on some Chelaxian imports. If the nation's military fully mobilizes, however, this economic status quo likely won't last.

Residents of Almas typically dress in a practical style free of fanciful adornments. The measures of an article of clothing are how well it's constructed and how long it will hold up to wear. As the Eagle Knights are much admired in the city, stylistic adornments often mimic the embellishments on uniforms with embroidery in the form of swooping raptors, thick gold braid along hemlines, and large, polished buttons as fasteners. (While there was a brief passion for epaulets on ladies' dresses, that trend thankfully lasted no more than a season.) The wealthy and politically connected, such as members of the People's Council, typically dress in finer materials than their more frugal counterparts, though they usually avoid clothing that smacks of a foreign style or delusions of aristocracy. That said, Almas's residents consider the freedom to dress as one pleases a fundamental expression of the Common Rule, and unless one is seen as "putting on airs," most outfits would pass in the city without major comment.

Residents of Almas are an ecumenical lot, with worship of the god of one's choice seen as one of the key freedoms of the country. Of the gods most common around the Inner Sea, only adherents of Lamashtu, Rovagug, and Norgorber's more sinister aspects are unwelcome in the city, though worship of Zon-Kuthon is uncommon and loyalty to Asmodeus will likely garner suspicion that the adherent is a Chelaxian sympathizer, at best. Worship of Abadar is the most widespread in the city, though the Eagle Knights tend to prefer Iomedae in their prayers. Free-spirited citizens raise cups to Cayden Cailean, and artisans across the city dedicate their masterpieces to Shelyn. The Avenue of the Gods is full of small shrines to empyreal lords, minor deities, and gods more commonly worshipped in other parts of Golarion.

The city has a special relationship with another divine being: the celestial Talmandor, who's considered the patron of Andoran. Like most of his kind, Talmandor works in the Universe to bring mortals closer to enlightenment, and he believes it important for people to have a voice in society and work toward the common good. It's said today that Talmandor's words inspired poet Darl Jubannich, whose writings catalyzed the People's Revolt. The celestial continues to visit Andoran to this day, traveling from his home in Elysium to speak before the People's Council or to consult with Eagle Knights in the Golden Aerie. The feathered celestial is strongly associated with birds of prey, so the Steel Falcons recognize him as their special patron. While the entire country celebrates a holiday in Talmandor's honor on 4 Erastus, the celestial staunchly insists that the festival merely honors him as one hero among many the nation has had. Still, admiration of Talmandor borders on outright worship, particularly in the nation's capital. Despite his protests, some have come to view him as a nascent demigod, ready to take up a portfolio of community, hope, and liberty. In Almas, Talmandor's Day sees the streets crowded with parades and as many citizens as possible packed into

ALMAS

SETTLEMENT 13

METROPOLIS

Capital of Andoran and headquarters of the Eagle Knights

Government Mayor and citizens' council (elected leaders)

Population 88,500 (65% humans, 10% halflings, 5% dwarves, 5% elves, 5% gnomes, 5% aiuvarin, 5% other)

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Halfling

Religions Abadar, Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Desna, Erastil, Iomedae, Irori, Nethys, Pharasma, Sarenrae, Shelyn, Torag

Threats anti-democratic sentiment, militarization, political unrest

Effective Bureaucracy Almas is home to a well-organized central government. With 1d4 hours, you can secure an audience with a knowledgeable public official from a government agency. This NPC begins with an attitude of friendly and can answer basic questions about Almas and their governmental agency. Conversing with the NPC provides you with a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to Recall Knowledge about the city.

Andira Marusek (dauntless female human Eagle Knight) Supreme Elect of the People's Council

Fior Trace (meticulous female halfling judge) Grand Magistrate and head of the city watch

Lowell Kaplan (sadistic male dwarf enforcer) Lumber Consortium bully and boss of the Timberfell district

Ries Cuprianas (valiant male human retired commando) Eagle Knight Commander

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As Supreme Elect, Andira Marusek plays a dual role as leader of the People's Council and mayor of Almas.

Since she's so often embroiled in national and international conflicts, she often leaves the governance of the city to local officials with more time to dedicate to the task. The city's citizens' council is composed of two representatives from each district in the city, plus a representative from the Eagle Knights and Consul **Erast Forn** (impatient male human commander), the leader of the national military troops stationed in the city. Serving on the citizens' council is considered a punishment duty among Eagle Knights, who have little patience for the bureaucratic discussions that comprise most of the group's work. The citizens' council is advised by Grand Magistrate **Fior Trace** (meticulous female halfling judge), the head of the city guard and local justice system. Working together, these groups rarely feel the need to impose on the Supreme Elect's time or attention.

the Field of Concord for public performances, rousing political speeches, and feasts that last long into the night.

GAZETTEER

The city of Almas is divided into five major districts that span both sides of the Andoshen River: East Hill, Liberty District, North End, Portside, and Tamuth District.

EAST HILL

The primary residential district of the city, East Hill separates the tough traders of Portside from the government buildings of the Liberty District. Large stone mansions for the wealthy sit at the center of the district on wide streets, while smaller dwellings crowd the cramped lanes along the district's edge.

Almas Lodge: The headquarters of the Pathfinder Society in Almas is housed in what was once the Cathedral of Aroden along the Avenue of the Gods. Despite recent legal claims made by the Church of Iomedae, Venture-Captain **Brackett** (passionate male human swordmaster), the head of the Lodge, has preserved the Pathfinder Society's reputation in the city, and the building's spacious accommodations, central location, and extensive library (staffed by constructs) make this lodge a popular destination for Pathfinders traveling from the Grand Lodge. **Wystorn Telfyr** (innovative male human construct crafter), the lodge's archivist, maintains an extensive laboratory on site.

Avenue of the Gods: More than a dozen impressive temples line this broad street, with major churches dedicated to Abadar, Cayden Cailean, Erastil, Pharasma, Shelyn, and Torag being the among the most impressive. Smaller chapels and shrines dedicated to other gods and empyreal lords nestle between the major temples, including a growing congregation dedicated to Arazni. The high clergy of the city's major temples take it in turn annually to serve as Supreme Vicar, the spiritual advisor for the Supreme Elect and, by extension, Andoran's government. The current Supreme Vicar, Songsmith **Clarion Veg** (empathetic nonbinary human priest), head of Shelyn's temple, often speaks out against the country's rush toward militarization and urges the Supreme Elect to show caution in foreign affairs. In recent years, clergy of smaller temples have petitioned for the privilege of serving as Supreme Vicar, and Andira Marusek is on the verge of granting this request.

Godsgate: The city's largest gate, this opening in the eastern wall provides clear routes for travelers visiting the Avenue of the Gods and the government buildings in the Liberty District. The Godsgate has never been closed since the People's Revolt, a fact residents mention with pride.

LIBERTY DISTRICT

Home to most of Almas's government offices, the Liberty District offers numerous fine inns and taverns for officials and visitors. The district also sees hundreds of tourists daily, drawn by the impressive landmarks placed throughout.

Archstone Monument: Not long after Andoran formally declared independence from Chelax, azarketi diplomats arrived with a remarkable relic: the keystone of the Arch of Aroden, the titanic monument that once bridged the continents of Avistan and Garund. The azarketi presented the keystone, retrieved from the ocean floor, to the newly minted government to demonstrate their support of Andoran's peaceful establishment of liberty. Standing in the Field of Concord, the keystone is said to bring good luck to those who touch it.

Citadel of the Supreme Elect: The copper dome of this walled citadel, near the western end of the Field of Concord, is visible from most places in the city. The Citadel houses the offices and residence of the Supreme Elect, along with working space for much of the nation's bureaucratic staff. The compound also contains several other marble-clad buildings, including the Hall of the Demarchy Assembly.

Field of Concord: This wide cobblestone avenue stretches from the city walls to the Andoshen River. A multitude of fountains, statues, topiaries, and gardens line the thoroughfare, many dedicated to fallen soldiers or Eagle Knights. In pleasant weather, merchants set up stalls to display their wares and sell delicious snacks.

Golden Aerie: A white marble tower standing in the heart of the Field of Concord, the Golden Aerie is headquarters to the Eagle Knights. From the high pinnacle of the building, a great golden statue of the celestial Talmandor looks out over the city. In addition to housing the offices of the order, the large tower is a functional fortress, hosting several thousand Eagle Knights ready to fight for Andoran.

Golden Cathedral: Opposite the Palace of the People's Council, at the eastern end of the Field of Concord, stands a grand church once dedicated to Aroden. Today, rather than sermons, people gather in its halls to hear speeches on political philosophy and recitations from poets and writers. On the walls, the tenets of Common Rule hang in place of sacred edicts. The cathedral is Andoran's tallest building and its largest public library, with halls open 24 hours a day. Chief Librarian **Nethya Cloris** (kindly nonbinary aphorite human) provides reading classes for the children of the city every Oathday.

Palace of the People's Council: This ostentatious building dominates the eastern bank of the Andoshen at the heart of Almas. The Palace of the People's Council houses the amphitheater where the governing body convenes twice a year. The rest of the marble building is packed with private offices for representatives and their staff. Many citizens who visit are shocked at the elegance of these private offices, and some mutter that representatives must think themselves nobility.

NORTH END

The North End is Almas's largest district, comprising the city north of the Field of Concord and the Tamuth River. Divided by the Andoshen River and its tributaries, North End features several sections, each with its own unique character.

Almas University: In the northeastern quarter of the city, the quiet of Almas University's campus is broken by only the twitter of birds living in the institution's ivy, and the occasional stressed groans of overworked students. Though technically open to any citizen of Andoran, the school has few class openings, and the application process is terribly competitive. While the university is renowned for its study of law, politics, modern philosophy, and history, it also boasts the premier school of zoology in the Inner Sea. **Felandriel Morgethai** (curious female elf loremaster), the school's provost, has run the school for over 100 years, safely seeing it through the People's Revolt.

Embassy District: North of the Field of Concord, along the bank of the Moulton River, a district of walled manor houses that once belonged to aristocratic families now serves as residences for visiting diplomats. Technically not beholden to Andoren law inside their walls, these embassies have sometimes provided political asylum for those who crossed the Andoren government.

Theater District: Sitting on a tongue of land between the Andoshen and Moulton Rivers, the Theater District isn't considered a respectable area, but the neighborhood's rundown apartments and converted studios are home to some of the most talented artists in Andoran. The low rents make the district an attractive option for several playhouses presenting material from the mundane to the glorious, whether traditional Andoren folk plays or Chelaxian chamber music performed with cobbler's tools. Some citizens complain of petty crime in the district's streets, but most city residents will travel there to see an interesting performance by **Panzano Triban** (eccentric male nephilim gnome impresario).

LOCAL FACTIONS

As in most of Andoran, the Eagle Knights and Lumber Consortium play significant roles in Almas. Several local groups also influence life in the city.

Andoran Alchemists' Guild:

Though headquartered in Alvis, the Guild maintains a strong presence in the capital. Professor **Jeltir**

Vluck (absent-minded male naari dwarf envoy) maintains an office at Almas University and, when he can remember to, keeps an ear open for word of godsblood or warshards in the country.

Children of Darl: This group of artists rails against the staid, conservative norms of Almas society. They execute public art performances that they consider dangerous and subversive, though to date, most citizens who have seen the performances—which involve poetry performed backward, paint splashed on untanned cow hides, or military marches performed with children's toys—describe them as deeply odd. Though the group garners little attention now, they've been infiltrated by **Than Gurlik** (devious male nephilim human spy), who urges them to escalate from provocative art to political violence.

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Timberfell: Though technically part of Almas, the lands in the city's northwest quarter were sold to the Lumber Consortium more than 50 years ago. The Consortium established its capital offices in Timberfell but also built a series of small neighborhoods where shoddy construction and materials have led to poor living conditions. The city guard mostly stays out of Timberfell, leaving Lumber Consortium Gavel **Lowell Kaplan** (sadistic male dwarf enforcer) in charge of keeping order.

PORTSIDE

This small but bustling district sees most of the foreign trade entering Almas. The city's most vital imports are the salt and grain that maintain the populace, while traders leave Almas with ships loaded with timber, wine, cheese, and fish. Government ministers and magistrates keep a close watch on the area, ensuring that no single company gains too much of an advantage in the marketplace. Such regulation has become more difficult in recent years as Chelaxian trading houses use increasingly complex business practices and paperwork to obscure their identities and activities.

Benedict's Hope: The ever-burning lighthouse just outside Almas's harbor and the island upon which it sits are both named in honor of writer Aylsande Benedict, a hero of the People's Revolt who wrote tracts that

both denounced House Thrune and urged the people to seek diplomatic means of breaking free from Chelax. A statue of a woman, crouched over a writing desk and clutching a quill pen, sits at the base of the lighthouse to memorialize the revolutionary.

Grand Exchange: This large international currency exchange sits just south of the East Hill district amid a neighborhood full of merchant shops and warehouses. Traders, information brokers, factors, and functionaries from nations across Golarion can be found exchanging currency, tales, and contracts. A popular place for adventurers and desperate potential employers, the Grand Exchange can be a rowdy place, but **Kayden Plano** (stern nonbinary dromaar human actuary), a representative from the Church of Abadar, keeps things orderly.

Well of Gorum: This deep pit in the center of the district was once a prosperous, though nondescript, warehouse. On the day of the Godsrain, witnesses reported a fireball streaking down from the sky, then obliterating the building in an explosive conflagration. When the city watch dared to enter the area, they found a shiny, jagged scrap of metal at the bottom of the crater. The shard was quickly spirited away to the Golden Aerie, but the pit was merely roped off and a Golden Legion guard assigned to patrol it. Poor drainage in the vicinity leaves the crater a muddy pool after rainstorms.

While the guard has been effective at keeping people away, local residents report extremely strange behavior among the neighborhood's animal life. So far, officials have dismissed rumors of levitating alley cats and bloodthirsty pigeons, but no one can deny how the water in the pit has an eerie red glow under a full moon.

TAMUTH DISTRICT

This district in the city's southwestern corner, south of the Tamuth River, hosts many of the unglamorous businesses that form the backbone of the city's industry. A place of clamorous sounds and pungent odors, it's also home to some of the city's poorest residents.

Baltimore's Canal: A shallow, sludge-filled canal that flows from north to south through the heart of the district, the canal was designed to transport merchant rafts. Unfortunately, its stagnant waters have become so clogged with waste from Minetown and Mugget that transport along it has become impossible; even walking near it is highly unpleasant. After years without improvement to the waterway's condition, residents have a glimmer of hope: a visiting researcher, **Teliandre Vastin** (driven female merfolk hydrologist), has partnered with a local sanitation worker, **Slanderoff Rustleaf** (dour male gnome sanitation engineer) and made a promise to purify the water.

Bellows: A series of squat stone houses in the district's northwestern corner, Bellows was founded by dwarf refugees from the destroyed city of Tar Khadurrm. Though the original dwarven population has dwindled over the hundreds of years since the Rending, dwarfs still operate small, high-quality shops offering masonry, silversmithing, and gem-cutting services out of the neighborhood. In recent years, several humans have moved in and established themselves as apprentices to dwarves, sparking something of a revitalization of the neighborhood. Though reluctant to share their traditions at first, earnest respect from the humans won over the dwarven leader, **Elgrid Twelvehammers** (devout female dwarf mentor). With word that the Pathfinder Society has reopened the halls of Jernashall, Tar Khadurrm's fallen capital, the small community has begun pooling their resources to organize or hire an expedition of their own.

Iron and Hoof Gate: The main gate in Almas's west wall, this huge pair of reinforced gates connects the industrial Tamuth District to the trade roads outside. Wide enough, when opened, to allow the passage of large wagons and draft animals, the gate is vital to the crafters inside the city. After years of the dirt road here turning into a muddy pit during heavy rains, a druid from the Verduran Forest turned the streets to stone as a gesture of peace after the Wildwood Revolt.

Mugget: Home to the city's meat processing industry, Mugget squeezes the settlement's most gory and odious businesses into a neighborhood of ramshackle buildings and crooked streets. From the stockyards in the district's southeastern corner, animal carcasses travel the wide Blackrocks Thoroughfare to the butcher shops and tanneries that dot the district. The sharp smell of lye is strong in the air of Mugget, and the gutters, spattered with blood and offal, run into the rivers and out of the city. Warehouses and offices occupy the remaining buildings of the quarter, managing the livestock and tanning industries.

Smithtown: Nothing in Almas surpasses the cacophony of ringing hammers, roaring furnaces, and clanging tongs that echo throughout Smithtown (though some say the din of the People's Council in full debate can match it). Master smiths crowd the narrow, somewhat haphazard streets of the district, most of them crafting practical tools for farming, construction, or shipbuilding. Though the busy city provides plenty of work, smiths fiercely compete in their areas of specialty, and a crafter who spends most of his day shaping plowshares might have a finely honed battle axe hanging on the shop wall as a demonstration of their mastery.

FESTIVALS OF ALMAS

Celebrations that spread throughout the city are a fine excuse for residents to come together with their neighbors.

4 Erastus: Talmandor's Day. This spirited holiday celebrates the feathered celestial Talmandor as one of the heroes of the nation and reminds residents of the city that benevolent forces are on their side.

Last Sunday of Abadius, First Sunday of Rova: Silverglazer Sunday. This two-part festival is held on subsequent Sundays throughout Andoran. Revelers travel a short distance up the Andoshen River north of the city to cleared areas and spend the days fishing and having swimming competitions. At the end of the second Sunday, great fish-shaped puppets are floated into the city during a boat parade.

2nd Oathday of Rova: Signing Day. Though originally a Chelaxian holiday, Signing Day in Almas is the day that Steel Falcons are officially inducted into the service. Most commemorate the occasion by climbing to the top of the Golden Aerie and looking out over the city.

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EAGLE KNIGHT

When most people around the Inner Sea think of Andoran, the first thing they picture is an Eagle Knight, resplendent in blue and silver armor. Ever since the People's Revolt, the order has existed to safeguard the core principles of Andoran: equality, justice, and liberty. These knights are recognized for their loyalty to the ideals of the nation above all else, including personal ambition or service to a commanding officer. Most Eagle Knights serve a specific branch—the home guard of the Golden Legion, the evangelical Steel Falcons, or the clandestine Twilight Talons—but all Eagle Knights dedicate themselves to the stability and integrity of Andoran. Their newest cohort, the Platinum Wing, is experimenting with firearms.

Additional Feats: 4th Quick Draw (*Player Core* 159); 8th Reactive Striker (*Player Core* 219); 10th Blind-Fight (*Player Core* 145), Hazard Finder (*Player Core* 161); 12th Tactical Reflexes (*Player Core* 148); 16th Determination (*Player Core* 149)



EAGLE KNIGHT DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON | ARCHETYPE | DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Diplomacy and Society

Access You're invited by a current member of the Eagle Knights or the People's Council.

Eagle Knights are the marshals and envoys of Andoran and are committed to keeping the peace. On the first round of combat, if you roll Diplomacy for initiative, creatures that haven't acted are off-guard to you. You gain the Additional Lore skill feat for Politics Lore. If you were already trained in Politics Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice. You can use Politics Lore to Make an Impression on or make a Request of government officials (or similar figures) or to Gather Information about them. If you critically succeed at a check to Gather Information with Politics Lore, you know the information without having to spend any time gathering it.

COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE | AUDITORY | MENTAL | SKILL

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication, expert in Diplomacy

You help an ally shake off any impediment that would give an enemy an unfair advantage. You rally a creature within 30 feet in an attempt to reduce its frightened or stupefied condition. If a creature has multiple conditions from this list, choose one. When you're a master in Diplomacy, add clumsy and enfeebled to the list of conditions. When you're legendary in Diplomacy, add stunned to the list of conditions; if the stunned condition has a duration instead of a value, you can't use Commitment to Equality to reduce it.

Attempt a Diplomacy check against the saving throw DC of the effect that caused the condition; if there was no saving throw DC, use the hard DC for the level of the creature, hazard, or item that caused the effect. You can't treat a condition that came from an artifact or effect above 20th level unless you're legendary in Diplomacy; even if you can, the counteract DC increases by 10. You can't treat a condition that is part of a curse or disease or is a natural state of the target. Once you attempt to treat a target's condition, that target is immune to further attempts for 1 hour, regardless of the result.

Critical Success Reduce the condition's value by 2.

Success Reduce the condition's value by 1.

Critical Failure Increase the condition's value by 1.

INTERPOSE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE | FLOURISH

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication

You put yourself between an ally and danger. Stride up to your Speed. You must end your movement adjacent to an ally. You and your ally then swap positions with each other. After changing positions, you can make a melee Strike against an enemy within your reach.

COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE | FLOURISH

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication

Requirements You witnessed a creature kill or reduce an ally to 0 Hit Points since your last turn.

When your allies are harmed, you deliver retribution.

Make a Strike against the required creature. If this Strike hits, you gain a circumstance bonus to damage equal to three times the number of weapon damage dice.

COMMITMENT TO LIBERTY ◆◆

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication

Requirements A creature has an ally grabbed or restrained.

You can't abide when a foe has one of your allies in its grip. Make a Strike against the required creature. If this Strike hits, the grabbed or restrained ally can immediately attempt to Escape as a free action. If the Strike was a critical hit, that ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their Escape attempt.

BOLSTER ALLY ◆

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication

Frequency once per 10 minutes

Trigger One of your allies within 30 feet is targeted by a spell or ability that allows a saving throw.

You shout encouragement to your embattled ally. The ally can use your saving throw modifier instead of their own against the triggering spell.

STIR ALLIES ◆◆

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY FLOURISH

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication

You shout a command for your allies to scramble. Allies within 30 feet can use a reaction to Step. If you're legendary in Diplomacy, they can instead Stride.

AURA OF CONFIDENCE

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE EMOTION MENTAL

Prerequisite Eagle Knight Dedication

Your will and your faith in your nation is unassailable, and the feeling is contagious. You gain resistance to mental damage equal to half your level. You and all allies within 15 feet gain a +2 status bonus to saving throws against mental effects.

TALMANDOR'S SHOUT ◆◆

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eagle Knight Dedication, master in Intimidation

Frequency once per day

Requirements You witnessed a creature deal damage to an ally within 30 feet since your last turn.

After seeing an enemy harm one of your allies, you deliver a righteous shout in the name of the celestial Talmandor. Attempt an Intimidation check to Demoralize, comparing the result to the Will DC of each enemy within a 60-foot emanation; this Demoralize attempt doesn't take any penalty for not sharing a language. It's possible to get a different degree of success for each target.

EVEN THE ODDS ◆

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE FORTUNE

Prerequisites Commitment to Equality

Frequency once per day

Even when overpowered, Eagle Knights hold out hope. If your next action is to use Commitment to Equality, you roll the Diplomacy check twice and take the higher result. If you succeed, the target also gains 25 temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute.

IMMEDIATE REBUKE

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Commitment to Justice, Reactive Strike

You can use Reactive Strike when a creature within your reach Strikes one of your allies.

JOINING THE EAGLE KNIGHTS

Typically, Eagle Knights are recruited directly from the military, often by a Golden Legionnaire assigned to their unit. After being identified, the candidate reports to the Golden Aerie for screening and identification of skills that might suit one of the Eagle Knight branches. An aspiring Eagle Knight can also present themselves directly to the headquarters for testing, though usually they must have at least two letters of commendation from People's Council members or mayors of settlements in Andoran to be granted an examination. Finally, adventurers might be recruited to the ranks if they show themselves particularly dedicated to the causes of equality, justice, and liberty. Such recruitments are often called out by a Steel Falcon or Twilight Talon agent. Adventurers sometimes don't know they're being recruited if they're approached by a clandestine agent; they might be simply hired to deliver a sealed message to the Golden Aerie that requests their testing.

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ANDORAN OPTIONS

The following character options are found within Andoran.

MAGIC ITEMS

Eagle Knights work closely with alchemists and artificers to make sure their ranks are well-equipped.

BREATH OF FREEDOM

ITEM 4

CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN

Price 18 gp

Usage affixed to armor; Bulk—

Activate ⤴ (concentrate); **Trigger** You become grabbed, immobilized, or restrained; **Requirements** You're an expert in Reflex saves.

This delicate feather ornament looks fragile but is solid as stone. When you Activate the talisman, you can immediately attempt to Escape.

CRIMSON GODSBLOOD SERUM

ITEM 6+

RARE CONSUMABLE MAGICAL POTION

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ⤴ (manipulate)

Though it contains but a tiny drop of Gorum's blood, drinking this thick, swirling potion fills the user with divine wrath and resilience. While under the effect of the potion, you gain a status bonus to physical damage rolls for 1 minute. The first time during that minute you're reduced to 0 Hit Points but not immediately killed, you avoid being knocked out, regain the listed amount of Hit Points, and become confused for 1 round, and your wounded condition increases by 1.

Type lesser; **Level** 6; **Price** 50 gp

The potion grants a +2 status bonus and restores 2d8+5 Hit Points.

Type moderate; **Level** 12; **Price** 400 gp

The potion grants a +3 status bonus and restores 3d8+10 Hit Points.

Type greater; **Level** 18; **Price** 5,000 gp

The potion grants a +4 status bonus and restores 6d8+20 Hit Points.

GODRENDING AMMUNITION

ITEM 13+

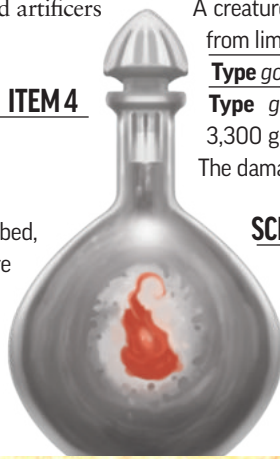
RARE CONSUMABLE MAGICAL

Ammunition any

Activate ⤴ (manipulate)

Embedded in this piece of ammunition is a shining sliver of a warshard. When an activated *godrending ammunition* hits a target, the body of the struck creature attempts to tear itself apart, causing nauseating pain. Instead of its normal damage, the ammunition deals 10d8 slashing damage. The target can attempt a DC 30 Fortitude saving throw; it takes a -2 circumstance penalty to this save if the Strike was a critical hit.

Critical Success The foe takes the normal damage from the ammunition, instead of the 10d8 slashing damage.



CRIMSON GODSBLOOD SERUM

Success The foe takes half damage.

Failure The foe takes full damage and is sickened 1.

Critical Failure The foe takes double damage and is sickened 2.

A creature reduced to 0 HP from this damage is ripped limb from limb, and it instantly dies; its gear remains.

Type *godrending ammunition*; **Level** 13; **Price** 440 gp

Type *greater godrending ammunition*; **Level** 18; **Price** 3,300 gp

The damage is 15d8, and the save DC is 38.

SCREAMING PINION

ITEM 13

RARE MAGICAL

Price 3,000 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk 1

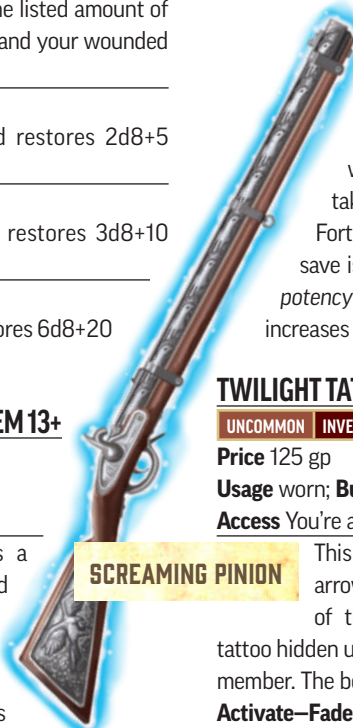
This +2 *greater striking flintlock musket* is an innovation of the Platinum Wing, and possession of one by a civilian is a high crime in Andoran. The gun's secret is the chip of a warshard used as the hammer in the striking mechanism.

Activate—Transcendent Shot ⤴ (manipulate)

Requirements The *screaming pinion* is unloaded; **Effect** You call on the power of the warshard to load the *screaming pinion* with a bullet made of divine fury. The next attack from the gun deals spirit damage, rather than its typical type, and on a critical hit, the target is subject to the weapon's critical specialization effect. If the gun isn't fired before the end of your next turn, the bullet disappears, and the gun becomes unloaded.

Activate—Eagle's Cry ⤴⤴ (concentrate, manipulate, sonic) **Frequency** once per day;

Effect The musket unleashes a piercing sound wave in a 70-foot line. Each creature in the area takes 8d10 sonic damage with a DC 30 basic Fortitude save. A creature that critically fails its save is also deafened. If the *screaming pinion* has a +3 *potency rune*, the DC increases to 35, and the damage increases to 10d10.



SCREAMING PINION

TWILIGHT TATTOO

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL TATTOO

Price 125 gp

Usage worn; Bulk—

Access You're a member of the Twilight Talons.

This tattoo of a black eagle gripping a sword and arrows in its talons identifies the bearer as a member of the Twilight Talons. Agents typically keep the tattoo hidden unless they need to prove their identity to another member. The bearer gains a +1 item bonus to Deception checks.

Activate—Fade ⤴ (concentrate, illusion) **Effect** You hide your tattoo from view. The tattoo is invisible for 1 day and can't be detected by effects such as *detect magic* and *read aura*. You can Dismiss this effect.

Activate—Inscribe ⤴⤴ (concentrate, illusion, manipulate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You lay your hand on a piece

of text, and your tattoo makes a perfect copy of it, storing it as a ring of swirling letters surrounding the design. The tattoo can hold text equivalent to two pages of a book, a single scroll, or a similar area of other surfaces, though it doesn't replicate any magical effect or other special properties of the original words. You can Dismiss this effect, and when you Dismiss it, the tattoo copies the original text onto a blank writing surface you're touching.

SKILL FEATS

Though it's a period of disquiet in Andoran, it's also a time of innovation, with everyone creating new techniques to accomplish their goals.

INFLAME CROWD

FEAT 7

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites master in Performance, Impressive Performance
Your performances are a call to action for the crowds who listen to you. For 1 hour after you successfully Make an Impression using Performance, you can make a Request of a member of the affected audience using Performance instead of Diplomacy.

STIFLE FLAMES

FEAT 1

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites trained in Nature or Survival
Your forestry experience helped you develop techniques for fighting wildfires. Any time you attempt a skill check to extinguish a non-magical fire, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the check. Your DC on flat checks to end persistent fire damage is reduced from 15 to 10, or from 10 to 5 after receiving especially appropriate assistance.

VANISH INTO THE LAND

FEAT 7

UNCOMMON GENERAL SKILL

Prerequisites master in Stealth, trained in Survival, Terrain Stalker

You're adept at using the land's natural features to find places to hide. When in the difficult terrain you've selected for the Terrain Stalker feat, you can Hide and Sneak even without cover or being concealed.

SPELLS

From the glory of its natural settings to the ideals of its politics, Andoran inspires wondrous magic.

AVENGING WILDWOOD

SPELL 2

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE PLANT WOOD

Traditions primal

Range 60 feet

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

A Medium tree sprouts in an unoccupied square within range, its branches capable of striking out at your foes. This animated tree uses your spell attack modifier for its attack rolls and your spell DC for its AC. Its saving throw modifiers are equal to your spell DC - 10, and it has 20 Hit Points. Other creatures can't occupy its space, but allies can pass through its space. When you Cast the Spell and each time you Sustain it, you can have the tree make a branches Strike against a creature within 15 feet of it, dealing

2d8 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. You choose the damage type each time.

If the tree is in soil and survives to the end of the spell's duration, it remains as an ordinary, non-magical tree and continues to grow and thrive. The GM might determine that the tree disappears immediately in certain inhospitable situations.

Heightened (+2) The animated tree has 10 additional Hit Points, and its branches Strike deals 1d8 additional damage.

EAGLE'S CRY

SPELL 3

UNCOMMON AUDITORY CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE SONIC

Traditions arcane, primal

Area 30-foot cone

Defense Fortitude

You let out the mighty cry of a majestic eagle that pierces eardrums. This cry deals 4d8 sonic damage. Each creature in the area must attempt a Fortitude saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage and is frightened 1.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage, is frightened 2, and is fleeing for 1 round.

Heightened (+2) The damage increases by 3d8.

EQUAL FOOTING

SPELL 1

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE CURSE MANIPULATE

Traditions arcane, occult, primal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature with a land Speed greater than yours

Defense Will; **Duration** varies

You level the field between yourself and another creature, hampering its movements if it's quicker than you. The target attempts a Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is clumsy 1 and takes a -10-foot status penalty to all its Speeds until the end of your next turn.

Failure The target is clumsy 1 and takes a -15-foot status penalty to all its Speeds for 1 minute. During this time, it can't benefit from bonuses to its Speeds or take other penalties to its Speeds.

Critical Failure The target is clumsy 2 and takes a -15-foot status penalty to all its Speeds for 1 minute. During this time, it can't benefit from bonuses to its Speeds or take other penalties to its Speeds.

RADIANT GLOBE

SPELL 3

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE LIGHT MANIPULATE

Traditions arcane, divine

Range 120 feet; **Area** 10-foot burst

Defense Fortitude; **Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

You create a dome of brilliant light that destroys projectiles attempting to pass through it. Ammunition from physical ranged attacks—such as arrows, bolts, sling bullets, and other objects of similar size—is destroyed in a flash of light when it passes into or out of the globe's area. Attackers targeting creatures or objects through the globe's surface with physical ranged attacks must succeed at a Fortitude save or become dazzled for 1 round (blinded for 1 round on a critical failure).

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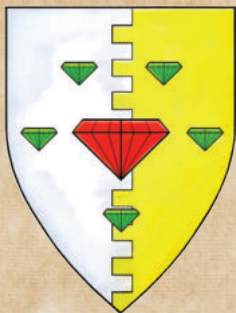
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DRUMA

NATIONS



DRUMA
Capital: Kerse
Government: Oligarchy
Ruler: High Prophet Kelldor

PEOPLES

Dromaars
Dwarves
Fey
Geniekin
Gnomes

Halfings
Humans
Nephilim
Ysoki

LANGUAGES

Common
Dwarven

FACTIONS



Prophets
of Kalistrade

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Prophecies of
Kalistrade

RESOURCES



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



Jewelry/
Gems



Lumber



Luxury Goods
and Art



Magic items/
extraplanar goods



Mercenaries



Ores



Seafood



Stone



Textiles



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Each country in the Shining Kingdoms has its own set of social rules and customs. Some elevate talented craftspeople. Others run on the rule of lineage or might. But in Druma, social status can—and must—be bought. The region’s influential Prophets of Kalistrade are known across Golarion for their relentless (but strictly regimented) pursuit of wealth and entrepreneurial success.

Druma is a small nation to the southeast of Lake Encarthan. It shares a brief border with both Kyonin (to the northeast) and Molthune (to the northwest). The nation runs up against Isgar in the southwest and is otherwise bounded by the Five Kings Mountains. Druma is split into two main regions: the plains, where most of its population lives, and the Palakar Forest, which is largely the realm of the fey.

Druma’s major exports are agriculture, gems, and minerals. The rich farmland that makes up most of the plains, along with Druma’s famously mild weather, makes for consistently strong yields. Elsewhere in the nation, prospectors delve into the earth in search of gems and ore and refine the materials for trade. With all the wealth the land provides, Druma is the perfect location for the Prophets of Kalistrade to preach their doctrine of building one’s fortune.

Most outsiders have heard of the Kalistocrats, but the scope of their success and influence is easy to understate. Only firsthand experience can convey the

extent of their impact. Druma’s capital city, Kerse, is widely thought to be the wealthiest city on Golarion. Visitors who arrive via Lake Encarthan are greeted by docks whose marble pillars sparkle with precious gems. As introductions go, the display does well to represent the heart and soul of the country.

Ostentatious shows of wealth aren’t the only signs of Kalistocratic influence, however. The Prophets of Kalistrade follow a restrictive set of principles believed to aid their pursuit of wealth. Most famously, they only ever wear white and tend toward clothes that fully cover their skin regardless of the weather. No outfit is complete without the group’s signature pair of long, white gloves. All prophets also follow a specific diet that prioritizes foods that are considered virtuous due to their cultivation or preparation methods. Therefore, markets and eateries tend to offer Kalistocrat-friendly meals.

There’s one more large cultural difference driven by the Prophets of Kalistrade: most Drumans aren’t heavily religious. It’s acceptable to worship most deities, but few locals do so with fervor. Instead of faith in the gods, citizens of Druma tend to follow the guidance of the prophet Kalistrade or live by old tenets of animism that can be traced back to the region’s original Kellid inhabitants. Even Abadar, the deity of trade, lacks the presence one might expect in such a trade-heavy nation.

It should be noted that those outside the Prophets of Kalistrade know little of the group's actual practices. Nonbelievers can easily access the Prophecies of Kalistrade, but they won't benefit from the context passed down through oral tradition. Some secrets—such as the prophets' final aim of building their own afterlife—are only shared within the upper levels of the organization. Outsiders mostly think of the Kalistocratic faith as one that solely emphasizes material success, and its followers are fine with this conception. Secrets are their own form of currency.

The nation's well-earned reputation for wealth has merited Druma an outsized cultural influence in the Inner Sea region and beyond. Traders from across Golarion seek relationships with preeminent Kalistocrats, and the more successful prophets have contacts who occupy high positions in other countries. The nation is also known for its premier fighting force, the world-renowned Blackjackets of the Mercenary League. The Mercenary League has a contract with Druma's government and functions as Druma's army, but its agents aren't confined to the nation. One can find Blackjackets staffing outposts in non-Drumish—but disputed—territories, in locations with a large population of Kalistocrats, or accompanying major Kalistocrats on trade and business missions.

Druma sells itself to other nations as a success story at the confluence of power and profit—but like all local legends, there's a bigger truth lurking behind the glory. The fierce national pride and independence that suffuse Drumish culture aren't just relics of the country's past. Those who spend enough time here learn that the glamour and smiles are a veneer that mask a deeply competitive and untrusting society.

GOVERNMENT

The Kalistocracy of Druma isn't ruled by the Prophets of Kalistrade, as one might assume. Its official government is an administration known as the Resplendent Bureaucracy. However, the nation's name tells the truth: Kalistocrats wield a large amount of unofficial influence over government affairs.

The Resplendent Bureaucracy was founded in 2332 AR by the group of Kalistocrats known as the Promise of Kalistrade, who succeeded in buying Druma's independence. They knew it would be unwise to appoint themselves leaders, so they created a separate system of government. To enforce space between it and their Kalistocrat friends, they placed caps on how much gold civil servants could earn. This practice, while well-intended, didn't do nearly enough to insulate the government from Kalistocratic influence.

Today, the Resplendent Bureaucracy is staffed by two types of people. The first are ambitious low-level prophets seeking to rise through the Kalistocrats' ranks. The second are those who genuinely want to serve their nation. Druma's government, like its population, is heavily human, but there's a disproportionately high

number of halflings, dwarves, and other ancestries on the government staff.

Like all good bureaucracies, Druma's government has multiple levels. The newest members of the Resplendent Bureaucracy are assigned to clerk positions and handle basics like notarizing and filing paperwork. Ranking clerks have a higher title but carry out the same sort of duties. Clerks are overseen by administrators, who also do the day-to-day work of running settlements. The largest cities have dozens of administrators on staff. The chief administrator oversees them and serves as the main point of contact for the national government in Kerse.

Chief administrators send regular reports into the capital city, where yet another administrator steps in. Druma's high administrator synthesizes and summarizes information from all the local governments. Their reports go to the national Oversight Council, the eight senior leaders who serve as the main decision-making body for all of Druma.

Each bureaucrat on the council runs an office that oversees one of Druma's major areas of policy: agriculture and natural resources, commerce and labor, foreign relations, health and social projects, infrastructure, justice, medicine and technology, and settlements and housing. Though decisions are always made by group vote, the council tends to defer to the domain expert for help in resolving debates. Council members serve for 10 years, after which they appoint their replacement and step down. The system maintains continuity in government, but it has also allowed Kalistocrats to ensure that those loyal to them and their cause always fill the seats.

The Kalistocrats have two further levers they can use to control the government if necessary. The intercessor, an individual with the power to overturn Oversight Council decisions, is appointed directly by the Kalistocrats' high prophet. Most intercessors favor a hands-off approach to protect the appearance of independence for the Resplendent Bureaucracy. The high prophet can also countermand the Oversight Council or intercessor if needed.

The High Prophet rarely needs to draw attention to the Kalistocrats' supreme power in Druma. Every level of the government is arranged in a way that promotes Kalistocratic priorities and protects their elite. Bureaucrats with no particular ties or loyalty to the Kalistocrats have little hope of being promoted above clerkship. Administrators earn their authority over local affairs by supporting the goals of their Kalistocrat benefactors. Of course, governmental officials at all levels have been credibly accused of taking bribes.

The Prophets of Kalistrade are a savvy-enough group that they can keep their intervention, and any evidence of government corruption, out of plain view. To those who care to look, however, the lines of influence are exceptionally plain.

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HISTORY

TIMELINE

- 6400 AR The Macridi Blade culture founds agricultural settlements in Druma.
- 6082 AR Kellid tribes form the Peace of Palakar with the forest's fey.
- 5293 AR Earthfall.
- 5013 AR Orcs, chased to the surface by the Quest for Sky, clash with Kellid tribes.
- 4987 AR The Quest for Sky brings dwarves into the Five Kings Mountains.
- 4890 AR Druma becomes a province of the dwarven empire of Tar Taargadth.
- 4866 AR The First Drumish Rebellion is fought.



KALISTRADÉ

While Drumans do not brag of their history in the same manner as Taldor, archaeologists have found proof that Druma was inhabited at least 11,000 years ago by nomadic Kellid peoples, and their proud legacy still echoes in the culture today. The development of the Prophets of Kalistrade, the low-level spiritualism that undergirds daily life in Druma, and the nation's determined independence are rooted in its past struggles and triumphs.

Not much is known about the early history of Druma. Kellid oral tradition tells of nomadic tribes, and though a few agricultural artifacts have been recovered from this era, the first settlements in the lands now known as Druma were founded over 10,000 years ago. The civilization known as the Macridi Blade people was the first to develop an agricultural society within Druma. Their workers pioneered metalsmithing techniques used by today's artisans. They domesticated the crops that still grow in Drumish farmers' fields. They made the first treaties with the fey in the Palakar Forest, and a religious group known as the Speakers of the Pale set forth a view that everything is interconnected, which modern Drumans have adopted into an animistic philosophy.

The fall of the *Starstone* devastated Golarion and caused staple crops to die off, forcing tribes to return to nomadism. Then came a new form of peril as the dwarven Quest for Sky pushed orcs out of their ancestral home. Desperate orcs attacked the local humans in order to carve out a place for themselves on the surface and raided their neighbors to steal valuable resources. Fighting this threat took a toll on the fractured Kellid clans, leaving them unwilling or unable to resist the paternalistic charity of the dwarves who surfaced a few decades later. The dwarven empire of Tar Taargadth was born, and Druma made a province.

The dwarven empire exploited Druma's fertile land and promised safety from orcs and other local threats. However, dwarven laws clashed with the indigenous culture, and rising tensions bubbled into the First Drumish Rebellion. The fey courts in the Palakar Forest likewise saw dwarven incursions and logging operations as a violation of former peace treaties. Tar Taargadth refused to pay for access and exploitation rights, so a group of satyrs kidnapped the empire's prospectors. This dispute flamed into the Charcoal Wars. During the 17-year conflict, nearly a quarter of the Palakar Forest was logged and burned, leaving long-lasting scars on the forest and on fey relations.

Despite these conflicts, the following period of relative peace and prosperity in the Age of Destiny gave rise to collaboration between Kellid and dwarven populations. Many infrastructure improvements made during this time remain in use today. Though the tensions that typified early Druma were pushed down, they were still present. The Second and Third Drumish Rebellions took place in this time period, though records are sparse on the causes and consequences.

The Age of Enthronement accentuated these divides. With no outside threats to unite them, the dwarves of Tar Taargadth fell into internal conflicts. They ignored complaints from Druma, where a group of craftspeople started petitioning against the oppressive conglomeration of taxes, tariffs, and laws that bound them. Dwarven rulers delayed for months before delivering a scant fraction of the desired changes. In the meantime, Kellid war bands from nearby Isger and Kestrillon had been organizing Drumans into an army. The Fourth Drumish Rebellion lasted a year, and Tar Taargadth won only after calling for reinforcements.

A hundred years after the end of the war, a craftsman named Kalistrade was born. His fabled 8-year journey outside of Druma after a weeks-long

illness culminated in mountains of wealth and a list of edicts he claimed were key to his success. He was sure enough in his methods (and rich enough) that a cult formed around his teachings. After his disappearance and presumed death, his disciples gathered his writings to create the Prophecies of Kalistrade, which united them into a quasi-religious institution.

However, one sect struck out on its own: the Golden Solidarity made its home on Inteper Isle and flouted Kalistrade's edict against charity. When the Whispering Tyrant took over the island in 861 AR, Kalistocrats on the mainland saw this event as a warning against unsanctioned views on the Prophecies.

In 1551, the empire of Tar Taargadth splintered, and the Five Kings War began. Druma, still beholden to dwarven rule, was taxed heavily to finance the conflict, leading to the Fifth Drumish Rebellion. Druma didn't achieve independence, but shortly after, a group of 14 Kalistocrats created the Promise of Kalistrade. They pooled their resources, which had grown thanks to wartime commerce, to buy land and war debts from the dwarven kingdoms.

The Promise of Kalistrade held its peace during the Sixth Drumish Rebellion, which temporarily succeeded in creating an independent Kellid state known as the Meritocracy of Jelheg. Sadly, this state made a number of critical errors, including refusing diplomatic relations with other nations and allowing its government to fall to cronyism. In 2142 AR, Taggoret crushed Jelheg's armies at the Battle of Scattered Ash, ending its attempt at independence.

In 2331 AR, the Promise of Kalistrade finally made its move. All five dwarven kingdoms received letters calling in their debts. The Promise of Kalistrade, anticipating a less-than-friendly response, retained the services of the Mercenary League for enforcement. So it was that the five dwarven kings signed the Kerse Accord. This document ended the war and granted Druma its independence while forgiving most of the kings' debts.

Now a fully-fledged nation, Druma had to set up its own government and laws. Kalistocrats formed the Resplendent Bureaucracy, which they gave the appearance of impartiality. Within a few years, the Burning Glove Riots forced changes in taxation and led to new economic stimulus programs and laws that allowed upward mobility.

Still, not all of Druma's citizens were content. Many who had been involved in the Sixth Rebellion launched a campaign to seize control of the Resplendent Bureaucracy. This group preached isolationism and discriminated against non-humans. They were in control when both the Five Kings Mountains and Kyonin faced attacks—thus, Druma refused to send help, instead extending its contract with the Mercenary League in perpetuity. This decision decreased Druma's credibility as an ally, a self-inflicted wound that took centuries to fix.

The consequences reached their peak in 3203 AR when the Whispering Tyrant returned to power. The newly formed dwarven empire of Tar Khadurrm rebuffed Drumish attempts at diplomacy despite the shared threat. Only after the eruption of Droskar's Crag did Druma redeem itself in dwarven eyes by offering aid to refugees.

Due to its relative detachment from religion and the influence of the gods, Druma wasn't heavily affected by Aroden's death. While its neighbors struggled with instability, Druma saw an opportunity to further expand trade routes and fortify its power in the region. The Goblinblood Wars tested the nation's strength recently, when tribes attempted to raid and conquer Isgar. However, Druma's extant allyship with the country led to the deployment of the Mercenary League. The Blackjackets allied with Chelixa's Hellknights and Andoran's Eagle Knights to push back the goblin threat. With this conflict resolved, Druma returned to the peace and prosperity its rulers hope to prolong today.

–4411 AR Tensions between the dwarves and fey of Palakar Forest turn into the Charcoal Wars.

circa –893 AR The Third Drumish Rebellion is fought.

113 AR The Fourth Drumish Rebellion is fought.

187 AR Kalistrade's birth.

229 AR Kalistrade returns to Druma with great riches and espouses his philosophy.

251 AR Kalistrade disappears and is presumed dead.

861 AR Tar-Baphon attacks Kestrillon, massacring its people.

896 AR Aroden mortally wounds Tar-Baphon.

1551 AR Tar Taargadth collapses.

1571 AR The Five Kings Wars begin.

1580 AR The Fifth Drumish Rebellion is fought and quickly lost. A group of prophets form the Promise of Kalistrade.

2135 AR Isgari emigrants encourage the Sixth Drumish Rebellion. The Meritocracy of Jelheg is founded.

2142 AR The Meritocracy of Jelheg is recaptured by dwarves during a temporary truce in the Five Kings Wars.

2144 AR The Mercenary League is founded.

2331 AR The Promise of Kalistrade calls in its dwarven debts.

2332 AR The Kerse Accord is signed, and Druma finally wins its independence.

2335 AR The Burning Glove Riots lead to changes in government policy.

2487 AR Jelhegi dissidents seize power in Druma.

2493 AR The Mercenary League signs a perpetual contract with Druma.

4606 AR Aroden dies.

4697 AR Druma fights in the Goblinblood Wars.

4717 AR High Prophet Kelldor orders the expansion of the Mercenary League.

4724 AR The Godsrain causes chaos across Golarion.

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CURRENT EVENTS

Druma's era of peace might be coming to an end thanks to recent developments in nearby lands. The country remains internally stable because of the continued dominance of the Prophets of Kalistrade and the protections offered by the Mercenary League. However, cracks have begun to form as new threats exert pressure on its institutions.

Death is Bad for Business: The Whispering Tyrant stirs, which means people—and worse, trade routes—in neighboring countries might be at risk. Businesses and independent merchants who operate out of Druma have started to budget for the cost of hiring private guards. Additionally, some traders from other nations have decreased deliveries to the region. As a result, imported goods have become more expensive, and luxuries less extensive. Druma has what it needs to keep its people fed and meet the elite's demands for artisan-made frivolities

crafted from precious metals and fine gems. However, high-ranking Kalistocrats, eager for more fineries to advertise their wealth and status, are searching for solutions that will keep Druma on the list of desirable trade destinations.

As soon as whispers of an undead threat reached the Esteemed Bureaucratic Foundation, leaders increased the number of Blackjackets patrolling Druma's borders. The interior of the country remains safe, but more than one individual has complained to the Resplendent Bureaucracy about dangers they've encountered in bordering countries. Intercessor Ulba Tuddlym had to make an announcement reminding Drumans that the Blackjackets are a national army, not a personal protective force. Trained guards (and anyone who can pass as one) have been in high demand since her communiqué. With the talent pool in Druma nearly exhausted, some locals look to hire from neighboring countries. The government has expressed ambivalence regarding contracts with neighboring forces like the Eagle Knights and the Knights of Lastwall. On one hand, officials want trade to keep flowing. On the other, each neighbor of Druma's that Tar-Baphon conquers places the nation in greater danger.

In the meantime, the Mercenary League is doing everything it can to prepare for the worst. The army is no longer assuming new recruits will have time to complete their full training; thus, all applicants must have some background in defense or combat. After this policy change, many Blackjackets have devoted their downtime to acting as instructors.

Officially, the Mercenary League has denounced this practice for impacting military readiness and splitting soldiers' loyalty. Unofficially, its leaders know recruitment numbers are down, and any Druman with a desire to serve and professional training is a boon to their mission.

Kalistrade's New Sect: Tar-Baphon's return has also caused agitation within the Prophets of Kalistrade. The movement's devotees know its history, including its long-past run-in with the Whispering Tyrant. In 861 AR, he marched on the city of Kestrillon and its local Kalistocratic sect, seemingly attracted by their wealth. They—and the other inhabitants of the island now known as the Isle of Terror—paid for it with their lives.

Some believe Druma is making the same mistake today with its flamboyant displays of prosperity.

And that isn't the only complaint swirling among Kalistocrats. Some enterprising prophets see the Godsrain and the death of Gorum as a financial opportunity; however, even among the many prophets who don't worship any deities, this endeavor is bold enough to count as blasphemy. Others warn that the Kalistocrats need to take care not to anger the gods,



WHISPERING TYRANT

lest Pharasma look any closer at their attempts to evade her judgment.

These various disenchanted individuals have banded together to call for a spate of changes. Though not all of them agree with each other—and some are almost certainly involved for the chance to get one over on their rivals—a rough platform has emerged from their discussions. They believe the Kalistocracy needs to refocus on ethics, updating the Prophecies of Kalistrade with lessons and guidance that apply to the Age of Lost Omens. Among the proposed changes is a suggestion that, at least in public, too much ostentation is a bad thing. Another claims Kalistocrats should tithe a certain amount of their earnings to the government to invest in the nation's defense.

Both proposals have generated pushback, with an anti-reform group claiming it's the wrong time to shake things up. It's common wisdom among the faithful that the Golden Solidarity caused its own downfall by flouting Kalistrade's guidance. Changing Druma's approach to his teachings now would only put it in more danger. Proponents of the reforms, though, point out that making minor adjustments could bring Kalistocratic teachings closer in line with other religions. Thus, the changes would increase the authority of Kalistocrats and win them allies against the coming danger.

Those Who Cheated Death: Prophets of Kalistrade follow strict principles in hopes of making their way to a personalized paradise in the afterlife, free from Pharasma's judgments and bought with the ritual and wealth they earned in life. With the death of Gorum, some prophets who achieved their own heaven have been unexpectedly returned to the land of the living. All who follow the teachings of Kalistrade are worried by this disruption to their sacred practices.

Of course, reactions have been varied. Some have started to question Kalistrade's teachings, spreading doubt over his promise of a personalized afterlife. Even if they manage to achieve it, these individuals ask, will they get to keep it? Others claim this is the first step in Pharasma's retribution against the group. Plenty of naysayers retort that the Lady of Graves would never retaliate in this manner were she to care, and the problem is only affecting those who didn't truly find their way to their promised eternal mindscape. Everyone has a theory, and most Kalistocrats approach the topic with some amount of fear and trepidation—though, of course, they never express so outwardly.

The prophets who were thus revived are upset and desperate. They followed Kalistrade's word and achieved their

final goal only to have it ripped away. Worse, there's no precedent telling them how to return to their personalized afterlife, so they must find their own solution. More than one of these individuals has gone on an angry rampage, seeking revenge against perceived "enemies" they blame for their situation or simply flexing their power just to prove they still have it.

High Prophet Kelldor knows the situation must be brought under control as soon as possible. Most outsiders don't know about the practices Kalistocrats follow to avoid facing Pharasma and would likely be unhappy to learn of them. Plus, the returned prophets are now undead and thus subject to control by Tar-Baphon. Along with alerting some of the high-ranking Blackjackets to prepare for emergency operations, the high prophet has made the unprecedented step of creating a council of prophets to advise him on the issue. While this method might be the fastest way to answers, it also causes new rifts between those who were chosen and those who were left out.

Sedition in the South: The southern lands in Druma have always harbored malcontents, and the recent upheavals have added to their ranks. Some of the troublemakers claim to be ex-Prophets of Kalistrade who left the organization due to disagreements with its leadership or current direction. Given the leaks regarding the Kalistocratic afterlife and the returned prophets, these individuals at the very least have connections within the organization. Their rumormongering has awakened new opposition to the prophets, who already faced skepticism among this crowd.

Another rallying cry used to draw people into the fold is a worry that should the Whispering Tyrant move on Druma, the Blackjackets will prioritize protecting Kalistocrats. Second on their list will be the Resplendent Bureaucracy, then local officials. Those with no connections to either power will be left to fend for themselves. Thus far, few solutions to this problem have been proposed, but it's only a matter of time before someone

puts together a serious campaign aimed at overthrowing at least a local government.

Some of the concerns this group has are certainly valid; though Druma's early government reforms decreased wealth inequality, the Prophets of Kalistrade still hold most of the country's wealth and a fair amount of its political power (even if the latter is mainly behind the scenes). It remains to be seen whether this group will manage to launch a political movement with broad appeal. Otherwise, the longtime cranks who have been advocating for a revolution might seize control of the momentum and endanger the country further during a time when stability is necessary for safety.



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KELLDOR



VANA KEANE



DEVEN DANBER



GREDNA RANDALSON

Druma is full of wealthy and powerful individuals thanks to the ambition of the Prophets of Kalistrade. Their influence shapes the country but also extends beyond its borders via various political connections. None of them would be Drumans if they lived in harmony with each other. Some have plans to further enmesh the Kalistocrats in the highest echelons of national and international influence; others care mostly for their own ascent into the halls of power. Then, there are those who want to shake things up—either by changing the way power shifts hands or by changing the hands power flows to. These are the individuals to watch as the nation shifts in the face of uncertainty.

High Prophet **Kelldor** (perceptive male human religious leader) is the preeminent power in Druma, though to date, he hasn't flexed his authority over the Oversight Council or the intercessor. Kelldor is a smart businessman and a master of social situations, thanks in part to his ability to divine the future. Like all the best Kalistocrats, Kelldor is notoriously secretive about his dealings. He spends his days conferring with trusted aides and meeting foreign advisors and leaders. His main goals are to maintain peace in the Inner Sea region and ensure Druma will prevail through any conflict that might arise. Accordingly, he's dedicated his resources to purchasing land in foreign countries (some near the Inner Sea, others further afield) and expanding the Mercenary League.

Vana Keane (cultured female human Kalistocrat envoy) fancies herself a spiritual successor to Druma's early symposium leaders. Like those women, she regularly hosts gatherings that feature fine art, finer alcohol, and lively philosophical debate. It was in one of these meetings six years ago that Vana first suggested Princess Eutropia deserved to prevail in Taldor's newly broken out civil war. More than one attendee disagreed with her. In response, Vana became one of Eutropia's biggest backers, leaning on her ties with Taldor's nobility and diplomats from neighboring countries. Grand Princess Eutropia officially recognized Vana's help with an invitation to her coronation. Vana was named an ambassador to Taldor shortly after; despite her lack of political experience, she's the quickest way to Eutropia's ear.

No one knows **Deven Danber** (secretive male halfling spymaster) by his true name. If they did, he wouldn't be very good at his job. The aliases he uses are as varied as the groups and populations he's ingratiated himself with. Deven's job is to know things, and one knows things by knowing people. His address book is a who's who of everyone who has, at one point, shown the potential to influence Drumish society. Those who flame out are passed off to one of his underlings for continued monitoring. The more consequential parties are drawn directly into Deven's network so he can keep a close eye. His well-tuned intelligence operation has helped High Prophet Kelldor stay on the right side of public opinion and business dealings alike.

High Marshal **Gredna Randalson** (demanding female dwarf fighter) runs a tight ship as head of the Mercenary League's training program. As tough as she is cunning, the high marshal has successfully overseen the recent expansion of the league. Critics call her training regime brutal but can't argue with its results. Under High Marshal Gredna, the Mercenary League has been able to provide protection to more prophets (and other Drumans) and defend the country's borders against bandits, undead, and further threats. Just don't ask her about the downstream effects of her methods—multiple trainee Blackjackets have died attempting to live up to her standards.

Ulba Tuddlym (cautious female dwarf intercessor) serves as Druma's intercessor and largely functions as a figurehead. Some see her refusal

to overrule the Oversight Council as a sign of weakness. However, those who know her better are aware she's deeply strategic. Ulba can tell where public opinion stands (and how malleable it is) on any issue; she'll only step in when the people will support her actions. Most recently, Ulba made waves by upholding a policy that prevented mining in sites with relics from the Macridi Blade culture. This decision angered the powerful Petronax family (and the council members in Vayde Petronax's pocket) but played well among Drumish citizens. The Petronax family came out of the dustup looking worse, and the people's confidence in Ulba increased.

Discontented Drumans all know the name **Nahmik Cannon** (organized male human rebel leader). As the Inner Sea region has continued to destabilize, Nahmik has made a name for himself by criticizing the nonresponse of Druma's elite. His charisma and speechmaking skill have helped him earn the support of many discontented Drumans who came to New Jelheg in search of like-minded individuals. Among the rebellious factions in New Jelheg, Nahmik's Ochre Glove is the largest and also the most moderate. Its members call for reform, not bloody revolution. However, some of his followers have started to complain he's an ineffective leader. Keeping their loyalty will require either a big win or a pivot to more extreme viewpoints.

When **Casia Maddox** (smug female human entrepreneur) left Druma 8 years ago, she was a middling businesswoman with middling wealth. People laughed behind her back when she claimed she was traveling to make her fortune. Now, she's returned victorious. Casia's success is obvious by her ornate dress and embellishments, and she proudly (and loudly) takes credit for the recent flow of fine textiles and intricate machinery that have fascinated many local elites. The way Casia's story mirrors Kalistrade's has enabled her to achieve the unheard of: she jumped the rental list for one of Kerse's supplicant properties. Her rivals are certain this "stroke of luck" was arranged by the High Prophet, though none can decide whether he plans to cut her down or set her up as his successor.

Temel Passad (flirtatious male human expert) owns a mansion on Kerse on the shores of Lake Encarthan. Along with entertaining rich businesspeople he hopes to partner with, Temel also hosts Pathfinder Society agents working in the area. The other Prophets of Kalistrade are wary of this connection, fearing the Society will uncover the secret of the prophets' personal afterlives.

Vayde Petronax (hell-raising male grimspawn nephilim human magus) wants nothing less than the overthrow of Druma. He inherited this goal—literally—from his great-grandmother, who made a deal with the daemon Braismois. Though Vayde is a Kalistocrat, he secretly believes that the Prophecies are a sham and that the prophets' methods of avoiding death are a foolish attempt to delay the inevitable. He aims to achieve true immortality by helping Braismois harvest the afterlives of Druma's ascended prophets. Vayde uses his fortune to destabilize the country, bribing or otherwise manipulating members of the Oversight Council while also funding rebel groups in his home region of Kahlehlín. He's a paranoid man, rarely leaving the magic wards around his grand estate.

Deshara "Des" Thennais (spiteful genderfluid elf returned prophet) died nearly 50 years ago after completing the self-mummification process all Kalistocrats undergo when nearing the end of their lives. After the Godsrain, they were ejected from their personal afterlife and woke up, newly undead, in their own tomb. Gone is the silver-tongued merchant who was a favorite guest at invite-only soirees and diplomatic gatherings alike. Oversensitive, petty, and bent on revenge, Des is convinced they were rudely awakened at the hand of a rival. After all, many other ascended prophets remained in their afterlives. They're determined to hunt down the person or group who brought them back, even if their quest takes them to the steps of the Everlasting Palace itself.



ULBA TUUDLYM



NAHMIK CANNON



CASIA MADDOX



VAYDE PETRONAX



DESHARA "DES" THENNAIS

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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Eradi Vesand (polymath female undine occultist) has a shop in Detmer's Upper City where she collects antiques and information.

Her goods run the gamut from collectors' items to cursed objects—she'll trade in anything, so long as it sells for a good price. She also regularly hires adventurers to seek out treasures rumored to be in the Lake Encarthan region.

Jhorek Attwater (studious male human bureaucrat) keeps his head down and is known as a model worker. However, he didn't join the Resplendent Bureaucracy to serve his country. His goal is to undermine the Kalistocracy by falsifying business and tax records of leading prophets. He's recently forged documents that will make it seem like one of Kerse's wealthiest families has been cheating the government.

Marell Price (brooding female human rogue) is one of the more cutthroat Prophets of Kalistrade in Macridi. Of course, she isn't one to get her hands dirty, but she frequently hires mercenaries, gangs, and other groups of freelancers to help her win deals by sabotaging her rivals. Many predict Marell's practices will push one of her enemies into seeking revenge sooner or later.

Yhule Vadat (daring female aiuvarin human arcanist) was caught on a smuggler's ship on Lake Encarthan. She traded her firsthand experience of the Whispering Tyrant's old capital of Adorak for safety from her Blackjacket captors. Since then, she's stayed in Prophet's Home, studying arcane mysteries within the School of the Arcane.

Both the cities and landscape of Druma abound with luxury, beauty, and wealth, though this polish begins to crack the further visitors travel from the capital.

Alabastrine: This irregular settlement defies the stereotype of sleepy small towns, as its various districts are frequently traded between the hands of Druma's wealthy. The would-be city with a current population of 1,023 was quickly constructed after Aroden's death to serve an expected wave of immigrants. Construction ended just as fast when the prediction didn't pan out, leaving many unfinished projects across the settlement.

Alabastrine also feels unfinished politically, thanks to Druma's wealthy. High Prophet Keldor purchased the city in 4711 and awarded governance of its districts to the highest bidders. None of Alabastrine is still in the hands of its original buyers. Deeds are passed back and forth by aspiring Kalistocrats and rival factions who see the land (and its inhabitants) as nothing more than game pieces. Alabastrine's residents are forced to endure constant changes in leadership and policy with wealthy outsiders meddling in their affairs.

Current high administrator **Donaraad Sternheart** (stalwart nonbinary dwarf barrister) has their hands full trying to placate the various owners of Alabastrine's streets while also serving its people. Their tendency to focus on the latter when both goals conflict leads many to believe they won't hold the top position for much longer.

Cedar Court: The dryads of Palakar Forest make their home in the Cedar Court. Though the name suggests a grand location, the Cedar Court is nothing more than a congregation of trees belonging to the oldest dryads. No outsiders are ever invited to visit, and all Drumans know is that it's in the northwestern part of the forest. **Ryauhm** (organized male dryad druid), an elder said to be older than the forest itself, has been accepted as a leader of the dryads. He was one of the architects of the Oath of Everlasting Friendship.

Court of Endless Revelry: Palakar Forest's satyr population travels the eastern part of the forest as a roving band of carousers. They can be heard from miles away but are hard to track down. Their court is bounded by the Profit's Flow and Great Goldpan Rivers, which are perhaps the only barriers keeping their herd from trespassing into the lands claimed by the other fey courts. No leader polices the court's movements, for the satyrs don't have one.

Court of Seasons: Even the other fey of Druma hardly speak with the nymphs in the southern forest's Court of Seasons. **Cyrella** (territorial female nymph rogue) rules the court from a glade of rocks, rushing water, and sturdy trees. Two dozen nymph families meet with her to share oversight duties. The nymphs forcefully maintain their borders; while some intruders are kindly steered away, others are permanently blinded for daring to trespass.

Cutter's Holdout: This village either borders Kyonin, or is in Kyonin, depending on which government you ask. Its members, led by **Jdeera Tuch** (stubborn female dromaar elder) consider themselves Druman and take pride in that fact. The town (population of 173) was founded by Kalistocrats hoping to exploit the Fierani Forest, back in the early days of Druma. Their mission was disrupted by the elves' return to Golarion and subsequent claim over the lands of Kyonin. Only an edict from the High Prophet prevented the Kalistocrats from launching a war for the territory. Tensions cooled slowly, but two millennia proved enough for any bad blood to wash away. The two nations recently improved their relations when collaborating to defeat a group of demons coming from

nearby Tanglebriar. Since then, locals on both sides of the border consider themselves odd friends and routinely trade gifts and aid.

Detmer: The biggest naval yard on Lake Encarthan can be found at the base of Detmer. This small city has 8,624 residents, is overseen by chief administrator **Tannon Karleif** (bookish male human oracle), and packs a heavy economic punch thanks to the famous shipyards. The sudden undead dangers originating from Lake Encarthan have catapulted Detmer to even further importance, to many residents' concern.

Detmer's harbor has long been populated, from the Macridi Blade era's "Old Detmer" to a settlement during the time of Tar Taargadth that consisted of fishers and dwarven exiles. The city as it stands today exists after being re-founded by a member of the Promise of Kalistrade in conjunction with a dwarven business partner. The pair invested in the construction of freight elevators to transport goods and people between shipyards in the cove and the top of a nearby cliff. This ingenious feat of dwarven engineering allowed for an "Upper City" to support the industry that would bloom below.

Today, Sapphire Harbor's deep blue waters are home to multiple docks. Some serve as construction or repair berths for ships, others are dedicated to trade and tourism vessels, and the rest are reserved for the Mercenary League's naval fleet. A 10-minute ride up the freight elevators takes visitors to a different world. Detmer's Upper City is home to a brisk open marketplace. Those looking for work are sure to find a ship's captain in need of crew. Given the number of travelers that pass through Detmer, information on Druma and the surrounding nations is also plentiful... especially for those willing to pay.

Gulshire: Few set foot inside Gulshire beyond the 30 or so expert animal trainers who live there. The hamlet is entirely fenced in, and its only structures are residences and farm buildings. Gulshire's supplies are delivered by prophets and other elites who furnish their goods for free, though they are stopped at the gate. Despite these circumstances, there's steep competition for these roles. Vendors have a higher chance of winning the lottery to attend events where Gulshire's prize animals are sold.

Buyers are only allowed to enter Gulshire at specific times, and they're escorted through the hamlet in small groups. The animal handlers personally decide who gets first pick of their herds, which is the only way to buy one of their ostentatious, prizewinning animals. A Gulshire-bred companion is the ultimate status symbol in Druma. The alpaca-like bacallia, the frilled, reptilian keulia, and the tauhoti squirrel are among the species that leader **Amé Khian** (nurturing female aiuvarin human animal breeder) has cultivated in the hamlet.

Gildside: The wealthy Petronax family owns this southeastern mining town that was built into the side of Rancor Canyon. It has a unique vertical construction meant to reduce the risk of weather hazards and make for easy defense against intrusions from the Darklands. The architecture might have also been inspired by Detmer's freight elevators, as a series of pulleys and lifts help people (and goods) traverse the six levels that comprise Gildside.

Its 1,407 inhabitants live in vaults carved into the walls of the canyons. Most of them are part of its industry, with the majority working as miners. The rest are either involved in refining the raw ore or handling administrative duties. **Iadriot Ravaelth** (ruthless male pitborn nephilim human overseer), a close friend of the Petronax patriarch, oversees Gildside with an iron fist.

Grimsburrow: This independent settlement boasts over 2,000 dwarven crafters from the Five Kings Mountains, many of them masters in their fields.

LOCAL CLIMATE

Druma's climate is perfectly mild. Lake Encarthan has a moderating effect on the region, so no winter is too cold or summer too hot. Many mornings start with heavy cloud cover or fog, the latter of which is more common in lakeside areas. However, both typically burn off within a few hours of sunrise: Druma is more often sunny than not.

Druma's average growing season is a respectable 200 days, meaning most crops can be cultivated in its lands. Scattered rain showers are common from spring through fall; Druma has over 100 rainy days in a typical year. The occasional spring or summer rainstorm will bring at least an inch of precipitation at a time. Snow and hail are more common in Druma's winter months, and the nation gets a decent amount of both.



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Agriculture is one of the main industries in Druma, so its signature crops are part of the national identity. Grains like millet and sorghum have a long history in these lands, as they were originally cultivated by the Macridi Blade culture—the same goes for plums and vetch. Modern growers have added staples of the Kalistocrats' diet, including tangerines, peaches, almonds, pistachios, soybeans, and chia.

Due to their country's reliance on agriculture, Drumans also respect pollinators, including bees, moths, butterflies, hummingbirds, and bats. The country's many remote and wild lands are home to larger mammals, such as foxes, deer, mountain lions, and wolves.

Some of the land's native creatures have been domesticated, such as bacallias, which are known for their soft, iridescent fur.

While its political status is a point of contention in Druma's government, Grimsburrow's services are in enough demand that the matter has effectively been tabled.

Kerse: Druma's capital is a grand hub of trade. More information on Kerse begins on page 68.

Macridi: The only non-fey settlement within Palakar Forest sits on millennia of history. This large town and its 3,374 residents are opportunistically located at the confluence of the Great Goldpan and Profit's Flow Rivers. Between the bounty of the forest and constant river traffic from merchants, it's a bustling local hub. Local chief administrator **Cuthveenllys Willobreng** (pious male gnome adept) has his hands full maintaining order while ensuring no one angers the forest's fey.

Macridi is the site of one of Druma's oldest settlements. Archaeological digs in the area have uncovered multiple artifacts that helped historians better understand the Macridi Blade culture. However, archaeology is a minor concern compared to the town's three major industries: logging, trade, and woodworking. The Oath of Everlasting Friendship between Drumans and the fey of Palakar Forest allows logging as long as workers take no more than needed and replant the logged areas. The wood is either sold for lumber or purchased by local carpenters and other artisans. Finely crafted duskwood and paueiel goods from Macridi provide bragging rights to those who traffic in and own them.

Macridi is also home to the Assembly Institute, an academy in which Prophets of Kalistrade and Blackjackets on the personal guard track learn to work alongside each other. While Blackjackets must learn how to anticipate prophets' needs and keep up with intercommunity gossip, prophets must learn when to defer to their battle-trained companions.

Matriculum's Charge: The ancient dragon **Matriculum** (duplicitous male ancient omen dragon warrior) once helped defend Druma's border against a goblin threat, which led to his ascension as a Kalistocrat and protector of this small village. **Janya Davin** (principled nonbinary human farmer) carries out the day-to-day administration duties, as Matriculum has little interest in running a town. With just 512 people, Matriculum's Charge (previously known as Hillsprung) is hardly a destination for most Drumans. However, its locals still tell the story of Matriculum's alleged instantaneous acceptance into the Prophets of Kalistrade—a feat no one has replicated.

New Jelheg: This small village of 341 citizens living in tents and earthen huts harbors malcontents who want to restore the Meritocracy of Jelheg, a failed Kellid nation. Those who end up here often have little, which is part of the reason for their antipathy toward Druma's government. New Jelheg has been led by **Falheer Suvasti** (resentful female human alchemist) for half a decade, but her position is threatened by newcomer Nahmik Cannon. Neither of these individuals has moved against the other directly, knowing their small community would fracture under the strain of infighting. Still, the friction between them (and their followers) has caused a certain coolness between neighbors on opposing sides. The one thing Falheer and Nahmik agree on is that they must keep their



MATRICULUM

movements relatively quiet, for national attention would invite a swift invasion by the Mercenary League.

Palakar Forest: Everyone in Druma respects the might of Palakar Forest, which covers a great swath of land in central Druma. Along with fey courts and small logging camps, the forest hosts several temporary portals into the First World. Only the oldest of the fey know this secret, though Drumans might learn of such a portal if they stumble through one and find themselves trapped in the First World. Accordingly, the fey prefer Drumans stay on the fringes of the forest and enforce it through the Oath of Everlasting Friendship that governs their relationship with the Drumish government. While some individuals might forge into the depths of the woods to live in solitude, Drumans hold each other to respecting the boundaries set by the fey.

Peddlegate: The embassy between Druma and the Five Kings Mountains was built in the old mines of this unique town. The mines are no longer operational but at one time produced so much ore that locals are still processing its bounty. The town's 1,249 residents are a diverse bunch: some are representatives from dwarven enclaves or the Drumish government, some are wealthy Kalistocrats who maintain temporary or seasonal homes here, and some are longtime residents who prop up the town's industry. **Farahild Jussdec** (ailing female dwarf artisan) consistently has her hands full trying to balance the needs of the visiting wealthy and the town's working-class residents.

Petitioner's Port: At the source of the Profit's Flow and the southern border of Druma, this small city sees more visitors in a month than it has permanent residents (who number at 1,751). Though perhaps the least ostentatious of Druma's major settlements, Petitioner's Port has plenty of wealth thanks to the booming trade industry. Visitors from Iser and nations further to the south and west use the city as their port of entry, and traders whose routes include the Profit's Flow always make a stop at Petitioner's Port. Additionally, the wealthy Petronax family runs mercantile operations from their in-town villa. Lifelong bureaucrat **Ermaanhelm Wurnbrandt** (connected male dwarf sage) serves as the town's chief administrator as well as its judge on the rare occasion one is needed. Under his eye, the city has remained relatively safe despite the large number of tourists and goods that flow through it every day.

Prophet's Home: The center of training for the Mercenary League might be the safest place in Druma. This town (population 7,385) in northeastern Druma is divided into two districts. Everything to the east of the central Thousand Shields fortress belongs to the Mercenary League. Trainees live, study, and drill there. The town's nonmilitary population makes their home in the west half of Prophet's Home, though the fortress that towers over them reminds them constantly of the military presence. Thousand Shields is more than just the seat of the Mercenary League. In its top tower, the School of the Arcane serves as a study for aiuvarin magister Yhule Vadat and a training space for military spellcasters. It's also home to High Marshal Gredna Randalson and Chief Administrator **Rulla Maddin** (logical female human military leader) as well as Prophets of Kalistrade who rent entire wings of the fortress to serve as their dwellings.

Twingate: This settlement on the Gulf of Accord is where aspirants of the Prophets of Kalistrade come to make their case. Overseen by Grand Prophet **Shalebreetias** (unpredictable female angelkin nephilim human magus), Twingate has few permanent residents. Most of the 946 individuals present at last count were camping in the tent city at the base of Twingate's matching stone towers. Few supplicants are selected by Shalebreetias to join the Prophets of Kalistrade, and no one knows how she makes her choices. The lucky are invited into the towers and there inducted into the Prophets of Kalistrade.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

- **Bailey's Perch** (population 395) is a fishing town that's far enough north it no longer borders the Gulf of Accord. It's known as a sleepy community, but recent reports of an undead catch have spooked its fishers.
- **Gottacker** (population 271) is a dwarven farming town along a tributary to the Profit's Flow. It was founded by individuals exiled from the Five Kings Mountains and is now a common destination for dwarven runaways.
- **Lyperro** (population 146) is a farming community with a secondary industry: prophet **Olastia Vihn** (unwary female human merchant) is always buying ore gathered from the nearby Great Goldpan River. She doesn't know the Vihn ancestor whose armor she plans to restore will reconstitute into a graveknight as a result.
- **Ulm's Delve** (population 328) is a gold rush town in southern Druma. Ruled by a mob boss and largely staffed by indentured laborers, the settlement has become a prison for many who arrived in search of opportunity.

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The opulent capital of Druma houses more wealthy individuals than perhaps any other city in Golarion. Only the richest of the Prophets of Kalistrade can afford to live here, thanks to the premium that property owners can charge for proximity to the High Prophet's Everlasting Palace. Thankfully for other Drumans, a percentage of the city's properties are reserved for those outside of the Prophets of Kalistrade. This concession is just one among others that Kerse has made in the face of the Kalistocrats' wide-reaching power and influence.

Though the Resplendent Bureaucracy is also in Kerse, the city tends to follow the lead of the Kalistocrats. Therefore, spending time in Kerse means surrounding oneself with business. While Druma's major exports are agriculture, artisan-made goods, and the might of the Mercenary League, the industry of Kerse is industry itself. The city is home to some of Golarion's richest trade centers, even though its markets are physically small.

The fashions that Druman people wear reflect the preferences of the Prophets of Kalistrade. Even many who aren't a part of the organization follow the general guidelines of wearing all white clothes that provide

nearly full-body coverage. On the other hand, if one wishes to show their distance from the Kalistocratic philosophy, one might instead wear brightly colored clothing. Different colors and styles signify social status among this group in the same way Kalistocrats use their dress and accessorizing to advertise theirs. Still, the group makes choices in diametric opposition to Kalistocrat-set norms, which hardly helps erode the faction's influence.

Despite the intense social signaling people engage in through their responses to Kalistocratic edicts, Kerse's residents enjoy a society with less stratification than one might guess. In the household, or at a job, it's expected those in lesser positions will obey their superiors. In social situations, however, it isn't a given that one should venerate those with a higher income, a better job, or elite connections. It's even perfectly acceptable to ask questions or even challenge the teachings of someone in a superior position, so long as it's done discreetly.

This relative informality perseveres due to the role of new connections, especially foreign ones, in business. The most successful Kalistocrats have a broad web of international relationships and contracts

to take advantage of unpredictable events and opportunities across the continent. Now, with companies and entrepreneurs becoming more wary of the Inner Sea area, locals are searching out new partnerships. Being the first person to forge a relationship with a newcomer can change the trajectory of one's career, so only a fool would choose to insult or ignore those of seemingly lower status. Additionally, the Prophets of Kalistrade aim to inspire others to join their movement, which means they must be open to making connections with those outside of it. It benefits even those in the upper echelons of society to have freedom of association, so Druma's norms encourage such contact.

The relatively wide-open social playing field presents its own set of challenges, though. It can be hard to keep up with one's wide circle of friends and acquaintances, much less track the successes and struggles of one's rivals. Fruitful business decisions must account for a changing social climate; therefore, a strong culture of gossip has flourished as a way to share news about oneself and gather news about others. Kerse's social events all leave time for guests to mingle and swap news and achievements. Participants aren't so gauche as to brag about themselves, but it's custom to expound on the accomplishments of the previous speaker or introduce a conversational partner by sharing their name and their recent achievements. This practice allows attendees to gauge each other's fortunes and influence. Lately, these discussions have also allowed people to save face by treating news of Blackjacket operations and nearby dangers as business matters that might affect one's status. It's best to keep all weaknesses, including fear, hidden.

After all, conversations can be their own battles. Despite their desire to form advantageous connections with others, Drumans have a reputation for taking offense at the smallest of slights. Visitors to Kerse are encouraged to watch for signs of ruffled feathers during all interactions. An offended party won't directly call attention to the slight but will signal their displeasure through conversation or actions. For example, they might say that a widely respected individual holds the opposite opinion or share how a person they knew handled a similar situation in a very different way. These cues signal for the offender to apologize and, if necessary, fix their mistake. That's all it takes for the insult to be forgotten.

A person who doesn't catch on to their conversational partner's anger or purposely replicates the offending behavior invites a retaliation. After an offender faces reprisal (of roughly the same severity as their original slight), both parties are expected to consider the matter settled and end the feud. However, depending on the type of conflict, a Druman might spend months or even years sabotaging someone who offended them. Kerse is full of disagreements that have escalated, perhaps due to increased stress as signs of danger become more prevalent. Old Kalistocratic wisdom says that people who are angry make mistakes. Frustrating one's competitors is a way for people to feel in control in a time of upheaval.

Many locals also enforce order and local tradition more as they search for reassurance. Druma's first people espoused a philosophy that includes causal animism, the belief that all things have some form of sentience and power. Today, that philosophy can be seen in the way Drumans interact with their environment. It's considered wise and kind to thank a ship for bringing one safely across Lake Encarthan, for example, or to apologize to a tauhoti squirrel that was spooked by one's sudden arrival. In that vein, it's considered especially uncouth to act recklessly and destructively, even if the only victim of such acts is an inanimate or natural object. Every being and item deserves a base amount of respect, and Drumans look down on those who don't give it. Especially in a time of hardship, Druma's defensive structures and systems might need every bit of encouragement they can get.

KERSE

SETTLEMENT 10

METROPOLIS

A wealthy city on the shores of Lake Encarthan that operates largely under the influence of the Kalistocrats

Government Chief Administrator (appointed leader)

Population 20,056 (71% humans, 16% dwarves, 5% halflings, 8% other)

Languages Common, Dwarven, Halfling

Religions Abadar, The Prophecies of Kalistrade; **Prohibited** Razmir

Threats Jelhegi dissidents, The Whispering Tyrant

Market of Many Worlds Unique and valuable items from across Golarion and beyond flow through Kerse. Visitors can often find uncommon or even rare items specific to regions beyond Druma and the Inner Sea.

Trusted Traders Drumans consider haggling a signal the buyer doesn't trust the seller's ability to appraise the worth of their goods or services. When players attempt checks to reduce the price of a purchase, apply the hard DC adjustment (+2).

Fabrinia Novellus (contemplative female human Kalistocrat) unofficial government consultant

Rambert Armbrudder (fearless male dwarf bureaucrat) chief administrator of Kerse

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Few in Kerse will outwardly discuss the rising danger or admit why they're searching for everyday assurances of order, but the signs are all around. Markets continue to bustle, though the activity is increasingly due to higher numbers of Blackjacket patrols in the streets. Newcomers to Kerse face expanded security practices on the docks. While the necessity of these practices is plain given Kerse's proximity to the Isle of Terror, many Kalistocrats dislike them for increasing the atmosphere of anxiety that has already hurt business. Gods might be dying, and legendary necromancers on the move again, but even in times of war, trade can't stop. It's unthinkable to Kalistocrats that their wealth can't keep them safe, so they don't let themselves think about it. In every struggle, there is opportunity, Kalistrade said. Kerse is determined that its people will be the ones to find and benefit from it.

GAZETTEER

The following are some of the more notable locations within Kerse.

Aerie Club: Only the wealthiest of Kerse's visitors and residents can afford entry to the historic Aerie Club, which dates back to the city's founding. Just as notable as its longevity is the fact that it isn't owned by a Kalistocrat, though its clientele consists largely

of their elite. Patrons can avail themselves of the best foods, retain the services of personal trainers in the fitness center, relax in the sauna, and network with other wealthy elites in the area. Only after making at least a dozen visits will they get the VIP privileges that allow them access to the private Aerie resort in Rhuzam's Torch Orchard. Kalistocrat **Kialiane Thariyen** (elitist female lawbringer nephilim elf property broker) has yet to receive her invitation after four months of weekly visits. Rumor has it she's willing to pay a high price to anyone who'll sabotage the club in a way that will make its property (and social) value plummet.

Barbarous Arena: Somewhere beneath the Pilgrimage District lies a fighting pit, circular and covered with iron bars. None have claimed ownership of this venue, yet it operates with extreme consistency. Combatants take on creatures imported from across Golarion or are pitted against each other for the crowd's amusement. And for profit, of course—betting is a mainstay of the fights. Whoever operates the arena takes extreme measures to keep authorities in the dark regarding its ownership. The bookies change every fight, and it's common knowledge that after a night of running operations, they have their memories wiped and altered. Previously, the Mercenary League was willing to look the other way when they heard rumors about the Barbarous Arena. Now, with danger

breathing down Kerse's neck, they want to shut down the arena before more would-be recruits are seriously injured or killed. The only lead they've gotten so far is a name: **Pesk Maldavast** (bubbly female gnome vendor), who can be found traveling the streets with her cart of exotic fruits. Among the (memory-modified) bookies who have been brought in for questioning, over half remember buying budberries from Pesk the day they reportedly worked the fights.

Cerulean Docks: Those who come to Kerse by boat disembark at the Cerulean Docks. The duskwood planks are supported by marble pillars that sparkle with embedded gems. Given the expense taken to construct them, it shouldn't be a surprise that the docks are small, but **Rhivash** (high-strung male undine dock chief) keeps all visitors to a tight schedule. Kerse is known as the most efficient trade stop on the Encarthan Circuit thanks to his efforts. However, just a few days past he had an unheard-of double booking for one of the docks. Rhivash believes someone broke into his office and forged both his schedule and the permits to match it. He's too busy to find proof on his own but willing to pay anyone who brings him substantial information on the subject.

Esteemed Bureaucratic Foundation: Druma's most important political decisions are made in this cream-colored marble building decorated with stained glass windows and filigree made of real gold. Visitors are allowed only on the first level, where Druma's highest-ranking clerks work. Above, the council members and their staffs write legislation while ambassadors, diplomats, and other politicians jockey for their favor. It's common to see Drumans line up outside in hopes of gaining an invitation to argue their position in front of council staff, but rarely are any allowed to. **Eridah** (brash female human agitator) claims to have blackmail showing Councillor **Silabyll** (unscrupulous male human aristocrat) cheated many of his past business partners, and she claims his staff will trade the documents for a 10-minute meeting with the man. They'll no longer even look at her given her record of disruptive advocacy, but she needs someone to argue for a round of tariffs protecting Druma's newest cash crop: crimson clover.

The Far Market: Only those who are in the know can peruse the goods at this marketplace hidden under one of the Trade District's larger warehouses. Several floors host permanent trade embassies from Axis, the Elemental Planes, the Netherworld, and many demiplanes as well. They sell powerful and unique artifacts to those who are willing to drop five digits' worth of gold on a curiosity. Even stranger are the items sold by aliens from Akiton, Castrovel, and Aucturn. Kalistocrat **Oskme** (inquisitive female hobgoblin scout) has a line on a pricey alien artifact she believes to be a weapon that could help Druma defeat the Whispering Tyrant. She's on the lookout for an escort to accompany her to the trade for protection—and maybe to help her figure out what the item is and how it works.

Gems of Kalistrade: These five towers surround the Everlasting Palace, where High Prophet Kelldor reigns. Each is home to some of Druma's most important history. Visitors can view Macridi Blade relics and other old Kellid history in the Origin Tower; the Kerse Accords and other items relating to Druma's dwarven relations in the Bonds Tower; and some of Kalistrade's original letters along with other founding Kalistocratic documents in the Purity Tower—though only prophets are allowed entrance. The purposes of the other two towers are unknown to outsiders. **Werden Luddrecht** (dour male dwarf curator) is currently trying to verify rumors of an ancient magical artifact that's said to be buried in a settlement near the borders of the Palakar Forest. He is willing to pay richly for its retrieval and might be convinced to trade access to the towers for its custody.

Mercenary League Headquarters: Though most think of Prophet's Home as the center of the Mercenary League, the army's top generals

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Resplendent Bureaucracy is located in Kerse, so Chief Administrator Rambert Armbrudder knows about Druma's upcoming domestic policy changes before they get signed into law. Kerse is often the first city to successfully implement new initiatives because it has a greater lead time to create the necessary infrastructure.

Like the rest of Druma's government, Kerse's administration is composed of bureaucrats who have worked their way up rather than being voted into office. Though the Resplendent Bureaucracy is nominally an independent organization, in truth, most higher-ranking administrators have close ties to one or more Kalistocrats. This is true of Chief Administrator Armbrudder, who's a longtime friend of Fabrinia Novellus. His likely successor, **Vasuna Starsword** (stoic female halfling bureaucrat) is close friends with Vana Keane and a common guest at her symposia. Up-and-comer **Calrinn Merella** (carefree nonbinary aiuvarin human bureaucrat) seems to be reaping the rewards of supporting Casia Maddox before she made her fortune.

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LOCAL FACTIONS

The Prophets of Kalistrade are the most influential group in Kerse (as throughout Druma), thanks to their numbers and the fact that they control most of the city's wealth. The Blackjackets of the Mercenary League are Kerse's national army by contract but side with the Kalistocrats in political and social matters. Though Kalistocrats are largely united, a group has split off to form the Alabaster Representatives and advocate for a more moderate vision of Kalistocratic glory. Those who have soured on the prophets and their ilk might ally with one of the other local powers. Many business owners have banded together into a group known as the Underwriters. Along with offering each other material and social support, this group funds extralegal operations to undermine the Kalistocrats. For those who prefer faith over money, the Macridi Echo claims to be a modern version of the Speakers of the Pale.

reside in Kerse. This plain stone building (which looks even starker when contrasted with the opulence of the city) is where Blackjacket strategists plan, coordinate, and oversee global campaigns. It's also the base of operations for the forces guarding the city. Commander **Sarissa Kurst** (orderly female human fighter) oversees local operations and is currently strapped for resources given the mobilization against the Whispering Tyrant. She's looking for trained fighters to help guard an upcoming Kalistocratic event that will be attended by all the most influential prophets. Rumor has it High Prophet Kelldor might leave his palace for the event.

Ophidian Estate: As a global trade guild, the Aspis Consortium has many ties in Druma and its capital city. The group recently came into possession of this estate just outside Kerse to support its local operations. Much to the chagrin of the Pathfinder Society, its leaders hope to more closely integrate with the Prophets of Kalistrade, and perhaps induct one of the faction's members into their ranks. Until that happens, there's plenty of work to be done. **Brinesie Iliesco** (heartless male human Aspis Consortium agent) currently oversees local operations and needs a group of practiced guards to protect an upcoming caravan bound for the port in Almas.

Passad's Mansion: Temel Passad lives in an estate typical of Kerse's Manor District and takes pride in entertaining potential business partners and Pathfinder Society agents alike in his waterfront home. His dual loyalties are controversial among the Kalistocratic elite, but his star is rising so quickly few can afford to snub him entirely. As his household prepares for upcoming festivities to celebrate the Promise of Kalistrade, he's on alert for potential sabotage. **Maiullef Sunbinder** (loyal male dwarf household manager) has been discreetly looking for individuals who can keep their ear to the ground to uncover—and thwart—any attempts to undermine Temel's reputation.

Planepierce Spire: This imposing tower houses floors of laboratories and storage, all belonging to Kalistocrat **Cyran Androtus** (canny male elf conjurer). However, few get to see the interior, as only Cyran, his close advisors, and those with their own expertise in magic are allowed inside. Once per week, the spire's doors open to admit couriers and suppliers; rumor has it all the tower's other needs are handled magically by extraplanar beings. Certainly, Cyran knows enough about extraplanar politics and negotiations for this claim to be believable. Whatever the reason, his closed-door policy grants him a large amount of privacy that some find suspect. One of his fellow Kalistocrats, a sprite named **Lotus** (clever nonbinary sprite supplier), is trying to arrange a shipment of rare spices to open that door—they're just looking for some "delivery people" who can take advantage of the opportunity.

Sublime Square: Kerse's open-air market might be one of the best on Golarion in terms of the quality and variety of goods available. From fresh produce to fine clothes made from hand-spun bacallia wool, from well-forged weapons to rare magic artifacts, anything can be purchased for the right price. Influential Kalistocrats fill the storefronts and stalls in the square; lower-level prophets and other sellers lucky enough to land a permit sprawl through the narrow streets and alleys nearby. Blackjackets patrol to keep order—though, this being Kerse, crime is exceedingly rare. Among the crowds, keen shoppers might find **Risven Qreth** (nosy female gnome appraiser), who has an eye for valuable artifacts and an ear for valuable gossip. She's been hoping to verify whether Prophet **Lalek Galani's** (optimistic male human vendor) sudden interest in courtship is due to a genuine pursuit for a wife or is simply a veil to aid with the latest disruption of one of his rival prophets.

Suppliant Properties: These compact homes, which border the walls of the High Prophet's Sanctum, are considered the hottest properties

in Kerse. They can't look like it compared to the lavish and sometimes palatial manors the Kalistocratic elite are known for, but prophets will spend years on a waiting list and tens of thousands of gold pieces for the privilege of spending a night in one of them. These properties are the site of an event known as the High Prophet's Notice. A few times a year, the High Prophet will leave their palace and choose one of the supplicant properties. Its residents are invited into the High Prophet's Sanctum—a privilege afforded to few who aren't heads of state—to consult with the High Prophet. The chosen supplicants can ask any questions and broach any topic.

Though the High Prophet's Notice and the houses chosen are said to be done on a random schedule, **Isiresk** (opinionated male human Prophet of Kalistrade) didn't spend so much time and money to leave his future to the whims of fate. He'll pay double the rental amount to any person or group who can arrange for High Prophet Kelldor to choose him and his wife **Badrai** (cheery female human hostess) when they stay in their property in a week's time. Though he's aware no amount of money can buy the High Prophet directly, he's certain he can pay somebody to exert the right type of influence on the man.

Trimmed Maze: Those who want to escape the city completely can enter the forested area east of Kerse. The trees and bushes here grow so densely it's hard to move between them, unless you enter from one of two openings and stay on the path marked by a sprinkling of rose petals. Inside the maze, the sound of birdsong and the heavy perfume of flowers and fruit surround walkers. Those who venture off the path might have a very different experience than this idyllic stroll—bushes thick with thorns and beast-like creatures are both known threats in the area. **Estrellix Blossombough** (credulous nonbinary halfling dockworker) worries the latter has taken their son and his boyfriend, who went into the maze a day ago and haven't yet returned. There are rumors that some visitors to the maze spend only a few hours inside but come out years later, confused and disoriented—but certainly, those are just tales, and nothing more than a mundane threat is at play here.

The Unanointed: Most rentals in Kerse take the form of apartments, condos, or lofts. The Unanointed is one of the few actual inns visitors can stay at, and those who want privacy and space from the city's Kalistocratic presence typically find themselves here. The Unanointed has no ties to any Kalistocrats' businesses, and even Blackjackets are rarely found in this part of town. It's run by **Frahi** (affable female ratfolk innkeeper) and around two dozen staff members, all of whom are her children. Any visitor is invited to stop by for a pint, a hearty meal, and a place to relax. Those looking for work often come to Frahi as well, and right now she's helping a friend crew up his ship for a trade voyage across Lake Encarthan.

Verity Inquiries: Despite Kerse's extremely low levels of crime, **Pal Kusdy** (melodramatic male halfling investigator) makes a living through helping those who need to retain a private investigator. His small rented office is marked by a half-rotted wooden sign that receives more complaints than he does business. Pal is rarely retained by Kalistocrats; the bulk of his small customer base are those who have been slighted by the government or a prophet. When he isn't investigating other cases, he's working his own: Pal remains convinced the Kalistocrats follow a "sham philosophy." As a devotee of Zohls, the empyreal lord of investigation and truth, he believes he has been called to shine a light on the Kalistocratic gift. He's willing to pay good coin to those who can provide proof the prophecies aren't all they seem to be, and he's currently investigating a rumor that Casia Maddox's rise through the Kalistocrat ranks has little to do with the teachings of a long-dead man and everything to do with tax fraud enabled by an ally in the Resplendent Bureaucracy.

KALISTRADÉ'S INFLUENCE

The Prophets of Kalistrade are so central to Druma's culture that even those who don't follow the group's teachings adopt many of their customs. Visitors will notice Kerse is one of the cleaner cities they've ever visited—because Kalistocrats see cleanliness as a sign of good character. Kerse has many bathhouses to help people adhere to this ethic, and the most generous hosts will allow visitors to use their private bathrooms to clean themselves.

Adjacent to the desire for cleanliness is a strong norm around personal space. Kalistocrats don't like to touch others, so the accepted amount of social distance is around a yard to a yard and a half. Physical contact outside of close relationships must be preceded by a request for affirmative consent.

Finally, the Kalistocrats' preferred foods shape menus throughout the city. Local delicacies include fried moth chrysalises, pickled plums, and maple bread, which is made with a flour of ground maple bark.

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PROPHET OF KALISTRAD

You've dedicated your life to the teachings of Kalistrade, a mystic whose writings promise success through a restrictive set of practices. When you joined the Prophets of Kalistrade, you agreed to abide by the edicts of its eponymous founder. You follow a diet that prizes certain virtuous foods and avoids impure sustenance. You frequently meditate to keep yourself sharp. You value finding clever loopholes and making good deals as long as you don't ruin another's fortune entirely.

Dedicating yourself to Kalistocratic ways opened many doors when it comes to business connections and entrepreneurial knowledge. Like any good Kalistocrat, you turn one advantage into a stepping stone toward the next. Between your connections, your social skills, and (of course) your wealth, it's hard to get one over on you.

Additional Feats: 4th Gossip Lore (*Player Core 2 195*)

PROPHET OF KALISTRAD DEDICATION FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Mercantile Lore and Society, Charisma +2

Access You're from Druma.



After induction into the ranks of the Kalistocrats, you learned the skills necessary to succeed in business and rise above others by following a set of detailed strictures. Unless you take measures to hide your affiliation, anyone who has heard of the Prophets of Kalistrade will know you're one of them when they see you. You become an expert in Society and can use Society instead of Diplomacy to Make an Impression on merchants and traders.

Additionally, if you don't already cast spells from spell slots, you learn to cast spontaneous spells and gain the Cast a Spell activity. You gain a spell repertoire with two common occult cantrips, plus either *prestidigitation* or *read aura*. You're trained in the spell attack modifier and spell DC statistics. Your key spellcasting attribute for these spells is Charisma, and they're occult spells.

BASIC PROPHET SPELLCASTING FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Prophet of Kalistrade Dedication

You gain the basic spellcasting benefits. Each time you gain a spell slot of a new rank from the prophet of Kalistrade archetype, add a common occult spell of the appropriate rank, or another appropriate occult spell you've learned or discovered, to your repertoire.

SMILE AT FAILURE FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Prophet of Kalistrade Dedication

You know staying cool is key to prevailing in social situations, as anger leads to mistakes. When a creature you're interacting with decreases its attitude from indifferent to unfriendly or from unfriendly to hostile, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to any attempts to Make an Impression on the creature for the next hour. If this decrease in attitude leads to combat, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to the subsequent initiative roll instead.

FORTUNE'S FAVOR FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Prophet of Kalistrade Dedication

Frequency once per day

Trigger You're about to reroll a failed skill check or saving throw due to a fortune effect.

You understand when an investment in you has the chance to pay off. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the triggering roll.

PROLIFIC PROPHET SPELLCASTING FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Basic Prophet Spellcasting

Increase the number of spells in your repertoire and the number of spell slots you gain from prophet of Kalistrade archetype feats by 1 for each spell rank other than your two highest prophet of Kalistrade spell slots.

PROPHET'S LOCKBOX FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Prophet of Kalistrade Dedication

You've learned secret methods that allow you to store your valuables where no one else can reach them. You can cast *imaginary lockbox* (*Player Core 2 247*) as a 5th-rank innate

occult spell once per day. At 12th level and every 2 levels thereafter, the maximum amount you can target with this spell increases by 1 Bulk.

EXPERT PROPHET SPELLCASTING

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Basic Prophet Spellcasting, master in Society

You gain the expert spellcasting benefits.

MASTER MERCHANT

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE | SKILL

Prerequisites Prophet of Kalistrade Dedication

Kalistrade teaches that setbacks are only temporary and that perseverance is a treasured virtue. When you fail, but not critically fail, at a Society or Mercantile Lore check to Earn Income at a specific task and are allowed to continue working at that task on subsequent days, you can choose to attempt the skill check again the next day. If you succeed, you get a critical success and continue to earn that amount on further days spent working at the task, if the task lasts that long.

MASTER PROPHET SPELLCASTING

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Expert Prophet Spellcasting, legendary in Society

You gain the master spellcasting benefits.

SCHOOL OF KALISTRAD (UNCOMMON ARCADE SCHOOL)

Power and money are closely intertwined, and you recognize the potential for magic to assist in your pursuit of wealth and influence. Though you might study this school without joining the Prophets of Kalistrade, most who do so are either a part of the organization or local to Kerse and therefore used to the customs and culture of the Kalistocrats. You deploy magic to help you see through the illusions and trickery of others. At the same time, you push boundaries and exploit loopholes to get ahead of your competitors.

Curriculum cantrips: *prestidigitation*, *read aura*; 1st: *alarm*, *charm*, *item facade*, 2nd: *ghostly carrier*, *invisibility*; 3rd: *clairaudience*, *veil of privacy*; 4th: *outcast's curse*, *suggestion*; 5th: *imaginary lockbox* (Player Core 2 247), *subconscious suggestion*; 6th: *repulsion*, *scrying*; 7th: *project image*, *retroognition*; 8th: *disappearance*, *hidden mind*; 9th: *resplendent mansion* (Player Core 2 250)

School Spells initial: *unexpected windfall*; advanced: *capital dividend*

UNEXPECTED WINDFALL

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON | CONCENTRATE | FOCUS | MANIPULATE | METAL | WIZARD

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Defense Fortitude; **Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

Coins, trinkets carved from heavy stone, and other cumbersome treasures rain down upon a foe. The target must attempt a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is encumbered for 1 round.

Failure The target is encumbered for the duration of the spell.

Critical Failure As failure, but the extra weight also knocks the target prone.

CAPITAL DIVIDEND

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON | CONCENTRATE | FOCUS | WIZARD

Trigger You would be reduced to 0 Hit Points but not immediately killed.

Through diet and other strict regimens, you've fortified your body as Kalistrade's teachings have fortified your mind. You remain at 1 Hit Point, and your skin takes on a slight warm glow.

For the next minute, any time you would regain Hit Points from a healing effect, this magic amplifies the effect, and you regain an additional 8 Hit Points.

Heightened (+1) The additional healing increases by 2 Hit Points.

JOINING THE PROPHETS OF KALISTRAD

Anyone who wishes to be a Prophet of Kalistrade must have patience and a record to recommend them to the organization. Kalistocrats are known for their success, but joining isn't a shortcut to wealth—it's a sign of dedication to achieving financial success. Therefore, Grand Prophet Shalebreetias, who assesses potential newcomers, likes to see signs of initiative.

Signing on to be a prophet means living your life according to Kalistrade's teachings. Prophets don't give to charity; they must maintain personal cleanliness and purity; and they must promote sustainable ways of making money, among others. These edicts and taboos, Kalistocrats will learn, are meant to prepare them for eventual self-mummification. Kalistocrats ingest trace amounts of metal throughout their lives, then, when nearing death, ritualistically replace their blood with molten metals drawn from their fortunes. Through this practice, they avoid Pharama's judgment and enter a personal afterlife.

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DRUMA OPTIONS

BLACKJACKET

Members of the Mercenary League undergo some of the best military training in Golarion. Recruits might come in with little experience, but all leave with the capacity to act as a personal bodyguard, to operate within a security detail, or to defend their nation as part of an army. They're not just physically capable fighters; they're excellent strategists who can make difficult tactical decisions in the heat of battle.

Additional Feats: 4th Intimidating Strike (*Player Core* 141); 6th Reactive Striker (*Player Core* 219); 8th Shatter Defenses (*Player Core* 145)

BLACKJACKET DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in medium armor and martial weapons

Access You're from Druma.

You have entered the ranks of the Mercenary League and now wear the black uniform that's the source of the organization's popular epithet. You become trained in Intimidation; if you were already trained, you become an expert instead. You gain the Additional Lore skill feat for Warfare Lore; if you were already trained in Warfare Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice. While wearing medium or heavy armor, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks.



BACALLIA

BELAY THAT!

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY

Prerequisites Blackjacket Dedication

Trigger An ally within 30 feet of you critically fails a Strike. You can recognize when a strategy isn't working and advise your ally to change course. The next Strike the triggering ally makes before the end of their turn has the same multiple attack penalty as the critically failed Strike, but it counts toward their multiple attack penalty as normal.

MERCENARY MOTIVATION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE EXPLORATION

Prerequisites Blackjacket Dedication

A large part of being in the Mercenary League entails doing mercenary work. You spend 1 minute planning a course of action that will allow you to complete a task you've been hired or requested to do. Work with your GM to determine the circumstances of any job or task if need be, but typically, they can involve protecting a place or person, defeating a foe or enemy force, or retrieving an item. The course of action you plan must be something you believe you can accomplish.

Active Plan You can have only one course of action planned at a time. If you use Mercenary Motivation to plan a second course of action, you no longer receive the bonus to checks related to the first course of action.

On the Job Whenever you attempt a Perception check or skill check that will advance your course of action, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to the check. The exact checks this bonus applies to depend on your current job and are determined by the GM.

Finishing a Plan When you complete the course of action you planned to do, you don't lose the bonus or other benefits until you make a different plan with Mercenary Motivation or voluntarily Dismiss the current plan.

BATTLEFIELD AGILITY

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Blackjacket Dedication

Requirements You're flanked by at least two enemies.

Your enemies might think they have you surrounded, but you know just how to extricate yourself. Make a melee Strike against one of the enemies flanking you and Step, in any order.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Blackjacket Dedication

You telegraph your next attack to let your allies in on your strategy. Make a melee or ranged Strike with a -2 circumstance penalty. On a hit, the next ally to target the same creature with a Strike gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their attack roll. On a critical hit, the bonus applies to any allies who act before the start of your next turn.

NOTHING PERSONAL ◆

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE

Prerequisites Mercenary Motivation

Requirements You have an active course of action planned.

When you're on a job, you can't allow anyone to stop you. Designate a single creature you can see as being an impediment to your active course of action. The first time you Strike your impediment in a round, you deal an extra die of weapon damage. At 14th level, this increases to two extra dice, and at 20th level, this increases to three extra dice.

You can have only one creature designated as an impediment at a time. If you use Nothing Personal against a creature when you already have a creature designated, the prior creature loses the designation, and the new impediment gains the designation. Otherwise, your designation lasts for 1 hour.

CLOSE CONTRACT ◆

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE

Prerequisites Mercenary Motivation

Requirements You have completed your active course of action but haven't Dismissed it or chosen a new one.

You're bolstered when a plan comes together. You Dismiss your current course of action and gain 15 temporary Hit Points that last for 1 hour. The number of temporary Hit Points increases by 5 at 12th level and every 2 levels thereafter.

OPPORTUNE OPENING ◀

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Blackjacket Dedication

Trigger An ally lands a critical hit on a creature within your melee reach.

Your combat training taught you to capitalize on any moment of weakness from your foe. You make a melee Strike against the same creature your ally just hit. The creature is off-guard against this Strike.

ANIMAL COMPANIONS

The many luxury industries of Druma include the breeding and domestication of several types of local animals to serve as pets and mounts. Ownership of such fauna is seen as a symbol of status.

BACALLIA

UNCOMMON

Your companion is an alpaca-like pack animal selectively bred for its lustrous fur.

Size Medium

Melee ◆ foot, **Damage** 1d8 bludgeoning

Str +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

Hit Points 8

Skill Survival

Senses low-light vision

Speed 40 feet

Special mount; your bacallia ignores the harmful effects of mild, severe, and extreme cold or heat, selected when you gain the companion

FEAT 8

Support Benefit Your bacallia's shining fur reflects light into your enemy's eyes. Until the start of your next turn, creatures within your bacallia's reach that you damage with your Strikes are dazzled.

Advanced Maneuver Spit

SPIT ◆

FLOURISH

The bacallia regurgitates a portion of its stomach's contents as a ranged spit Strike that deals a base of 1d6 acid damage with a range increment of 10 feet. The damage is 2d6 for a mature bacallia and 3d6 for a specialized one. A living creature hit with this Strike is also sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical hit).

KEULIA

UNCOMMON

Your companion is a horned frilled lizard with a unique debris "shell" that can consist of precious metals and gems.

Size Small

Melee ◆ jaws, **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Str +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 4

Skill Thievery

Senses low-light vision

Speed 30 feet, burrow 10 feet

Support Benefit With its hard shell of objects, your keulia rams into enemies when you create an opening. Until the start of your next turn, each time you hit a creature in your keulia's reach with a Strike and deal physical damage, the creature takes 1d8 bludgeoning damage from the keulia. If your keulia is nimble or savage, the bludgeoning damage increases to 2d8.

Advanced Maneuver Lizard Leap

LIZARD LEAP ◆◆

The keulia Leaps and then makes a bite Strike. As long as it moved at least 10 feet, its Strike deals an additional 1d6 piercing damage, or 2d6 piercing damage if your keulia is nimble or savage.



KEULIA

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NATIONS



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Capital: Highhelm
Government: Monarchy
Ruler: King Borogrim the Hale

Kovlar
Government: Elected Council
Ruler: Chief Councilor Kelda Halrig

Larrad
Government: Theocracy
Ruler: King Besta Grimeye

Rolgrimmdur
Government: Military Council
Ruler: King Kaldon the Stalwart

Taggoret
Government: Democracy
Ruler: King Gefburt Gondak

Tar-Kazmukh
Government: Magocracy
Ruler: Hromkar Nalkuve and Wultri Nalkuve

PEOPLES

Dwarves

LANGUAGES

Common
 Dwarven

FACTIONS



Shieldwrought
 Striders



Wylderhearts

RELIGIONS



Angradd



Bolka



Dranngvit



Droskar



Folgrit



Kols



Magrim



Torag



Trudd

RESOURCES



Alcohol



Armor/
 Weapons



Gems



Lore



Luxury Goods
 and Art



Magic Items



Ores



Stone



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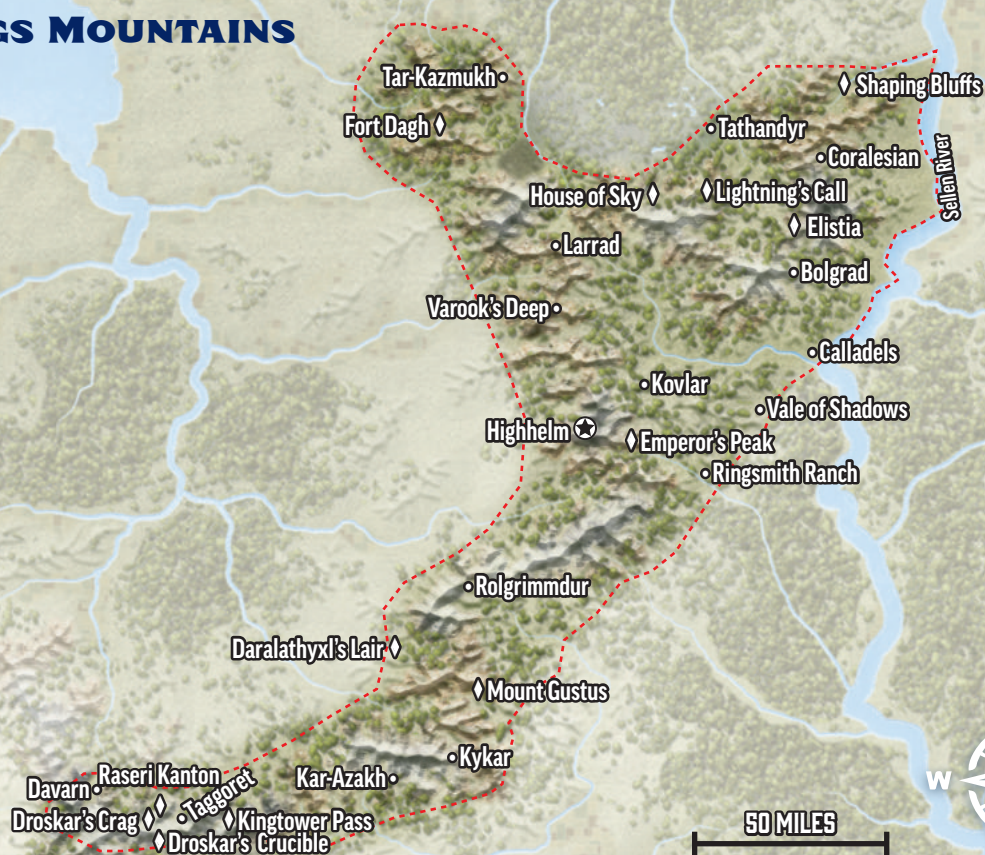
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FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS





Towering mountains rise in a crescent-shaped swath that cuts through the heart of the Shining Kingdoms. At first glance, these forbidding peaks seem nothing more than a dramatic natural barrier, breathtakingly beautiful yet unforgiving and harsh. Dividing Druma and Kyonin from Galt and Andoran, these mountains appear scarcely populated with small settlements of miners or ranchers widely spread out over their rough terrain. The few hardy travelers and determined mountaineers who brave hungry predators, fierce giants, and desperate bandits to traverse these peaks gain the occasional view of a mountainside sculpted into an immense stone gate or a monumental dwarven face. These massive stone works are the only indication of the vast cities thrumming beneath their feet, for this nation is almost entirely underground.

Residing largely under and within the mountains, the Five Kings Mountains is a nation unlike most others in the Inner Sea Region. The civilization's origins date back millennia, to the time when dwarves first emerged from the depths of Golarion to its surface after a centuries-long journey, called the Quest for the Sky, and began to construct massive fortifications of stone called Sky Citadels. To this day, the Sky Citadel of Highhelm, located inside Emperor's Peak, remains the cultural epicenter of not only the nation, but of Avistani dwarves in general. The de facto capital city, Highhelm is one of the several allied city-states that

constitute the nation; the others are Kovlar, Larrad, Rolgrimmur, Taggoret, and Tar-Kazmukh. Dwarves make up most of the residents, as they have since the founding of each city, and their customs and styles remain influential.

As has been typical throughout its long history, the Five Kings Mountains maintains good relations with its neighbors and focuses on trade with them. Druma and Kyonin are its closest trading partners and therefore its closest allies. White-clad representatives from Druma are easily spotted in every city and in most towns of any size, while Kyonin crafters increasingly work with artisans from the Five Kings Mountains to bring about some of the most beautiful and useful items ever created on Golarion. Recent events, including the return of the Whispering Tyrant, have spurred the nation to strengthen regional alliances and to ensure that, if and when any gathering storms break, these allies see the Five Kings Mountains as a secure bastion and place of refuge.

Diligent mining supplies the ore and gems that form the backbone of dwarven trade. The most prized trade with the nation involves finished goods; because dwarven metalwork is among the finest to be found anywhere on Golarion, no shortage of aspiring traders scheme to secure these items for their highest-paying clients. From suits of ornately decorated plate mail to finely etched arrowheads, dwarven products fetch

stunningly high prices—as they should, for a single item can take decades to complete. Dwarven artisans are famously meticulous, even perfectionist, as they lovingly craft their wares. To some extent, dwarven society as a whole exists to support these artisans, for their work exemplifies dwarven culture: intricate and deliberate, tradition-bound yet individualistic.

Dwarves are famed for their hospitality, and residents of the Five Kings Mountains exemplify these values. Travelers almost always receive a warm welcome and a comfortable place to rest. Even the smallest village boasts a lively tavern with a blazing hearth and strong ale. Meals tend to be hearty and simple—often, supper consists of a thick stew or a slab of roasted meat with warm bread. Feasts, on the other hand, feature dozens of dishes, accompanied by musical performances, demonstrations of skill, recitations of epic poems, and rounds of toasting. Before a feast, locals spend several days fine-tuning their appearances, from ceremonial clothing to heirloom beard-clasps and brooches.

Despite their gracious hospitality, residents of the Five Kings Mountains tend to hold newcomers at arm's length, reflecting a traditional dwarven pattern of being family-oriented and slow to trust strangers. Outsiders who wish to truly enter society here often find it difficult. Because their lifespans exceed that of humans, dwarves tend to have an extended timeline to their views on relationships of all kinds. While some dwarves are suspicious of all outsiders, others are simply cautious and slow-moving in their friendships—actions that sometimes look like disdain or reticence to shorter-lived humans and halflings.

Visitors and immigrants also face challenges adapting to dwarven lifestyle simply due to its subterranean nature. Most surface-dwelling people don't react well to long periods without sunlight and can find the forge warmed air of underground caverns to be overwhelmingly stifling. Taller ancestries such as elves and humans likewise have issues with everything built just a little bit too short to be comfortable, while halflings find most settings to be just a little bit too tall.

GOVERNMENT

The Five Kings Mountains appears to be a more cohesive state from the outside than is actually evident from the inside. Since the overthrow of the Droskari theocracy roughly a century ago, each city-state has governed itself. The allied city-states hold a Gathering Council, presided over by High King Borogrim the Hale, every 20 years in the traditional capital of Highhelm. While this council has every appearance of providing a central government, its function is largely ceremonial, a feature that Borogrim is keen to change. But bringing the city-states into agreement is much easier said than done.

Six city-states now make up the Five Kings Mountains: the bustling Sky Citadel capital of Highhelm, the industrious smithing city of Kovlar, the

ancient and religiously oriented Larrad, the warrior-led bastion of Rolgrimmudur, the reestablished mining metropolis of Taggoret, and the wizard-focused city of Tar-Kazmukh with its impressive arcane library. Each of these cities is led by a “king,” but that title doesn't indicate a royal male with hereditary claims on rulership. To the contrary, each city has its own distinct form of government. While Highhelm's highly structured society follows aristocratic traditions, Kovlar, under the leadership of Chief Councilor Kelda Halrig, and Taggoret, headed by industrialist Gefburt Gondak, favor more egalitarian and socially mobile modes, even holding balloted elections when multiple contenders present themselves for the same positions or whenever discussions fail to yield consensus. Rolgrimmudur falls between these two governmental modes, as its ruling class is open to anyone who can demonstrate martial prowess and acumen; once in power, its leaders, under King Kaldon the Stalwart (who's also a military general), favor swift decisions while in council together and rarely put measures to a wider vote. In Larrad, civil power is informed by divine knowledge and ability, as those in charge call on spiritual leaders to step into governing roles; its current leader, King Besta Grimeye, is also a high priest of Magrim. Similarly, Tar-Kazmukh prefers to entrust its government to learned arcanists who understand the support needed for its unique library—its current leaders, siblings Hromkar and Wultri Nalkuver, are famed for their magical abilities and knowledge more than for their civic acumen.

The rulers of these six main city-states form the bulk of the Gathering Council, where they each receive the title of “king” regardless of whether they use it back home. Each king often brings two or three councilors who, as part of their city's delegation, have the power to represent the full delegation if the king is ever unable to be present. A Stranger's Advocate, often but not always chosen from a smaller town of historical importance, represents all other settlements in the nation. Recognizing that a single voice on the national council isn't sufficient, many smaller towns and villages work with the nearest city-state and seek to have that king bring their issues to the whole. But they also grow impatient with their lack of direct representation.

The Gathering Council convenes in a grand and ceremonial affair to discuss issues that affect the whole region, including territorial boundaries, trade routes, defense priorities and resources, and tax rates for traveling in the underground tunnels between the city-states. As every issue requires not only a thorough discussion of current viewpoints but also a full review of the centuries-long history behind it, the convening lasts for months, even if only two or three decisions need to be reached. Once the council's deliberations are over, a Gathering Festival is held in Highhelm with similar festivities occurring in other cities as the kings return home.

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HISTORY

TIMELINE

- 4987 AR After 300 years of struggle, the dwarves of Tar Taargadth, under King Taargick, complete the Quest for Sky by reaching Golarion's surface.
- 4984 AR Koldukar, the first Sky Citadel, is built in what's now the Hold of Belkzen.
- 4880 AR The Sky Citadel of Highhelm, the first dwarven settlement in what's now the Five Kings Mountains, is completed.
- 3707 AR After Koldukar falls to orcs, Highhelm becomes

The Five Kings Mountains began, millennia ago, as an outpost of the dwarven kingdom of Tar Taargadth. Under the charismatic and determined Taargick, known as the "King of Sky," dwarves had tunneled their way to the surface of the earth a century earlier, fulfilling their divinely appointed Quest for Sky. Having left their Darklands homes when the earthquakes caused by Earthfall had wreaked havoc four centuries earlier, these dwarves first emerged in what's now the Hold of Belkzen, where they built the first Sky Citadel, Koldukar. From there, King Taargick encouraged his people to spread out and build additional citadels, and Emperor's Peak beckoned with its defensibility, promise of rich mining opportunities, and nearness to Druma's productive farmlands.

Within 7 years, the Sky Citadel of Highhelm was complete, its anvils ringing, its forges blazing, and its clan halls echoing in celebration. With its sure defenses and diligent military, Highhelm quickly became a haven and a place of cultural renaissance. Traditional arts flourished, and new ones were born within thick masonry walls and under high, ornate arches that evoked the best of their long-lost homes. Though dwarves still clashed with orcs, the eventual return of the sun to Golarion's surface gave dwarves an advantage in the conflict.

For more than a millennium, Highhelm flourished, a bustling society in a sound fortress that gave fealty and tithes to Tar Taargadth but was otherwise autonomous. Yet orcs weren't content to sit quietly in the hills and valleys where they'd been driven. When Koldukar fell to an immense army of orcs in the Battle of Nine Stones, Highhelm suddenly found itself the capital of a faltering nation, home to King Dhrotam and her court-in-exile. Tensions flared, both internally among warring nobles and externally with humans and fey. Slowly, the connections between the Sky Citadels frayed until they failed, and then, shockingly, the Sky Citadels themselves began to fall.

As Tar Taargadth crumbled, Highhelm received an influx of dwarven refugees, and the pressures fueled a feud among five siblings who were each determined to rule. When the second eldest, Torheim Gadrick I, took over leadership of Highhelm, he declared a new kingdom born, naming it Gardadth. Enraged, each of his four brothers gathered as many supporters as possible and left, each determined to found and rule his own kingdom within the mountains around Emperor's Peak. Thus, the kingdoms of Saggorak, Doggadth, Grakodan, and Taggoret were established according to the preferences of each new king and his followers.

But the fledgling nations weren't content to leave each other alone, and peace lasted a mere 9 years. Over the following six generations, conflicts erupted time and again in what came to be called the Five Kings War. Eventually, the newly ascendant Kalistocrats of Druma used the dwarves' ruinously expensive war budgets as leverage. This group, known as the Promise of Kalistrade, brought the warring kingdoms together and, in exchange for debt forgiveness, forged the Kerse Accord. The ensuing peace lasted a century and a half, and a single nation, the Five Kings Mountains, began to emerge.

This period of peace ended abruptly when hordes of orcs streamed into the nation from the north at the same time that a second force invaded from the Darklands below. Although they never overran Highhelm itself, the invaders warred against the nation for 30 years, destroying all other cities and slaughtering their citizens. For the next 700 years, orcs reigned, isolating Highhelm and nearly eradicating even the memory of a dwarven nation.



KHADON THE MIGHTY

Then a hero emerged, Khadon the Mighty. Traveling throughout Avistan, Khadon worked tirelessly until he'd gathered a determined force of dwarves with the rallying cry of reclaiming their homeland. When Khadon killed the orc commander Tarkdok Manyspears at the Battle of Splitmist Pass, orcs finally ceded the mountains to dwarven control once again. Khadon then founded the kingdom of Tar Khadurrm. His forces went on to recover the southern part of the undead-haunted Saggorak, founding a new city that they named Kovlar. Afterward, they established another new city, Rolgrimmur, on Grakodan's ruins.

Khadon dreamed of reestablishing the far-flung kingdom of Tar Taargadth, but Tar Khadurrm controlled only the Five Kings Mountains and no farther. Khadon's son, Sidrik the Handsome, abandoned the larger dream in favor of capable government under his watch; his most notable achievement was moving the capital to the newly constructed city of Jernashall, in the shadow of Torag's Crag, in an effort to shake up the corrupt, tradition-bound practices of Highhelm's aristocracy.

For five centuries, the kingdom and its capital prospered, but then Jernashall was utterly destroyed during the powerful volcanic eruption of Droskar's Crag known as the Rending. Capitalizing on the dwarves' misfortune, the cinder archdragon Daralathylx seized the moment with a show of force. For the following three centuries, the dwarven kingdom paid him tribute and allowed his emissary a place on the council, an act that earned the dragon the nickname "Sixth King of the Mountains." When the line of emissaries faltered, the nation assumed that the archdragon was no more—and rejoiced.

The kingdom of Tar Khadurrm carried on a few centuries longer until the last Great King, King Talhrik the Busy, died, leaving his son Garbold to succeed him. But Garbold's cousin, a priest of Droskar named Ordrik Talhrik, murdered the rightful heir and seized the throne. This vile deed ignited the Forge War, a 13-year clash in which fighting raged between clans throughout the kingdom. Ruthless and treacherous to the core, Ordrik retained power and, once he defeated his foes, declared his kingdom a Droskari theocracy. Thankless, pointless toil became the watchword of society in the Five Kings Mountains, and its culture became mired in clannish small-mindedness. A focus on minutiae eclipsed the grand practice of traditional arts, threatening the survival of dwarven artistry amid the general misery and broken spirit of the realm.

The stranglehold maintained by Droskari clergy lasted a hundred years, though this period is a relatively short time as dwarves reckon it. An expertly planned and flawlessly executed coup in Highhelm freed the city of Droskari rule. The other large cities soon followed in shaking off their theocratic oppressors. In the process, the kingdom of Tar Khadurrm was effectively ended as each city declared itself an independent state and sought to redefine itself. Recognizing the need to address regional issues with a unified voice, the settlements maintained the tradition of the Gathering Council and position of High King. By meeting infrequently and having no authority to implement their decisions, however, the Gathering Council has enjoyed little more than ceremonial power, and many outlying parts of the country have no sense of having a central authority at all.

Despite many efforts, no dwarf has been able to unite the disparate nations of the Five Kings Mountains, and this state of affairs has led to dwarves having reduced influence on Avistani politics. Even so, the nation has enjoyed more peace and prosperity than anytime since the Rending. As each city has found a unique way to govern itself, its residents have turned their attention to revitalizing traditions in many arts and crafts, including leatherwork, metalwork, and pottery. This cultural renaissance has extended to literature, music, poetry, and venerable spiritual practices, such as Rivethun traditions.

- the capital of the dwarven nation.
- 1551 AR The fall of several other Sky Citadels to orcs ends the kingdom of Tar Taargadth.
- 1557 AR The dwarven nation fractures as five separate kingdoms established over the next 5 years: Gardadth, Saggorak, Doggadth, Grakodan, and Taggoret.
- 1571 AR The Five Kings War begins.
- 2332 AR Druma's diplomats succeed in ending the Five Kings War with the signing of the Kerse Accord.
- 2492 AR Orcs invade the Five Kings Mountains.
- 2526 AR Though Highhelm remains intact, orcs destroy the five kingdoms and take control.
- 3197 AR Khadon the Mighty begins his campaign to retake the nation from orcs.
- 3279 AR The Battle of Splitmist Pass marks the final defeat of the orcs, and Khadon founds the kingdom of Tar Khadurrm.
- 3493 AR Khadon's son Sidrik the Handsome moves the nation's capital from Highhelm to Jernashall.
- 3980 AR The volcano Droskar's Crag erupts in a catastrophe known as the Rending, destroying Jernashall. Highhelm is reinstated as the capital city.
- 4369 AR Ordrik Talhrik murders King Garbold and seizes the throne, starting the Forge War.
- 4382 AR Ordrik wins the Forge War and declares Tar Khadurrm a Droskari theocracy.
- 4466 AR The Droskari theocracy is overthrown, along with the final vestiges of Tar Khadurrm.
- 4716 AR A mother lode of adamantine is discovered beneath Highhelm, leading to the invention of keep stone.
- 4725 AR The Torag's Shield project is completed.

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CURRENT EVENTS

When long nights of drinking lead to stories of terror and ruin, tales of the destruction of Lastwall at the hands of Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant, are shared in hushed voices with furtive glances into the darkest corners. Although the waters of Lake Encarthan and the forests of Kyonin separate the Five Kings Mountains from the Isle of Terror, everyone is keenly aware that the dreadful lich continues to amass his armies of necromancers and undead. The Gathering Council has devoted serious attention to this issue, believing that it's a matter of when—not if—the Whispering Tyrant will move against the Shining Kingdoms. This awareness has been a major motivation behind the rapid completion of the Torag's Shield project.

Crisis in Larrad: When the Godsrain fell, a massive warshard, wreathed in drops of red and silver, sliced through the thick crust of earth that had long protected the holy caverns of Larrad, crashing near the city's gates. Large enough to call the attention of more than just the dwarven nation, the powerful primordial creature Otolmens—who surveyed the Godsrain with a vision beyond mortal time—foresaw that from this potent and violent seed a threat would grow with the power to harm the very physics of reality. Certain the best way to end this threat was to wipe Larrad from existence,

thereby destroying everyone who might have been exposed to the warshard, Otolmens swiftly advanced on the city. But the dwarven god, Grundinnar—son of Torag and deity of friendship and loyalty—discovered Otolmens's plan. Unable to bear such wanton destruction for a distant threat, he rushed to save the holy city. The ancient primordial and dwarven god clashed near the warshard, and many heroes rushed to aid their deity. As the battle raged, those who fell dead rose as ascended celestials to continue the fight. Joined by other clerics and powerful Rivethun spiritualists, Grundinnar's forces turned their power on the warshard itself, hoping to destroy the true source of the conflict. This act ended the battle in a mighty flash and roar; when it cleared, Grundinnar, Otolmens, and all but a handful of the dwarven heroes were gone, as though they'd never been. The warshard, bereft of its droplets, remained, seemingly inert. Now, Larrad struggles with how to move forward, grieving the loss of a favorite god, seeking its lost heroes, and wondering whether the warshard is now safe.

Cult of Droskar: After the uprising that overthrew the Droskari theocracy and ended the Era of Toil, the people of the Five Kings Mountains vowed to never submit to that yoke again. Though it was an unusual step, cities and communities throughout the Five Kings Mountains outlawed the worship of Droskar as a necessary safeguard against further tyranny and misery. However, Droskar's followers have persisted in worshipping him in secret gatherings throughout the nation. For decades, they've been few in number and weak in power. But some cities have seen a marked rise in this worship as Droskar's cult gains a hold in the anxious hearts of many residents. In the city of Larrad where Droskari worship was never fully suppressed, Faressel Stonesplitter, a fanatical adherent of the outlawed god, leads the nation's strongest cult, its worshippers hidden among the faithful of other dwarven gods, especially Angradd and Magrim. Faressel has been sending out emissaries to unite cults in other cities and has begun to make overtures to agents of the archdragon Daralathylx, willing to offer his cult's assistance in that dragon's upcoming campaign against the Five Kings Mountains.

Daralathylx's Return: Most residents of the Five Kings Mountains can recite legend upon legend of the terrifying archdragon who lairs between Droskar's Crag and Mount Gustus and who once threatened the entire nation with his murderous will. Most residents also believe that this menace has retired, having become content to live out his final decades of life in peace. Unknown to them, the Godsrain renewed Daralathylx. Now a reinvigorated being with the energy and potential of youth alongside the



wisdom and power of an archdragon, he's actively gathering his children and other minions, amassing his forces for an assault on the dwarven nation from within its borders. Daralathylx has also sent agents and spies to infiltrate and destabilize the Five Kings Mountains from within. One of the few leaders who believes that Daralathylx poses a dire threat is Chief Councilor Kelda Halrig of Kovlar, but her decision to consult with necromancers to use the undead of Saggorak as protection against the dragon has fueled a strong backlash in her city and undermines her ability to rally others to the cause.

Torag's Shield: Begun years ago when an enormous deposit of adamantine was discovered under Highhelm, the ambitious defense project known as Torag's Shield has now been completed. This shield consists of a retractable wall that, when deployed, secures the entire city as well as the greater part of Emperor's Peak behind an impenetrable protective shell. This development has been greeted throughout the nation with excitement and a general sense of optimism arising from a widespread cultural value of continuity and security. The Gathering Council has authorized diplomatic missions to neighboring nations offering new alliances that hinge on the safety provided by Torag's Shield. In exchange for goods, services, and other benefits (depending on what the nation has to offer), the diplomats are offering a secured space within Highhelm as a place of sanctuary. With the heightened tensions and outbreaks of unpredictable violence following the Godsrain, an urgency has suffused these diplomatic missions, and in general, they've found themselves well received throughout the Shining Kingdoms.

Unification: As he has for decades, High King Borogrim the Hale continues his efforts to unite the Five Kings Mountains into a single nation with a strong central government. Among the members of the Gathering Council, Borogrim has persuaded Chief Councilor Kelda Halrig, leader of Kovlar, and King Gefburt Gondak, head of Taggoret, to become supporters of this cause, and both have pledged support for a national government, unified military force, and expanded representation. But both leaders face fierce challenges in their own cities and might not be in power for much longer. Because his city of Kykar (with its sizable population of 9,200) lacks a seat on the current Gathering Council, Lord Mayor Hansin Struckiron has also been a vocal supporter of the unification plan and has rallied leaders from other unrepresented settlements to the cause, including Silthen Broadbough of Bolgrad. Against these proponents stands King Kaldon the Stalwart, fierce ruler of the militaristic city of Rolgrimmur. Each side attempts to

enlist the support of King Besta Grimeye, current head of Larrad's government, and of the ruling Nalkuver siblings in Tar-Kazmukh, all of whom cherish the independence of their respective cities but who also acknowledge their vulnerability—both Tar-Kazmukh and Larrad have relatively weak defenses, and Larrad's has been even more compromised recently. Finally, rumors of Borogrim's senility and avarice have been circulating, suggesting that he either isn't competent to run a national government or is using the scheme as a front for robbing other city-states. These rumors are coming from somewhere within Stonehall, though no one seems to know exactly who's behind them. Diligent investigation could reveal that the rumors are perpetuated by Katilyar Sternsong, Borogrim's young cousin. Not actually a dwarf, Katilyar is a disguised conspirator dragon named Anandrixth. As an agent of the archdragon Daralathylx, Anandrixth has been using her facade to undermine confidence in Borogrim and thereby destabilize the nation.



ANANDRIXTH

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KATILYAR STERNSONG



KELDA HALRIG



FARESSEL STONESPLITTER



BOROGRIM THE HALE

As the homeland of Golarion's dwarves for millennia, the Five Kings Mountains is often associated with a monolithic, tradition-bound culture that foregrounds dwarven values of quality artisanship, hard work, and devotion to family. But the nation today, while still run largely by dwarven rulers and military leaders, boasts a diverse population and honors the contributions of many different cultures. Each city across the country has its own character and composition, further dispelling the myth of a single culture. Not only is the country a vibrant mixture of many different heritages and traditions, but there's also more than one way to be dwarven!

Anandrixth (ambitious female conspirator dragon infiltrator), a granddaughter of Daralathylx determined to promote her grandfather's vision of domination as well as seize her own territory to rule, works undercover to weaken defenses in the Five Kings Mountains and to sow discord and mistrust. She's currently inhabiting the form of Katilyar Sternsong, a young dwarven cousin of High King Borogrim who Anandrixth recently killed. In this disguise, Anandrixth continues to work in Katilya's position as a page and courier in Stonehall palace in Highhelm where she's particularly interested in undermining Torag's Shield as well as damaging Borogrim's reputation.

Chief Councilor **Kelda Halrig** (assertive female dwarf forgemaster) is leader of the city of Kovlar, representing the city on the nation's Gathering Council while also heading the city's powerful Anvillers' Guild. Headstrong and efficient, Kelda is respected for getting things done, but her approach creates friction, and her willingness to look beyond traditional dwarven methods and values has fired up political enemies in this relatively democratic city. She currently faces strong resistance because, determined to counter the threat of Daralathylx, she's discussing with necromancers how to marshal the undead forces that lie close to Kovlar, in the walled-off ruins of Saggorak.

Faressel Stonesplitter (obsessive male dwarf cult leader) recalls fondly the Droskari competitions he watched as a child in which smiths would work themselves almost—and sometimes actually—to death to forge a winning axe or breastplate. In those heat-soaked memories from before the overthrow of the Droskari theocracy, Faressel sees a high point of dwarven accomplishment and devotion, now long lost. Striving to reestablish the worship of his outlawed god, Faressel has served in the temple of Magrim in Larrad for decades, whispering blasphemies against the Taskmaster, drawing souls to his fanatical view, and waiting for the right time to strike.

When **Borogrim the Hale** (pragmatic male dwarf king) was crowned High King, the title was largely ceremonial, but he continually works to make it more real. From his palace Stonehall in Highhelm, he extends his influence and rule patiently, working through advisors and clan leaders to govern the city and bring about the unification of the entire country. When he convenes the Gathering Council, the High King is involved in all aspects of the occasion's grand ceremonies. Otherwise, he spends as much time as possible inside his palace, indulging his desire to study government, history, and philosophy.

High Seeker **Polbar Trueye** (thoughtful agender dwarf visionary), the current leader of followers of the ancient spirit-calling practices known as Rivethun, presides over the Court of One Thousand. As the High Seeker, Polbar acts as an ambassador for the Court, settles questions of practices and interpretation, and represents the court at the weekly governing council meetings in Larrad. They also travel to other Rivethun collectives, including

frequent trips to the Smoldering Court in Highhelm, as they feel that city desperately needs greater guidance. Perceptive and soft-spoken, they seem an unlikely leader, but they radiate a quiet power that calms and enlightens.

King **Besta Grimeye** (dedicated female duskwalker dwarf high priest) has long led both the Temple of the Taskmaster and the city's governing council in the holy city of Larrad; she's also Larrad's representative to the Gathering Council in Highhelm. Stoic and careful, she oversees government decisions, manages affairs for her temple, greets diplomatic delegations, and even occasionally travels as a representative of Larrad to neighboring countries. Her direct manner is generally appreciated among clerics and devotees of Magrim but can cause tensions with others, particularly those who have been denied a burial site in Larrad's necropolis.

King **Gefburt Gondak**'s (cautious male dwarf industrialist) thoughtful improvements in his mining and steelmaking businesses, coupled with his honest and fair way of interacting with his employees and their families, have made him a welcome candidate in the democratic politics of Taggoret, where he enjoys building consensus and bringing forward new ideas. Gefburt also represents his city on the nation's Gathering Council. Concerned about Daralathyl's return, he has recently decided to refuse to allow new mining under Droskar's Crag, and this position has created such opposition that he might soon lose his position as king.

The siblings King **Hromkar Nalkuver** (studious male dwarf conjurer) and King **Wultri Nalkuver** (cerebral female dwarf diviner) have been on the national Gathering Council and at the helm of Tar-Kazmukh for decades, staying in their leadership roles not because of their expertise so much as because no one else wants the job. The siblings' primary concerns are enhancing and protecting the great arcane library; as a result, they enjoy support among the library's Blue Warders. The rulers otherwise leave Tar-Kazmukh to care for itself, a strategy that—in this small city of scholars of magic—works better than it ought to.

As head of the militaristic city of Rolgrimmdur, which they also represent on the nation's Gathering Council, King **Kaldon the Stalwart** (bold nonbinary dwarf general) has capped a distinguished military career that they've pursued since first enrolling at Praxis, the military college that drew them, like so many other students, to the city. With a brilliant strategic mind and daring decisiveness that fits well with the city's culture, Kaldon enjoys strong support for initiatives around city defense. Unwilling to weaken their city to benefit other parts of the country, Kaldon opposes High King Borogrim's unification plans.

Recruited by minions of Daralathyl when he was a child, **Kulgu Rumblebringer** (reckless male kobold arsonist) quickly grasped the idea that he could sow chaos and spread fear as an agent of the archdragon—and have the protection of a powerful group while doing so. Whether he truly understands his expendability in the eyes of Daralathyl's other minions, Kulgu is quick to embrace risks, no matter how deadly. He especially enjoys starting fires in outlying communities, setting explosive traps in the tunnels that connect the Five Kings Mountains' cities, and rigging forges to burn erratically.

Elegant and elusive, **Ryffon Runesinger** (charming male elf spy) looks every bit the dashing hero from an elven romance—from his long, silky hair to his fashionably tall boots—and he has the gallant manners to match. But after he leaves town, corrupted foliage and cursed items turn up in his wake while a valuable necklace or important ledger goes missing. These signs point to Ryffon being a former agent of Treerazer, working to undermine dwarven defenses, but so far, he's eluded all attempts to catch him. In truth, he's a double agent who was intent on learning how best to stop the nefarious demon and is now suffering for the sacrifices he previously made.



POLBAR TRUEYE



BESTA GRIMEYE



GEFBURT GONDAK



KULGU RUMBLEBRINGER



RYFFON RUNESINGER

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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Renowned for her wisdom, **Eninaleryl** (earnest female elf mystic) assisted in founding Tathandyr several decades ago. She often leads the vigils and rituals that strive to sanctify the demon-infested area around her forest town.

The charismatic and handsome **Lastherti Forgeminder** (fanatical male dwarf cultist) is often found in Larrad's Temple of the Forge Fire, where he appears to be an acolyte of Angradd with a solid work ethic. In reality, he's the right hand of cult leader Faressel Stonesplitter, insidiously striving to turn the entire temple to the worship of Droskar.

Quissen the Keen-minded (scheming nonbinary gnome magician) is a well-known denizen of the arcane library in Tar-Kazmukh. With their bright purple hair and heavily embroidered robes, this gnome comes across as friendly and a bit addled. This persona, however, is designed to hide their true mission: to steal the ancient and invaluable *Tome of Earthbound Power*.

Stranded mountaineers on Mount Arugak tell of a kindly bear-headed guide who came to their aid at precisely the right moment, treating their wounds or frostbite and leading them back to their party. Most never learn her name: **Sagetchu** (compassionate female nephilim human tracker).

Near the roaring Cascade in Kar-Azakh lives **Wansillet the Wise** (anxious genderfluid dwarf seer), a reclusive yet gifted Rivethun practitioner who communes with the area's many potent spirits. Despite a general avoidance of people, Wansillet takes joy in helping anyone looking for lost persons or items, particularly those that have gone missing in the tunnel network, by asking the spirits for aid.

Wrothgam Clawhammer (impulsive male dwarf warrior) is convinced that the archdragon Daralathylx is a growing threat. This accomplished yet occasionally reckless young soldier has given up on getting the ear of Rolgrimmur's leaders. Instead, he's forming a mercenary company to take on the menacing archdragon.

The following are some of the more notable locations in the Five Kings Mountains.

Bolgrad: Near the border with Galt in the northeast lies this gemstone-rich city. The national epicenter of gem mining, polishing, and cutting is famed for producing the finest of dwarven jewelry. Nicknamed "Star-Studded Bolgrad" because of the gem-laced veins that shine down on the city, its 6,000 residents largely work with gems. The guilds that make up "the craft," from the miners to the jewelers, run the city under the leadership of Guildmaster **Silthen Broadbough** (shrewd female dwarf negotiator). While the Gathering Council was happy to commission an intricate necklace from Bolgrad's artisans to send to Grand Princess Eutropia Stavian of Taldor as a coronation gift, they've so far refused to grant the city a seat on the council. Tired of negotiating, a growing faction among Bolgrad's guilds is threatening an armed revolt against Silthen—and against Highhelm!

Bowtown: A small village of 147 people near Mount Mist, this settlement is mainly notable as a base camp and supply stop for those looking to scale the mountain peak.

The Carved Kings: These five gigantic monuments represent the five kings from whom the nation takes its name and commemorate the long-ago signing of the Kerse Accords. Spread throughout the nation, these sculptures are carved into the sides of prominent peaks, each measuring over 150 feet in height. The peak of Lightning's Call features King Harral, once the ruler of Saggorak, while King Kazmukh of Doggath guards the Great Pass near Fort Dagh and King Rolgrimm of Grakodan keeps watch over the Low Pass near Rolgrimmur. The side of Mount Arugak near Kovlar manifests King Madgrim IX of Gardadth, and the side of Mount Langley boasts King Taggun (sometimes called Taggrick I) who overlooks the Kingtower Pass and nearby Taggoret. Just as legend shrouds each of these kings, so also does legend attend their imposing stone forms: each one is said to contain a magical jewel—the clan gem precious to that particular king—capable of unleashing immense power against any invading army. Like many legends, however, proof of these magical gems has yet to be found.

Coralesian: This aboveground mountain town has a unique population for the Five Kings Mountains: almost all 460 inhabitants are elves. Located near Kyonin in the far northeastern corner of the nation, the town was founded a few centuries ago when a core group of elves were drawn into the mountains by the beauty of the towering peaks and alpine meadows. Under the direction of Ranger Captain **Jaychen Endrani** (earnest female elf scout), the townsfolk have lived peaceably and dealt with the few threats—but increasingly the signs of demonic corruption impinge on the nearby forests. Recently, some children have disappeared and residents fear the worst.

Daralathylx's Lair: Known and feared for centuries, the archdragon Daralathylx laired in the foothills between Droskar's Crag and Mount Gustus. Among the most powerful of all the creatures in Avistan, the magnificent cinder dragon commanded allegiance from not only his children but also from dragons and from legions of other creatures. Legends speak to his destructive fury, and the question of whether he had the power to wipe out the Five Kings Mountains still causes many a tavern brawl. But ever since Daralathylx stopped insisting on his representative having a seat at the Gathering Council, rumors have circulated that the dragon has died and adventurers have begun seeking out his lair in hopes

of claiming its treasure. A lone survivor from a recent excursion tells quite a different tale, however—one of a powerful archdragon still very much alive and bent on domination.

Davarn: With both an aboveground section and an underground district, this town in the southwestern part of the country sits in the main pass between Druma and Andoran. With about 1,000 residents, the aboveground part of town is inhabited mostly by humans who work farms, raise livestock, or run taverns and shops. Belowground, roughly 1,250 townsfolk—almost all of them dwarves—pursue mining, metalwork, and foraging amid traditional dwarven architecture. In general, both halves of the city cooperate. At the heart of that cooperation is a five-member council. Currently, two councilors, Mayor **Ranti Bessik** (affable female dwarf politician) and customs collector **Novar Rinaldi** (stubborn male human bureaucrat), have become rivals while a ring of thieves preys on unwary traders and counterfeits jewelry and clan daggers.

Droskar's Crag: The highest point in the Five Kings Mountains, this active volcano climbs to 28,822 feet above sea level. The Crag actually consists of two peaks, the Hammer and the Anvil, the latter of which holds an active lava crater. The surrounding area features several glaciers, including the Coldforge, Eastrise, Gold, Peakcrest, Silver, and Sunset. Runoff from these glaciers in turn feeds two major rivers, the Coldforge River on the north side of the Crag and the Goldmelt River on the southwest side; these two rivers converge into the River Foam just over the border in Andoran. The Crag's most recent major eruption, the Rending, brought devastation to the nation, destroying the capital city of Jernashall and tumbling the nearby city of Raseri Kanton into lava-filled crevices. The eruption caused further destruction across the region by setting off earthquake after earthquake; as snowmelt swelled rivers well past their usual banks, even more damage from flooding occurred as far south as Almas in Andoran. The catastrophe broke the empire of Tar Khadurrm. Whenever the volcano unleashes a sizable amount of smoke and ash, reports circulate in hushed voices, tales of old are repeated in solemn tones, and prayers take on a new sincerity.

Droskar's Crucible: On the southeast slopes of Droskar's Crag sits a squat monastery that has been long abandoned, its plain, gray stone crumbling. Typical of the bleak aesthetic common during the Droskari theocracy, the mold-encrusted edifice has become the lair of a fierce predator, **Graypelt** (merciless male warg).

Elistia: Kyonin maintains this strategic military post inside the Five Kings Mountains with the blessing of the Gathering Council—or so it's long been assumed. Whether the current Gathering Council, being largely neglectful of the nation's northeastern region, has been fully apprised of the strength of the garrison at the Fortress of the Bluffs is a matter of debate. With its wide view of the border with Galt as well as across a large swath of the Five Kings Mountains, the fortress boasts 500 elven warriors under the authority of Lord **Alavar** (calculating male elf commander). While occasionally lending a hand to any mountaineers foolish enough to find themselves stranded in the area, Alavar and his warriors are otherwise aloof and even unfriendly, and what so large a force is doing at that location remains a closely guarded secret.

Emperor's Peak: The home of Highhelm, this 18,365-foot peak is the second-highest mountain in the Five Kings range. Carved into its side is the colossal statue of the Guardian King that resembles the Carved Kings in every way

LOCAL CLIMATE

The pleasantly moderate climate of the Five Kings Mountains during summertime tends to be enjoyed more by visitors than by its general population. But for residents who spend their lives mostly belowground, the summer is the time for excursions into beautiful mountain valleys. The warm, moist air from the Inner Sea delivers substantial rain and snow on the southern faces of the mountains, while a rain shadow effect keeps the northern slopes relatively dry. The nation's towering peaks are capped with snow and glaciers all year long, and even hardy mountaineers must take extra care when attempting to summit. But winters are harsh: biting winds and bitter cold prevail between sudden, intense blizzards. Underground, the climate varies in highly individual ways, with each settlement differing in humidity, temperature, and air quality, sometimes with magically enhanced qualities. Belowground residents tend to enjoy steady temperatures free from storms and wind.



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THREATENING FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE TUNNELS

In the outlying areas of the extensive tunnel system that connects the cities of the Five Kings Mountains, travelers must beware of many dangers.

Fungal Threats: Splintermold and cytillesh spread unseen in nooks and crannies, posing a serious risk to unwary travelers. Fungal creatures such as myceloids and slime molds sometimes lie in wait, eager to pounce.

Predators: Underground caverns are notorious for their cunning and insatiable predators, some of whom find their way into less-used passages where they hope for easy meals. From poisonous worms to oozes of all kinds to the tentacled grael, these predators attack before many travelers realize they're in danger.

Undead: Particularly near Saggorak and the necropolis of Larrad, travelers often find themselves face-to-face with undead menaces, whether mindless zombies or crafty ghouls. Some passages become haunted and require skilled occultists or dedicated clerics to make them safe again.

except that it isn't a depiction of a specific king. Rather—as Highhelm's citizens are quick to explain—the Guardian King is their tribute to the protection, stability, and tradition that dwarven culture, as embodied in the ideal monarch, represents.

Fort Dagb: This aboveground keep guards the Great Pass south of Tar-Kazmukh and the country's northwestern border. First Captain **Hannah Drasten** (female human garrison captain) leads a team of mountain dwarves and humans who largely enjoy the breathtaking views of the range but who fall to picking fights with each other out of boredom. The captain herself is driven to demonstrate that, as one of the few non-dwarves in a leadership position in the entire nation, she's capable of more than running a quiet outpost. Recently, she went missing while on a mission to recover stranded travelers.

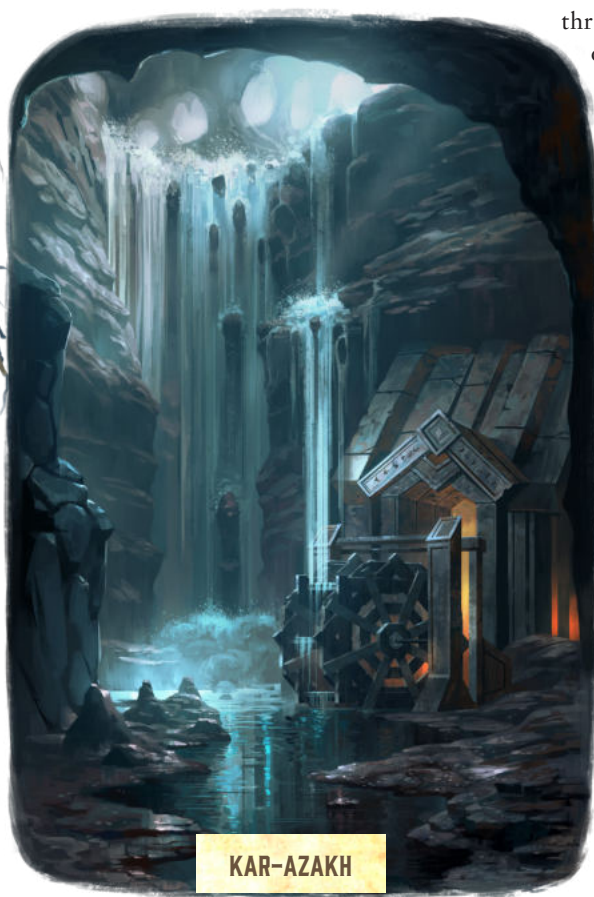
Highhelm: The largest city and de facto capital of the Five Kings Mountains, Highhelm is among the most influential cities on Avistan as well as the center of Avistani dwarven culture. Built inside Emperor's Peak, the city extends through four levels of vibrant neighborhoods and flourishes under the capable rulership of High King **Borogrim the Hale** (pragmatic male dwarf king). More information on Highhelm can be found in *Lost Omens Highhelm*.

House of Sky: The Owl Council of the Fierani Forest makes its home in this aerie in the country's far north with a view over the forests of Kyonin. Longtime allies of the dwarves and eternal enemies of demons, the council keeps a close eye on Tanglebriar for any remnants of Treerazer and his minions. Despite their devotion to this cause, the council is a contentious group who have recently turned against longtime consensus-builder Winglord **Kreiagh** (learned male giant owl peacemaker) following a betrayal by an elven spy who was working for Treerazer.

Kar-Azakh: A roaring waterfall called the Cascade, whose torrential waters tumble 200 feet and send continuous, reverberating echoes throughout the entire cavern, is the defining feature of this city of about 3,200. Its residents generally wear hearing protection and communicate with sign language as they make use of the Cascade's power to run dozens of waterwheels within the city. Mayor **Tandril Gripstone** (even-handed genderfluid dwarf artificer) is well-known for their fair juggling of the jockeying for power among the city's guilds, but they refuse to acknowledge Daralathyl's growing power; recently, they were entirely dismissive of reports about nearby ravages by the dragon's minions, and the injured parties are looking for help.

Kingtower Pass: Between Droskar's Crag and Mount Gustus on the southern edge of the nation, this pass serves as the key border crossing between the Five Kings Mountains and Andoran under the watchful carved face of King Taggun. Captain **Jartan Clapstin** (valorous nonbinary dwarf march captain) leads the group of soldiers that patrol the area combating bandits, helping wayward travelers and mountaineers, and intercepting any Darkmoon Vale creatures before they cause too much trouble.

Kovlar: Once part of the grand city of Saggorak, this small city of 4,500 still enjoys outsized influence thanks to its storied history. After a protracted siege that caused mass starvation in 2519 AR, the city's residents rose as undead and defeated the invading orcs. Almost 700 years later, fortifications were rebuilt around the southern district to repel the still-virulent undead, and Kovlar was repopulated with the living. Chief Councilor **Kelda Halrig** (assertive female dwarf forgemaster), head of the Anvillers' Guild, represents the city on the Gathering Council. Alarmed at the growing threat posed by Daralathyl, she's been



KAR-AZAKH

reaching out to necromancers to learn how to marshal the undead forces in old Saggorak, a move that has led to direct political challenges from other guild leaders who consider this move risky and even un-dwarven.

Kykar: Situated under Mount Gustus and boasting a population of 9,200, this city has long wanted to expand its political power. Lord Mayor **Hansin Struckiron** (confident male dwarf merchant) supports the unification efforts of Highhelm's King Borogrim in the hopes of gaining representation on the Gathering Council for his city.

Larrad: A favorite destination of pilgrims, clerics in training, and wedding parties, this holy city of about 19,000 residents fills several large caverns in the country's north. Its cathedrals and temples serve as training centers for dwarven clergy, especially those dedicated to Torag and his family. King **Besta Grimeye** (dedicated female duskwalker dwarf high priest) currently heads the city's council and represents it on the Gathering Council. More about Larrad can be found on page 92.

Lightning's Call: This impressive peak on the Kyonin border features a giant carving of King Harral and a constant swirl of angry storm clouds. Wizards from Tar-Kazmukh who have studied the clouds have dismissed a magical origin, leaving no known explanation for the anomaly.

Mount Mist: The fifth-tallest peak in the Five Kings mountain range at 6,237 feet, Mount Mist attracts explorers and trailblazers from across Avistan seeking to scale the mountain.

Raseri Kanton: An expedition by the Pathfinder Society recently rediscovered the ruins of this city, which was destroyed during the Rending, beneath Droskar's Crag. Further exploration of its dangers and treasures is still needed.

Rolgrimmdur: With a population just over 7,000, this fortress city has the country's foremost military training facility, the Praxis, where students study tactics, combat techniques, and military history. The city also makes most of the country's siege weaponry. King **Kaldon the Stalwart** (bold nonbinary dwarf general) keeps a close eye on both the many mercenary bands that form in the city and on its defenses.

Shaping Bluffs: At the very northern border of the country, this long stretch of steep red stone cliffs along the Sellen River provides a haven for smugglers and river pirates thanks to its inexplicable property of shifting and rearranging its face, creating innumerable but short-lived caves at the river's edge.

Taggoret: This large southern city of about 14,800 prides itself on being both industrious and industrial, mining plentiful ore and smelting some of the nation's finest iron and steel. Further mine development in the direction of Droskar's Crag, however—where valuable veins of ore are known to exist—could run afoul of Daralathyl's minions, and King **Gefburt Gondak** (cautious male dwarf industrialist) has made clear his deep opposition to this course of action.

Tar-Kazmukh: Far to the northwest, this small city (with a population of about 3,700) is home to extensive arcane libraries run by rune-tattooed librarians, the Blue Warders, who are necessary guides through the shifting passages and magic wards. Sibling rulers King **Wultri Nalkuver** (cerebral female dwarf diviner) and King **Hromkar Nalkuver** (studious male dwarf conjurer) rule with a light touch and represent the city on the Gathering Council.

Vale of Shadows: This valley is said to possess one of Dou-Bral's Star Towers, placed before the god transformed into Zon-Kuthon. The planar fabric of this vale is weak, allowing the Netherworld's influence to constantly leak through.

Varook's Deep: At 17,621 feet below sea level, this small, martial city of about 2,500 provides the first line of defense against any incursions from below, with General **Flinda Strikespark** (strident female dwarf sapper) leading the well-supplied garrison.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

On the soggy south bank of the Sellen River, **Calladels** (population 117) gives every appearance of being a drab fishing village inhabited by a motley crew of simple misfits. In reality, it's home to the Brazen Bravos, a ring of audacious and ruthless smugglers.

Ringsmith Ranch (population 216), found on the Andoran border east of Highhelm, began as a ranch devoted to raising the region's sturdiest pack mules. Its location has made it a popular stop for long-distance caravans, but the town can't offer any protection from increasingly frequent bandit attacks.

The forest town of **Tathandyr** (population 342) is perilously close to the Tanglebriar and the demon-infested ruins of Shevaroth. Luckily, the area attracts mystics and devotees of the Green Faith who use their power to combat the corruption. They insist that the location of a powerful artifact, likely in the caverns below their feet, is soon to be revealed.

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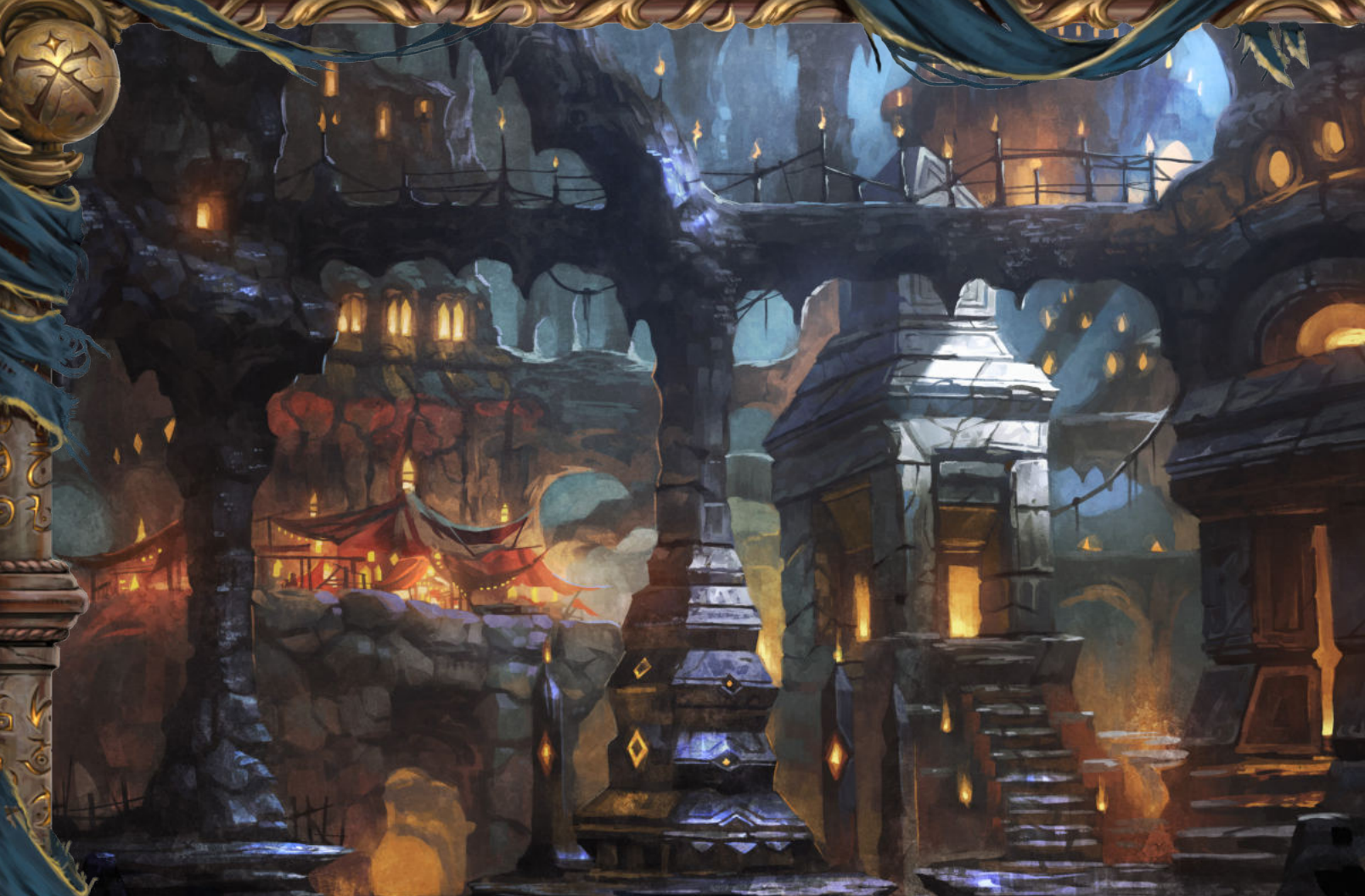
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LARRAD

Legend holds that when dwarves first came into the Five Kings Mountains, some of their children wandered off and were lost. When their anxious relatives found them in a cavern to the north, the children were not only safe but smiling. They described a beautiful woman who'd calmed their fears, kept them warm, and entertained them with stories of the gods. When the children described her, it became clear that a manifestation of Folgrit had protected them, and a shrine was soon dedicated to the Watchful Mother in that very spot.

Slowly, the city of Larrad—its name derived from a dwarven word for “holy” or “hallowed”—grew up around the shrine as more and more of the dwarven faithful were drawn to the area. The shrine to Folgrit was soon flanked with an orphanage and a communal home for the wounded and the elderly, and those dwellings were neighbored by a tavern and inn to house pilgrims and other visitors. As having Folgrit alone without her family seemed wrong, devout followers of Torag soon dedicated a temple to him, and then came cathedrals dedicated to their children: Bolka the Golden Gift, Grundinnar the Peacemaker, Kols the Oath-Keeper, and Trudd the Mighty. Temples to Torag's brothers, Angradd the Forge Fire and Magrim the Taskmaster, completed

the dwarven pantheon. Magrim's followers established a cemetery that, over millennia, grew into a necropolis that has now filled its enormous cavern almost entirely. From the beginning, alongside the worshippers of the dwarven pantheon came practitioners of the ancient traditions of Rivethun who sought the presence of powerful spirits in this sanctifying area and who now congregate in the Court of One Thousand. Reflecting both the widening fame of Larrad as well as the greater breadth of dwarven worship as the years rolled on, temples and shrines to many of the other deities worshipped throughout the Inner Sea were added to the holy city. Desna and Shelyn enjoy the largest of these followings here, but at least a dozen other gods have dedicated places of worship where acolytes and priests train and serve.

As a result of this slow, organic growth, Larrad came to fill several connected caverns without ever engineering them into one larger cavern as in most dwarven cities, and the towering stone arches and buttresses of those metropolises are also absent. Enlarged where necessary to accommodate larger creatures, Larrad's connecting tunnels act much as bridges do in other places, slowing down traffic and creating visual breaks. Unlike the smooth walls and

polished stone of most dwarven architecture, many of the built spaces of Larrad appear far more natural, incorporating the varied cavern walls and features such as stalactites. This use is partially a reflection of priorities other than grand architecture, but it also shows the distinctive influence of Rivethun beliefs about honoring the spirits in these natural features.

Life in Larrad is, as it has always been, dominated by faith. But anyone expecting a solemn, quiet city full of whispered prayers or monotone chanting is forgetting what makes dwarven faith unique: its emphasis on useful work, connected family, and love of life. Pious, reverent dwarves sing as they swing hammers, argue as they settle a bill, and raise a glass as they share a meal. The rhythms of other dwarven cities echo through the caverns here, from the marching feet of the city guard to the great whooshing of the giant bellows. A casual observer might note more religious symbols; a careful observer might sense the dedication and piety that infuse even the most banal actions with intention. The exuberant members of the dwarven pantheon recognize that a well-cooked meal, a well-told tale, or even a well-washed floor can be an act of devotion, and they pour out their spirit on such worshippers.

Dwarven hospitality is on its grandest display in Larrad, always welcoming travelers and pilgrims. Unlike most other dwarven communities, the residents here readily welcome newcomers, especially those who have come to study a religious or spiritual tradition. To a large extent, the temples and shrines of Larrad stand in for the clans of other dwarven cities. In other words, while every dwarf in Larrad is still fully aware of which clan they belong to and how they fit into an idealized dwarven society, the actual organizing structures here aren't clans but, instead, the religious houses. These houses handle the constant exchange of acolytes, priests, barkeepers, and pilgrims in the city's ancient streets.

Larrad's lean government also relies heavily on the religious structure of the city, inviting each of the religious centers to send a representative to a governing council that meets weekly under the oversight of King Besta Grimeye. Locally, each religious center is responsible for keeping the peace and arbitrating disputes within their own neighborhoods. Penalties range from restitution to banishment; however, informed as they are by a specific religious tradition and set of beliefs, the penalties are anything but uniform. As a result, judgments can be appealed to the governing council, although that body intervenes only rarely. In another departure from typical dwarven cities, Larrad has no standing army. In the event of an attack, plans exist for collapsing the connecting tunnels and retreating into defensible positions. Faithful of such as Trudd and Iomedae see to the martial training of those interested, and some of the temples support their own guards, but the military culture that so defines other dwarven cities is wholly absent.

In addition to wearing more religious symbols than elsewhere in the Five Kings Mountains, Larrad's citizens tend to favor traditional styles of dress, often with a nod to their special god, and to give particular attention to the details, as though just going to market were as important as dressing for a feast or festival. Patterned kilts, fringed shawls, leather aprons, laced boots, thick belts, and intricate gold jewelry are favored by pilgrims and by the taverns, inns, and shops that cater to them. Beard ornaments and braids are especially popular.

Each temple's acolytes and priests wear distinctive dress, and their presence throughout Larrad gives the town a special sense of spirituality. Whether it's the golden hoop skirts of Bolka's acolytes, the simple togas of Grundinnar's officiants, or the distinctive headdresses of Rivethun adherents, the clothing of the religious radiates their devoutness. This feeling is particularly true when holy days call for processions, and an entire religious center turns out its members. Hundreds upon hundreds of worshippers might join a procession that winds through the city and then crowd the temple itself, joining voices with a standing room-only crowd. Hardly a week goes by without

LARRAD

SETTLEMENT 9

METROPOLIS DWARF RELIGIOUS

Unique holy city in the Five Kings Mountains that draws large numbers of pilgrims and tourists to its bustling caverns.

Government Governing council (appointed)

Population 18,930

Languages Dwarven, Common

Religions Dwarven pantheon, Rivethun; **Prohibited** Droskar

Threats demonic forces from Tanglebriar, secret cultists of Droskar, strife between traditionalists and modernists, undead from the city's vast necropolis

Holy City Larrad draws pilgrims and travelers from throughout the Inner Sea Region and beyond who desire to experience its sacred spaces. Magic items of up to 10th level abound, especially low-level and single-use ones, and even relics can be found—but some are fakes.

Besta Grimeye (dedicated female duskwalker dwarf high priest) leader of the Temple of the Taskmaster, current king of the governing council, and Larrad's representative to the national Gathering Council

Magnissen Strongarm (narcissistic male dwarf athlete) high priest of the Cathedral of Might and ambitious rival to Besta Grimeye as he seeks to become the next king of Larrad

Polbar Trueye (thoughtful agender dwarf visionary) High Seeker of the Court of One Thousand, the headquarters of the Rivethun collective

Quist Andalon (amiable genderfluid halfling larcenist) charismatic proprietor of the Savories and Sundries Inn; former Pathfinder with several valuable, stolen magic items from the Pathfinder Society

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a celebration or ceremony, so that the years pass in an almost constant swirl of pageantry. Full of a boisterous love of the gods and of life, Larrad is justly renowned as a destination and a celebration of what it means to center spirituality, especially dwarven spirituality.

GAZETTEER

The following are some of the more notable locations within Larrad.

Cathedral of Might: Dedicated to Trudd the Mighty, this colorful space rings with the sounds of physical exertion and martial training as devotion takes the form of sparring, exercising, and otherwise increasing physical strength. Because a vigorous mind is an essential part of bodily might, Trudd's priests also lead classes ranging from military tactics to healthy eating. The ambitious High Priest **Magnissen Strongarm** (narcissistic male dwarf athlete) directs a boisterous coterie of priests and acolytes who have become increasingly angry that their leader is committing heresy with vainglorious shows of his own strength, and they intend to do something about it. The neighborhood surrounding the cathedral boasts the liveliest and most popular taverns and eateries in Larrad.

Cathedral of Peace: This strikingly airy structure glows with a soft light that infuses both its worked, white stone floor and its natural stone walls and ceiling. Dedicated to Grundinnar the Peacemaker, the cathedral is easily the quietest spot in Larrad, offering small chambers for meditation and self-reflection. **Xindersil the Wise** (serene male aiuvirin dwarf counselor) oversees a staff of priests and acolytes who offer listening ears and expert advice as well as eagerly arbitrate disputes of all kinds. But the faithful are still reeling from the recent disappearance of their deity following his stand against the powerful primordial being Otolmens. The surrounding neighborhood is Larrad's largest residential area, though shops and eateries are also found here, including the city's finest bakery, Peaceful Bread.

Court of One Thousand: The national headquarters for practitioners of the ancient traditions of Rivethun, the court is nearly as old as the shrine of Folgrit and is highly esteemed as a center of sacred thought and power. Honoring the living nature of its host cavern, the court preserves almost all the natural features of its space and sports almost no worked stone. Spaces are flexible, providing adequate room for worship, sleep, and work, as designated by colorful tapestries and cloths that are

easily rearranged—no one is ever turned away. Led by High Seeker **Polbar Trueye** (thoughtful agender dwarf visionary), the members of the Rivethun collective recognize few set roles or hierarchies; instead, adherents are invited to undertake their own studies, and discussions and study groups take the place of regular worship services. But the spirit of curious exploration that has long defined the court has been upended by the recent Godsrain, and vengeful spirits are turning against practitioners.

Fungal Jungle Farming: One of the few local food growers, this collective supports both foragers who venture into caverns replete with fungus and farmers who intentionally cultivate some of the tastier fungal delicacies. The current head of the collective, **Esmiray Spiritspeaker** (idealistic female dwarf healer), draws on her Rivethun attunement to assist both foragers and farmers—and she’s generous with the healing of foragers who return injured, as is recently more often the case, as they sustain attacks from grotesque creatures and fall to incurable diseases from corrupted fungi.

The Golden Cathedral: Dedicated to Bolka the Golden Gift, this spacious cavern twinkles with golden ornaments and magical lights. Its most celebrated feature is the largest waterfall in Larrad, which tumbles into a reflective pool whose golden light is a favorite backdrop for the lavish weddings that the cathedral specializes in. Holy High Celebrant **Thalisa Evensong** (joyful nonbinary nephilim dwarf matchmaker) takes delight in lifting up commitment ceremonies, bringing lovers together, and creating new families. The area around the cathedral sports the finest clothing boutiques, salons, milliners, haberdashers, and cobblers in Larrad as well as banqueting halls and luxurious inns.

Government Houses: Close to the Oath-Keeper’s Cathedral are the government houses, an unassuming collection of plain buildings in a variety of styles. The largest building, the meeting chambers for the governing council, is a stone hall in a traditional dwarven style, complete with pillars carved with dwarven faces and stained glass windows with a geometric pattern. The council crowds around a large round table of ancient wood, while a gallery offers stone benches for petitioners and interested citizens. To the west of the meeting chambers is the records office, a small and ancient space hand-dug from the cavern wall. Under the guidance of **Jaricks Ablepen** (harried female dwarf archivist), the records staff usually tells record-seekers to come back the following day. The staff at the more modern administrative building next door, under the able management of **Eberset Helmsbringer** (unfazed female dwarf bureaucrat), handles scheduling and complaints for the council and the king; Eberset also supervises the collection and accounting of the monthly contribution from all of Larrad’s religious centers and businesses. Known colloquially as “the Bread,” the Distribution Center is a sprawling, open-air space that facilitates the dispensing of both food and the monthly stipend to Larrad’s residents. Overseen by the incorruptible priests of Kols, the ease of this distribution often shocks visitors from greedier and more volatile places.

High Temple of Torag: This stunning edifice contains a large hall of worship dedicated to Torag the Forge Father, head of the dwarven pantheon. The majority of Larrad’s tourists and residents, regardless of their religious affiliations, enter this ornate and impressive space at some point, and the regular congregation itself is sizable. But the side chapels, full of mini-forges, looms, workbenches, and other tools for crafting and repairing, are arguably the true heart of the temple. Led by High Defender **Ghisdak the Devout** (industrious agender dwarf theologian), the large staff of priests and acolytes are constantly active throughout the temple and its adjoining buildings. Ghisdak is unaware, however, of a scheme among the acolytes to rob the temple’s replete coffers. The neighborhood surrounding the temple abounds in souvenir and curiosity shops as well as places selling quality goods or offering repairs for gear of all kinds.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Drawing on the religious structure of the city, Larrad’s government consists of a governing council to which each of the religious centers sends a representative for a weekly meeting. The council selects a “king”—currently Besta Grimeye, a high priest of Magrim—who oversees government decisions and represents Larrad at the Gathering Council in Highhelm. The biggest government initiative in Larrad is the collection of monthly contributions from each business and religious center and then the distribution of that money as an individual stipend for each Larrad resident. Almost all food in Larrad is imported, and every Larrad resident also receives a monthly share of the food deliveries. Given Larrad’s sizable population, these initiatives require a good deal of the government’s time and energy. But the effort is widely popular, as it results in a nearly egalitarian community where every individual is fed, housed, and provided with the means to pursue their calling and life’s work.

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SECRET FACTIONS

Cult of Droskar: Larrad fared better than much of the Five Kings Mountains during the Era of Toil, when priests of Droskar created a grueling theocracy—the various religious centers in Larrad nominally submitted to Droskari authority but maintained quite a bit of independence. Since their defeat, however, Droskarians have been able to hide out in Larrad more easily than in other cities. Under the magnetic leadership of **Faresseel Stonesplitter** (obsessive male dwarf cult leader), a growing number of Droskar cultists feign obeisance to Angradd and Magrim while seeding worship and attempting to lure others into the service of their forbidden god.

Trudd's Truest: Fed up with the arrogance of their high priest Magnissen Strongarm, a growing number of Trudd's devoted priests are secretly organizing to unseat him before he makes a bid for becoming Larrad's king. **Wellera Dornwielder** (clever female dwarf tactician) leads the effort by carefully chronicling Magnissen's missteps, especially his acts of open sacrilege and heresy, such as holding contests of strength.

Jewelers Row: The finest jewelers in Larrad sell their wares in shops on this stretch near the Golden Cathedral. Kept in line by **Astrid Brightmind** (shrewd female dwarf guild leader), these jewelers are justly known for both their fine artisanship and their scrupulous honesty. Astrid is particularly keen on ensuring that pieces of magical jewelry are accurately represented and sold for the prices they merit.

Necropolis: Over the millennia, what began as a simple cemetery has now grown to fill its enormous cavern almost entirely. Mausoleums and monuments from every epoch of the Five Kings Mountains' history stretch from end to end, offering a treasure trove of historical information—amid the potent dangers of a city whose denizens might rise in undeath or harbor any number of predators and perils. In keeping the dead at rest and the living safe among them, Magrim's priests receive support from Rivethun practitioners who are eager to interact with the spirits, especially powerful and restless ones. Space is now limited enough that King Besta Grimeye has to approve any additions to the necropolis. As many of Larrad's dwarves have a high preference for traditional burial over cremation or composting in the grindlegrub pits, the refusal of burial in the necropolis stirs up strong irritation and even grave robbing and illegal burials against the king's orders.

Oath-Keeper's Cathedral: In sharp contrast to most of Larrad's religious spaces, this holy place dedicated to Kols features smooth symmetry and sparse decorations. Its orderly and predictable observances are overseen by a small but dedicated group of priests and acolytes led by Head Oathkeeper **Kemcissa Trueword** (analytical transgender female dwarf lawyer). Doing a robust business in contracts, the cathedral sees the transaction of most of Larrad's business deals. Adventurers and mercenaries come here to find work, especially with caravans about to travel the network of tunnels that connect the nation's underground cities. This cathedral enjoys a great location, being handsomely placed between Larrad's largest market and its government houses.

The Sacred Hearth: Including the oldest structures in Larrad as well as some of the most recent, this sprawling complex is dedicated to Folgrit, the Watchful Mother, matriarch of the dwarven pantheon. Founded on the site of her appearance to a group of lost children millennia ago, her shrine was the first dwarven structure built in what would become Larrad. Continuously maintained ever since then, a fire burns at the center of the complex, providing the focal point for morning and evening devotionals overseen by Holy Mother **Olaria Stronghammer** (patient female dwarf matriarch); the fire steadily glows inside a rock ring at the center of a large room stuffed with seating of all kinds. From this center radiates a conglomeration of structures, including communal homes for the orphaned, the sick, and the elderly, that are all interconnected. Among these homes are schoolrooms and kitchens, rooms for learning skills, caring for children, and even simply for resting—as well as inns and taverns for visitors and pilgrims. Folgrit's priests are always on hand to provide healing or simply lend a patient ear. A favorite tradition is the handing out of small, sweet rolls and steaming cider every morning to all who wish it during the hour just before the morning devotional.

Sanitation Works: Pits full of grindlegrubs are the main feature of this depository of organic waste in Larrad. The venerable **Desken Foeminder** (persistent female dwarf animal lover) has long undertaken the management of these pits, including the distribution of grindlegrubs to street vendors and those in need of extra nourishment, out of a love for all animals and a devotion to Folgrit who cares for all aspects of the community. Desken strongly objects to feeding dead humanoid bodies to her grindlegrubs and is increasingly irritated with the priests of Magrim who, in her view, are shirking their job of caring for the dead in a proper and traditional way.

Savories and Sundries Inn: Near the Cathedral of Might lies the most lively and unruly of Larrad's tavern-inns. With five different great rooms that

function variously as bars, restaurants, gaming rooms, and performance halls, the chatter and laughter of the crowds who gather here last far into the night, every night. Above the bustling halls are a handful of rooms for rent by the night. The charismatic proprietor, **Quist Andalon** (amiable genderfluid halfling larcenist), isn't showy about the dedication of their establishment to both Cayden Cailean and Calistria but readily admits it—and shares their twin faith—with the faithful and the curious alike. Sincere in their worship, Quist also supports any traveling priests of these gods with free drinks and even free lodging on occasion. A former Pathfinder, Quist is much less forthcoming, however, about the surprising number of powerful and unusual magic items hiding in plain sight around the inn under enchantments that obscure their magical nature. These items include a *vine whip* (*Treasure Vault* 38), which hangs in a loose coil on the wall of the largest dining room, and *Cayden's Tankard* (*Treasure Vault* 178), which sits unassumingly on top of a small backbar.

Temple of the Forge Fire: Those unfamiliar with Angradd might mistake this massive forge as a workplace for particularly zealous smiths who keep the blazes going day in and day out as they craft everything from legendary swords to mundane hooks. Anyone seeking new armor or weapons is directed to speak with High Forge-minder **Cassilda Ironweft** (devoted female dwarf smith); while she oversees the daily observances in the small shrine attached to the forge, she knows—as do the rest of Angradd's religious—that working the forges is the heart of true devotion to their god. Larrad's less religious or otherwise affiliated smiths are also welcome at this temple, as it's the only spot in town that undertakes the high cost of maintaining such a large, hot forge. Unknown to Cassilda, among her faithful are cultists of Droskar, intent on seizing the temple for their own rites.

Temple of the Taskmaster: This low-profile shrine to Magrim belies the importance and influence that the dwarven god of duty and death holds in Larrad. Featuring low lighting and burnished wood paneling, the shrine is decorated with myriad carved runes and becomes uncomfortably cramped when filled with mourners turning out for a loved one's funeral. While intense and serious, Magrim's acolytes and priests—led by King **Besta Grimeye** (dedicated female duskwalker dwarf high priest), who's also head of Larrad's governing council—are far from joyless. They often host gatherings to highlight emerging artisans and sponsor festivals of arts and music, events that draw sizable crowds. Magrim's priests also enjoy helping young residents figure out their path in life. But hiding among their ranks is a cult leader looking to ensnare young minds in the worship of Droskar. Behind the temple stretches the sprawling necropolis whose maintenance also falls to Magrim's faithful.

Temple Row: This collection of shrines to non-dwarven gods began as a project by priests of Torag to honor their god's alliances with the deities most widely worshipped in the Inner Sea region. While the worship of these gods has become increasingly common among dwarves over the centuries, their relative unimportance here in Larrad is sometimes a shock to visitors familiar with soaring cathedrals in cities such as Absalom. Some visitors are further scandalized by the fact that Temple Row is almost the only place to get mind-altering substances and drugs otherwise anathema to dwarven traditions and culture. To enhance their value to the greater community as well as to stave off boredom, a currently resident priest of Desna, **Lassa Glimmercloak** (easygoing female catfolk wanderer), and the chief priest of Shelyn's shrine, **Orestias Gessoun** (lighthearted female human artist), have started a series of performances featuring dances and music whose experimental, formless nature runs counter to traditional dwarven aesthetics. Surprisingly, these performances have become quite popular, especially among Rivethun practitioners.

TANGLEBRIAR'S THREAT

Tired of having to import all their raw materials, Larrad's jewelers are agitating to open a mine on the far north side of the city. Astrid Brightmind has brought a detailed report of the prospected location to the governing council and strongly advocates for this course of action. But Rivethun practitioners strongly object, noting that the location has strong spiritual energies that need to be studied and communed with before the mine can go forward, and some Rivethun adherents insist that the mine would simply be too destructive in any case. Adding to the tension, the Fungal Jungle Farming's Esmiray Spiritspeaker has reported that foragers in that area have seen malformed and grotesque fungi, a sign of Treerazer's remaining demonic corruption. More alarmingly, some foragers have become infected with illnesses that Esmiray can't cure. Further exploration of the area could reveal whether a mine would be a conduit for economic growth—or for a demonic plague.

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FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS OPTIONS

The following character options are found within the Five Kings Mountains.

STALWART DEFENDER FEATS

The following feats are for the stalwart defender archetype on pages 110–111 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Highhelm*.

STALWART SONG

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stalwart Defender Dedication

Trigger You're about to attempt a saving throw against a fear effect.

Requirements You're in Tenacious Stance.

As a stalwart defender, you rely on your martial training and your tried-and-true armor to face any danger without flinching. Your mountain-like resilience and courage draw strength from the centuries-old traditions of dwarven song. You bring to mind—and possibly give voice to—a cherished dwarven song of inspiring heroism, granting you a +2 circumstance bonus to the saving throw.

STALWART CHANT

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Stalwart Song

You know story after story of unyielding, valiant dwarven heroes whose minds were bulwarks against fear and confusion. You can use Stalwart Song when attempting a saving throw

against any mental effect, and if you fail the saving throw, you gain resistance to mental damage against any resulting effect equal to half your level.

RIVETHUN SPELLS

The practice of Rivethun is becoming more widespread within the Five Kings Mountains. The following spells are available to Rivethun priests and shamans or those who have a close relationship with such individuals.

ATTACKED FROM WITHIN

SPELL 7

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE SPIRIT

Traditions divine, occult

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Defense Will; **Duration** varies

You assert your power over the target's own spirit as you reach deep into its soul in order to discover a moment of excruciating anguish, debilitating humiliation, or abject despair. The target takes 12d8 spirit damage and must attempt a Will save.

Critical Success The target takes no damage, with a brief sensation of pain followed by a pleasant memory.

Success The target takes half damage and is frightened 1.

Failure The target takes full damage and is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage and is frightened 2 and off-guard for 1 round.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d8.

DEFENDED BY SPIRITS

SPELL 1

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE SPIRIT

Traditions divine, occult

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 ally and 1 enemy

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You entreat a spirit or the spiritual energies in your location to surround and protect an ally from an certain foe. Each time the enemy attacks and damages the ally, the enemy takes 1d6 spirit damage. The enemy is aware of these spirits and has a general sense that attacking the ally will draw the spirits' ire.

Heightened (+2) The damage increases by 1d6.

MANIFESTATION OF SPIRITS

SPELL 2

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATION MENTAL

Tradition divine, primal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Defense Will; **Duration** varies

You open the target's eyes to the plethora of spirits surrounding it—and it sees all these spirits as menacing and powerful. The target must attempt a Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target believes every spirit it sees is an imminent threat. It's stupefied 3 for 1 round.

Failure As success, but the effect lasts 1 minute.



DEFENDED BY SPIRITS

Critical Failure As failure, and the target becomes confused for 1 round.

Heightened (6th) You can target up to 5 creatures.

PAIN OF AGES ◆◆

SPELL 6

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE SPIRIT

Tradition divine

Range 120 feet; **Area** 30-foot burst

Defense basic Will

You sense a spiritual resonance of deep anguish in the earth beneath your feet, the walls surrounding you, or the fragments of souls left behind in a place of calamity. You draw on this reservoir of pain and unleash its force against your enemies, dealing 8d8 spirit damage. On a critical failure, the creature is also stunned for 1 round as it reels from the impact of so much anguish.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d8.

SPIRIT WARD ◆ TO ◆◆◆

SPELL 1

UNCOMMON MANIPULATE

Tradition divine, occult

Range varies; **Targets** 1 creature

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You draw on nearby spiritual energy or on echoes of the spirits you've invoked throughout your life to temporarily ward living flesh against dangerous spirits. You grant the target a +1 status bonus to saving throws against spells and effects caused by creatures that have the spirit trait and haunts. The number of actions you spend when Casting this Spell determines its targets, range, area, and other parameters.

◆ The spell has a range of touch.

◆◆ (concentrate) The spell has a range of 30 feet. If you target a living creature, the bonus increases to +2.

◆◆◆ (concentrate) You create a ward in a 30-foot emanation. This targets you and all your allies in the burst.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL ◆◆

SPELL 4

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE HEALING MANIPULATE VITALITY

Tradition divine

Range touch; **Targets** 1 living creature

Duration 4 rounds

You draw upon the restorative power of the spirits around you. The target gains fast healing 8.

Heightened (+1) The fast healing increases by 2.

SPIRITUAL TRANSPORT ◆◆

SPELL 5

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Tradition divine

Range 240 feet

You call upon the spiritual energies surrounding you to teleport you to an unoccupied space within range that you can see. Any items you're wearing and holding come with you. Your familiar or animal companion, if you have one that's sharing your space or adjacent to your space, is transported with you, but any other creature sharing your space remains in that space.

Heightened (7th) The range increases to 1 mile. You don't need to be able to see your destination, as long as you have been there in the past and know its relative direction from you.

VEIL OF SPIRITS ◆◆◆

SPELL 2

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE SPIRIT

Tradition arcane, divine, occult

Range 120 feet; **Area** 20-foot burst

Defense Reflex; **Duration** 1 minute

You draw on the essence of spiritual energy surrounding you to manifest a misty veil. When a creature that isn't immune to spirit damage begins its turn within the area, it must attempt a Reflex save. You can Dismiss the veil.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is dazzled until the beginning of its next turn.

Failure The creature is dazzled and gains a weakness to spirit damage equal to half your level until the beginning of its next turn as spiritual energy clings to it. A creature with spiritsense can't use that imprecise sense while it's dazzled in this way.

Critical Failure As failure, but the weakness is equal to your level.

ANIMAL COMPANIONS

The many subterranean passages under the Five Kings Mountains are home to a wide array of creatures that some dwarves have domesticated as companions.

Cragstone Bear

UNCOMMON

Your companion is a four-legged cave ursine whose diet includes mineral-rich cave water that causes plates of rock to grow over its fur. Playful and energetic, the cragstone bear tends to have a personality more like a loyal dog than a grizzly, but with its rocky hide, its romping can be more forceful than intended.

Size Small

Melee ◆ slam, **Damage** 1d8 bludgeoning

Melee ◆ claw (agile), **Damage** 1d6 slashing

Str +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 8

Skill Survival

Senses darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise, 20 feet)

Speed 35 feet

Support Benefit Your cragstone bear eagerly defends you.

Until the start of your next turn, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your AC if your cragstone bear is adjacent to you.

If your bear is nimble or savage, increase the bonus to +2.

Advanced Maneuver Rolling Charge



GIANT ROCK TUATARA

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ROLLING CHARGE ◆◆

The cragstone bear tucks itself into a ball and Strides twice in a straight line. It can make a slam Strike against one creature it's adjacent to at any point during this movement. If the Strike is a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.

GIANT ROCK TUATARA

UNCOMMON

Your companion is a much larger cousin of the common rock tuatara, up to 6 feet long and 4 feet tall. Their milky-white third eye, spiny backs, and knobby club tails make them look far fiercer than they typically are.

Size Medium

Melee ◆ tail slam, **Damage** 1d8 bludgeoning

Melee ◆ bite, **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Str +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 8

Skill Intimidation

Senses darkvision, scent (imprecise, 30 feet)

Speed 25 feet

Support Benefit Your giant rock tuatara trips up your enemies when you create an opening. Until the start of your next turn, your Strikes that deal damage to a creature within your giant rock tuatara's reach make the target clumsy 1 until the end of your next turn.

Advanced Maneuver Tail Escape

TAIL ESCAPE ◆

Frequency once per 10 minutes

Requirements The giant rock tuatara is grabbed or restrained.

The giant rock tuatara detaches its tail to free itself from an enemy's grip. It automatically Escapes and can Step. It then can't use its tail slam Strike until it can regenerate its tail, which takes 10 minutes or an application of healing magic that restores Hit Points.

SPECIFIC FAMILIARS

The inquisitive dwarves of Tar-Kazmukh have pioneered some unique and interesting familiars.

GRINDLE-DRAKE

Grindlegubs have been an essential, if unglamorous, part of the Five Kings Mountains' food system for millennia, playing an especially important role in populous cities where enormous pits of them break down all organic waste. In these pits, the large white grubs eat voraciously, breed quickly, and provide a ready source of protein up and down the food chain. The grindlegubs within the Five Kings Mountains were specially bred millennia ago to enhance their size and other favorable traits. This domesticated breed of grindlegub evolved to grow to enormous sizes and eventually metamorphose into nigh-useless large black flies too heavy to fly. Knowledge of the origins of



GRINDLE-DRAKE

grindlegubs and their original forms was lost to time as the creatures' usefulness in their modified state proved invaluable to all settlements in the region.

Centuries ago, Ylivsach Taarghan, a young scholar at the Tar-Kazmukh arcane library undertook a deep study of grindlegubs, encouraging their metamorphosis under conditions both magical and mundane in an attempt to recreate the grindlegubs of old. With the right combination of arcane energy and a sulfurous steam vent for incubation, Ylivsach succeeded in bringing back the scaly, foot-long creatures with bright orange and red hues as well as six legs, pointy tails, and sharp beaks. Naming these creatures grindle-drakes, Ylivsach provoked controversy with her discovery, from those who insist that these creatures aren't related to drakes to those who insist that they aren't metamorphosed grindlegubs. To this day, grindle-drakes are bred in Tar-Kazmukh and sometimes gifted to friends of the Blue Warders.

GRINDLE-DRAKE

RARE

Access You're from the Five Kings Mountains.

Required Number of Abilities 4

Granted Abilities darkvision, skilled (Perception, Survival), touch telepathy

Forage ◆◆ (concentrate, manipulate) **Frequency** once per 10 minutes; **Effect** A grindle-drake is adept at finding sustenance for itself in almost any environment. The grindle-drake recovers a number of Hit Points equal to half your level.

Sure and Steady ◆◆ (concentrate, detection, primal) When placing all six legs on any ground or on stone flooring, a grindle-drake can extract knowledge about the surface under its feet in a 10-foot emanation in all directions. This knowledge can include whether the ground is enchanted, hollow, treacherous, or otherwise different than it appears. The grindle-drake can then communicate this information through touch telepathy.

MAGIC ITEMS

Dwarven aptitude for crafting is known throughout Golarion, and the citizens of the Five Kings Mountains have established a thriving industry for magic items.

EMPEROR'S PEAK QUARTZ BRACELET

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 5 gp

Usage worn; **Bulk**—

While most residents of—and travelers to—the Five Kings Mountains live underground, a significant number of people explore the regions' awe-inspiring peaks. Among their many discoveries on Emperor's Peak is a deposit of rainbow-colored

rock crystal quartz with inherent magical properties that aid in survival, especially in the mountains. Dwarven artisans fashion chunks of this translucent quartz into fashionable bracelets. Wearing such a bracelet grants you a +1 item bonus to Survival checks to Sense Direction and Subsist. This bonus increases to +3 when in mountainous terrain. If you attempt a Survival check to Subsist after 8 hours or less of exploration, you take only a -2 penalty instead of a -5 penalty.

KEEP STONE AMULET

ITEM 19

RARE INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 38,000 gp

Usage worn; **Bulk** L

The superior adamantine-lead alloy known as keep stone is as highly prized as it is expensive, and for good reason: keep stone combines the Hardness and durability of the finest metal with inherent magical protection. Not only does the metal itself resist magical effects, but anyone in proximity to a large amount of it also enjoys a degree of protection from divination magic. Dwarven crafters have attempted to make this extra protection more portable and more affordable in the form of *keep stone amulets*. Each amulet is unique in its exact shape, size, thickness, and decorations, but typically, a keep stone amulet is roughly palm-sized and engraved with clan symbols, holy aphorisms, or a favorite line of poetry.

While wearing a *keep stone amulet*, if you're the target of a spell with the detection or scrying trait, the caster must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or lose the spell.

Activate—Rebuff Magic ☞ (concentrate, misfortune)

Frequency once per day; **Trigger** You're the target of a spell with a spell attack roll; **Effect** The caster must roll the spell attack roll twice and take the worse result.

MEMORY RIBBON

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL

Price 20 gp

Usage worn; **Bulk** –

The time-honored tradition of weaving beautiful, embroidered glory ribbons throughout one's hair and beard remains an important cultural practice among some dwarven clans, with the choice of colors and style of presentation representing status, achievements, and other significant aspects of someone's position. Magical versions also exist that help enhance the wearer's memory. These magical ribbons are especially popular when someone has been invited to serve as a toastmaster at a guild banquet or as a master of ceremonies at an important festival. Their use in final oral exams for high positions is, however, hotly debated.

Activate—Read the Ribbon's Story ♦ (concentrate) **Trigger**

You attempt a skill check to Recall Knowledge but haven't rolled yet; **Effect** The *memory ribbon* grants you a +2 item bonus to the triggering skill check to Recall Knowledge. Afterward, the ribbon becomes non-magical.

CLAN DAGGER FILIGREES

These filigree ornaments represent some of the finest dwarven metal-crafting. Intricate in design and detail, each unique piece begins as a specific religious symbol to one of

the gods of the dwarven pantheon. The artisan meticulously shapes the religious symbol, abstracting it in thin lines of precious metal to create a thin filigree ornament. Once the artisan has finished the filigree, it's given to a cleric of the specific god and imbued with a magical ability as determined by the specific deity. When the filigree is ready, the artisan or a smith attaches the filigree to the clan dagger, usually as part of a ceremony attended by as many of the clan as possible; this functions in the same way as etching a rune onto a weapon. A clan dagger filigree counts as a property rune, and a clan dagger can be ornamented with more than one filigree provided that the wielder performs an act of devotion to each deity represented on their clan dagger at least once a year.

BOLKA'S BLESSING

RUNE 5+

UNCOMMON DIVINE MAGICAL

This filigree grants you a +1 item bonus to Diplomacy checks and to Perception checks to Sense Motive. Additionally, once per day, the filigree symbol can be activated for a healing effect.

Activate—Gift of Life ♦ (concentrate, healing, vitality)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You regain 3d10 Hit Points.

Type *Bolka's blessing*; **Level** 5; **Price** 160 gp

Type *greater Bolka's blessing*; **Level** 11; **Price** 1,400 gp

The bonuses increase to +2, and the healing increases to 6d10.

KOLS'S OATH

RUNE 5+

UNCOMMON DIVINE MAGICAL

This filigree grants you, as the clan dagger's owner, a +1 item bonus to Society checks and to Diplomacy checks to Request. Additionally, once per day, the filigree symbol can be activated to compel an enemy to act.

Activate—Vow Unbreakable ♦ (auditory, concentrate,

linguistic, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You command a creature within 30 feet to Stride away from you, drop prone, or release one item it's holding. The creature can choose to perform that action as the first action on its next turn; if it doesn't, it takes 4d6 mental damage (DC 20 basic Will save).

Type *Kols's oath*; **Level** 5; **Price** 160 gp

Type *greater Kols's oath*; **Level** 11; **Price** 1,400 gp

The bonuses increase to +2, the damage increases to 8d6, and the DC increases to 28.

TRUDD'S STRENGTH

RUNE 5+

UNCOMMON DIVINE MAGICAL

This filigree depiction of a warhammer in front of a kite-shaped shield grants you a +1 item bonus to Athletics checks and to Intimidation checks to Coerce. Additionally, once per day, the filigree symbol can be activated to protect your allies.

Activate—Protect the Clan! ♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once

per day; **Effect** Protective energy releases in a 10-foot emanation, granting a +1 status bonus to Armor Class to all allies within the area. The bonus lasts for 1 minute.

Type *Trudd's strength*; **Level** 5; **Price** 160 gp

Type *greater Trudd's strength*; **Level** 11; **Price** 1,400 gp

The bonuses to skills and AC increase to +2.

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NATIONS



GALT
Capital: Isarn
Government: Council
Ruler: Citizen Camilia Drannoch

PEOPLES

Halflings
 Humans
 Undead

LANGUAGES

Common
 Hallit

FACTIONS



Broken
 Ghosts



Firebrands



Pathfinder
 Society

RELIGIONS



Andirifkhu



Iomedae



Calistria



Milani



Cayden Cailean



Norgorber



Erastil



Shelyn

RESOURCES



Cheese



Coffee



Grain/Fruit/
 Vegetables



Honey



Livestock/
 Hides



Lumber



Perfume



Seafood



Stone



Textiles



Wine



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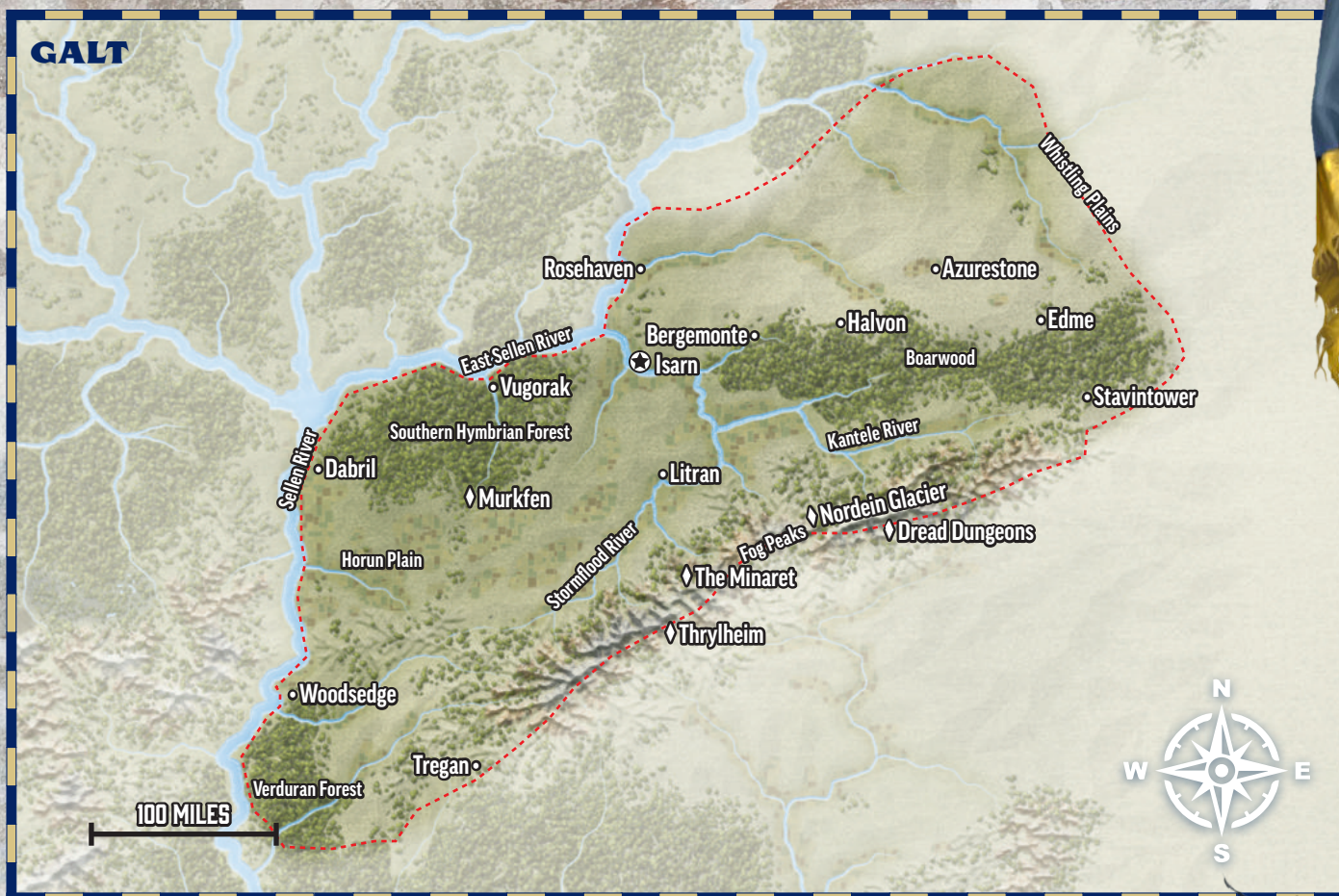
GALT

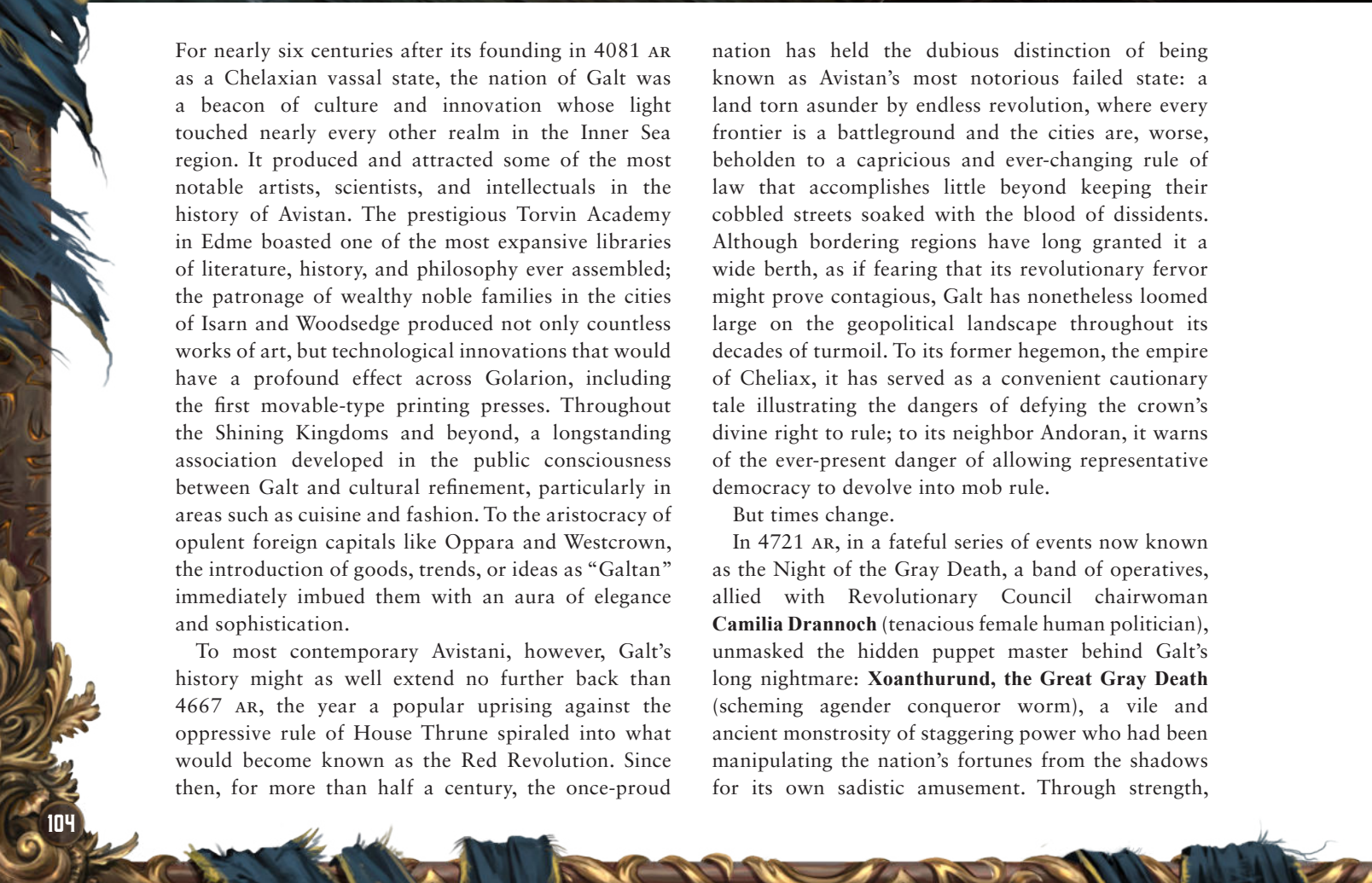
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To most contemporary Avistani, however, Galt's history might as well extend no further back than 4667 AR, the year a popular uprising against the oppressive rule of House Thrune spiraled into what would become known as the Red Revolution. Since then, for more than half a century, the once-proud

But times change.

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guile, and no small amount of luck, the worm was cast down—its plans to utterly destroy Galt foiled and its widespread organization of secret enforcers and executioners, the infamous Gray Gardeners, left scattered and directionless. After over 50 years as a monster’s plaything, the nation of Galt was finally free to forge its own destiny.

Today, with other regions across Avistan embroiled in international clashes triggered by the world-shaking events of the Godsrain, Galt uncharacteristically represents an island of relative stability in a sea of conflict due to its long sequestration from its neighbors. Even without immediate external threats, however, Galt finds itself at a treacherous crossroads as its leaders seek to heal the nation’s wounds with a full accounting of the horrors from the past 50 years, all the while striving to prevent their echoes from tearing it apart once and for all. While such efforts are cautiously well-received by many Galtans, others openly seek a more violent and decisive reckoning for anyone even peripherally involved with the Revolution’s brutality, threatening to shatter the tenuous peace.

Meanwhile, foreign interests, internal agitators, and power-hungry demagogues seek to influence popular sentiment for their own ends. As the long-shattered nation struggles to piece itself back together, Galt remains at risk, more than ever, of being pulled apart by these many competing interests and agendas, any one of which could unite the nation and light its path back to greatness—or push it back over the precipice into a ruinous chaos from which it won’t recover a second time.

As befits a nation whose primary defining trait for two generations has been a state of near-constant administrative turnover, the current state of government in Galt can best be described as complicated. The former Revolutionary Council, renamed the Reconciliation Council in 4722 AR by First Citizen Drannoch, ostensibly governs Galt from its traditional seat of power, a hulking fortress and prison known as the Monolith in the capital city of Isarn. Meanwhile, the Galtan army, functionally an independent body since its separation from the government in 4679 AR as part of an effort to dissuade future military coups, has steadily built up a groundswell of popular support in more rural corners of the nation by repelling numerous foreign incursions against the smaller settlements along its borders—settlements whose populations have also had ample time to nurture an equal resentment for the many faces worn by the Revolutionary Council over the past two generations. Finally, members of the original Galtan Senate, at least those few who have defied the odds by surviving 18 successive revolutions without losing their heads or dying of natural causes, have carefully begun exerting political pressure on the Council to honor Galt’s egalitarian ideals by holding the first

elections since 4664 AR, which will refill its dozens of vacant seats and begin the transition of power back to a democratically elected Senate.

Complicating matters, nearly all sitting senators retain various ties to the bourgeoisie who fled Galt in the early days of the Revolution, some of whom have spent the intervening decades funding both covert and overt hostilities against their former homeland’s erstwhile government. These actions have hardly endeared them to the Galtan people, even those harboring their own hatreds for the Revolutionary Council. While the revolution still raged, all three of these governmental entities—the Council, the Galtan army, and the scattering members of the Galtan Senate—largely functioned without interfering with one another. This independence was mostly owed to the covert placement of Gray Gardener agents in positions of authority within each organization, for these agents could surreptitiously steer them away from conflicts that didn’t suit Xoanthurund’s agenda. With the Gardeners’ leadership dead and their internal structure broken, however, new power players have arisen in each institution, driving them toward conflicting goals that threaten to put them at odds.

First Citizen Drannoch hopes to bring them all to the table and unite them in common purpose. In the years since the Night of the Gray Death laid bare the source of the nation’s woes, Camilia has actively extended olive branches to any people or factions willing to help mend the beleaguered nation, inviting representatives from the Senate, the military, religious institutions, merchants’ guilds, and even a handful of foreign envoys to serve on her advisory board. While these actions give credence to her intentions to unify the country, it has drawn harsh criticism from partisans in every faction, particularly xenophobic voices suspicious of sudden professed foreign interest in Galt’s well-being after generations of closed borders and trade sanctions. Meanwhile, Galt’s revolutionary spirit has proven quite capable of persisting without external influence, as anarchist groups and rabble-rousers actively attempt to sabotage the Council’s efforts—sometimes out of a difference in political opinion, sometimes inspired by nothing more than a desire to see the nation burn so that something different might arise from its ashes.

Despite these challenges, the Council has been making steady progress since its inception, even with international power structures thrown into disarray by the Godsrain. Ironically, Galt’s former status as a pariah nation might now prove to be its greatest strength, for its experience with necessary self-sufficiency places it in an ideal position to strengthen its foundations and expand its influence while its neighbors occupy themselves with defense. It remains to be seen whether Galt will succumb to internal strife and fracture once more, or if it will finally come together under a single banner—and if so, whose banner it will be.

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HISTORY

TIMELINE

- 115 AR Galt is established as a province of the Empire of Taldor.
- 4081 AR Alongside Andoran and Isger, Galt is acquired by a nascent Cheliah following its secession from Taldor in the Even-Tongued Conquest.
- 4308 AR The printing press is invented in Isarn by the halfling inventor Gerrit Goslingrove.
- 4606 AR Aroden dies, plunging Cheliah into civil war.
- 4640 AR House Thrune allies itself with the powers of Hell to seize control of Cheliah.
- 4656 AR Xoanthurund, the Great Gray Death, awakens beneath Galt.
- 4660 AR Under Xoanthurund's subtle influence, *[cont.]*

Despite the predominance of the human population that's defined Galt for millennia, ancient ruins and incomplete oral histories suggest that some of the nation's earliest inhabitants were elves, and that portions of the region might have once been considered part of the nation of Kyonin. It wasn't until the Age of Legend that the first bands of Kellids began to settle there as they migrated across northern Avistan, eventually constructing a thriving agrarian society of villages and farming communities stretching from the Sellen River to the Whistling Plains. These settlements enjoyed robust trade relations with the local elven population as well as the human communities that would eventually become the nations of Taldor and Andoran.

The elves abandoned their settlements when they retreated from Golarion to avoid the devastation of Earthfall, leaving the human communities who survived the cataclysm to collapse into nigh-feral brutality during the Age of Darkness as they warred among themselves over scant remaining resources. Ultimately, the Tiger Lords subsumed the region during their conquest of northeastern Avistan in the Age of Destiny, and Kellid dominion persisted for another thousand years before finally being broken by the invasion of Taldor's First Army of Exploration in 46 AR. Nearly 70 years later, Taldor annexed the territory as the province of Galt, officially marking one of the earliest steps on its journey from expansionist kingdom to empire.

In 4081 AR, that empire suffered an unexpected setback when Aspek the Even-Tongued, governor of a frontier prefecture on the empire's western border, officially announced his secession from Taldor. Declaring himself king of the independent nation of Cheliah, he then proceeded to acquire the province of Andoran through diplomacy and seize the provinces of Galt and Isger through demonstrations of martial prowess. Already embroiled in a massive military campaign against Qadira in the south and unable to fight a war on two fronts separated by thousands of miles, Taldor had little choice but to sign a treaty with the nascent kingdom in exchange for a commitment to cease further eastward expansion.

Galt remained a vassal state of Cheliah for almost 500 years, governed by a succession of viceroys responsible for representing Chelaxian interests. Although the position began as a merit-based appointment by the government in Westcrown, it quickly developed into a de facto hereditary aristocracy in all but name, creating a new stratum of wealthy nobility and inadvertently promoting a growing class divide that would eventually contribute to Galt's downfall. Left largely to act as an independent state while still enjoying the benefits of the Chelaxian empire's expanding borders and surging economy, the province of Galt thrived, ultimately emerging as a vibrant cosmopolitan nation celebrated across Cheliah and Taldor alike for its enlightened culture and intellectual achievements.

When the death of Aroden in 4606 abruptly ended Chelaxian domination of the Inner Sea region and plunged the empire into civil war, Galt's relative distance from the heart of the conflict allowed it to remain mostly unscathed, sidestepping involvement in any proxy wars and successfully maintaining a neutral position throughout the subsequent three decades of strife. When House Thrune emerged victorious and seized control of Cheliah by aligning itself with the powers of Hell, however, that commitment to neutrality faded rapidly. Cheliah's former laissez-faire attitude toward Galt came to a swift



XOANTHURUND

end, replaced by forced devil worship, oppressive taxation, bans on art and literature deemed subversive by the Chelaxian government, and countless other dicta seemingly enacted with the sole purpose of crushing the famously free Galtan spirit.

It was around this time the conqueror worm Xoanthurund, the Great Gray Death, awoke somewhere deep beneath Galt, perhaps stirred from his long slumber by the echoes of psychic discord emanating from far above. For a time, the worm did nothing, content merely to sift through the thoughts of the subjugated populace of Galt. Scheming to subvert the people's yearnings for freedom to serve its dark designs, the worm eventually took up residence beneath Torvin Academy in Edme, where it spent years whispering into the minds of students and faculty, twisting their noble ideals into a thirst for violent reprisal and gradually shoring up an army of unwitting foot soldiers.

In 4660 AR, the university's dean, the celebrated philosopher Hosetter, published a series of inflammatory essays titled *Imperial Betrayal*, harshly criticizing the heavy-handedness of Galt's Chelaxian occupiers. Hosetter's words spread like wildfire across the nation and eventually reached the renowned aiuvirin poet Darl Jubannich of Woodsedge, inspiring his broadsheet manifesto *On Government* in which he argued that House Thrune's actions had invalidated the most basic principles of divine right and effectively abdicated Chelax's authority over Galt, Andoran, and all its other vassal states. The writings of Hosetter and Darl Jubannich inspired the formation of dozens of would-be revolutionary factions throughout Galt, among them a modest assembly who'd recently begun holding secret meetings beneath an abandoned monastery overlooking the city of Litran, concealing their identities with gray masks and naming themselves "Gray Gardeners" after a passage from one of Darl's poems. When Xoanthurund relocated its lair from Edme to Litran in 4663 AR, these unassuming subversives became the first of the conqueror worm's notorious cat's-paws with whom it would terrorize Galt for decades to come.

As tensions rose, Xoanthurund gradually ramped up its efforts, inciting puppets in the provincial Chelaxian military to violently crack down on public demonstrations. Threatened with arrest, Hosetter and Darl fled to Litran, where they found refuge among the Gray Gardeners. Then, from a hidden base beneath the monastery, they continued to launch guerrilla strikes against Chelaxian infrastructure, inspiring similar acts of violence across the nation. The death of artist Irlyna Vosh, assassinated while publicly supporting a student protest in Isarn, was the spark that finally ignited the powder keg of the Red Revolution in 4668 AR. In cities across Galt, politicians, nobles, and other suspected Chelaxian sympathizers were dragged from their homes and publicly executed as enemies of the people. On the 5th of Neth, Hosetter and Darl formally declared Galtan independence in the name of a new "Revolutionary Council," encouraging sympathizers across the nation to take up arms for their cause. As cities across the nation descended into chaos, the Gray Gardeners transported over a dozen *final blades*, deadly devices crafted by the brilliant inventor Margaery San Trayne and a cadre of Gray Gardener occultists, to key locations across Galt to facilitate further mass murder of the Revolution's enemies and expand Xoanthurund's sphere of influence. Multiple waves of executions later, what remained of the Galtan Senate swore allegiance to the Revolutionary Council, officially ceding control of Galt.

Of course, peace was not to last; barely three years later, the Council was upended in a military coup, sending Hosetter and Margaery San Trayne to the *final blades* and Darl Jubannich into exile in Andoran. Thus began the cycle of violence that would exemplify the Red Revolution for over 50 years while the Great Gray Death gleefully built up one Revolutionary Council after another, toppling each regime in an orgy of bloodshed whenever it grew bored with the status quo.

- 4662 AR Hosetter publishes *Imperial Betrayal*, a series of inflammatory screeds against Chelaxian occupation. Inspired by Hosetter's writings, Darl Jubannich publishes the broadsheet manifesto *On Government*.
- 4668 AR The death of Irlyna Vosh catalyzes widespread uprisings into an explosion of violence. Mass executions of perceived Chelaxian sympathizers serve as prelude to the official declaration of Galtan independence.
- 4672 AR The first Council falls. Citizen Hosetter is executed; Darl flees to Andoran.
- 4682 AR Camilia Drannoch dies to the *final blade* named *Silent Lenore*, temporarily renamed *Silence*.
- 4697 AR The hag Grimalda, sister of Traxyla, attempts to siphon power from *Silent Lenore* and fails, allowing Camilia's soul to escape.
- 4716 AR The Blade Breakers, captured by Gray Gardeners, falsely claim to be Firebrands and prompt actual Firebrands into rescuing them from execution.
- 4717 AR Camilia Drannoch seizes control of the People's Council from Korran Goss.
- 4721 AR The Night of the Gray Death brings an end to Xoanthurund and the Gray Gardeners.
- 4724 AR The Godsrain sparks new conflicts across Avistan. The first gray blades appear.

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CURRENT EVENTS

In the months immediately following the Night of the Gray Death, one of the most daunting challenges faced by First Citizen Camilia Drannoch and the People's Council was convincing the people of Galt that the Red Revolution had finally and truly ended. With that purpose in mind, they've taken every opportunity to distance themselves from the 17 Revolutionary Councils that came before, beginning by renaming themselves the Reconciliation Council and announcing their intentions to launch hearings and fact-finding missions intended to produce as complete as possible an accounting of the last 58 years.

Dozens of couriers have been dispatched across the nation to collect oral histories from every village and township they can find. A small army of archivists scours the depths of the Monolith for long-forgotten records of executions and imprisonments in the hope of providing thousands of grieving Galtans with some

semblance of closure. Formal inquiries have also been launched to identify former Gray Gardeners and hold them accountable for their crimes, even taking the highly controversial step of offering clemency to former Gardeners willing to throw themselves on the mercy of the court and cooperate with authorities to aid further investigations. These latter efforts have been complicated by the emergence of vigilante groups with the same theoretical goals but much less rigorous standards of proof, leading some to question whether the threat of false implication by the mob differs meaningfully from the threat of execution for alleged sedition posed by the previous regimes.

Foreign Aid: Admirable though the Reconciliation Council's goals might be, accomplishing them has required significant resources—resources that are in short supply following Galt's decades of misrule. Seeking to replenish the nation's coffers as well as take tentative steps toward repairing foreign relations, the Council has sent emissaries to Kyonin, Andoran, and Taldor to request their assistance in restoring Galt to a state of sustainable prosperity and stability. So far, their call has been answered by two delegations of volunteers representing the churches of Abadar and Iomedae, a company of Andoren Eagle Knights, and numerous members of various unaffiliated organizations, including both the Firebrands and the Pathfinder Society.

Not everyone is pleased with this development. Although those contributing to the relief effort all claim political neutrality, many Galtans can neither forget nor forgive the frequent military incursions they suffered along their borders during the Red Revolution and harbor strong suspicions that these outsiders must have some ulterior motive. Others remain deeply resentful of the world outside Galt for abandoning it in its time of need, openly questioning where they've been over the past 50 years. The Firebrands in particular have found themselves frequent targets of this ire, often facing accusations that their presence in Galt is more about grandstanding and self-promotion than a genuine desire to help the Galtan people.

Spirit of Liberty: To the cheering throngs who venerate her as a folk hero, the story of First Citizen Camilia Drannoch is both a powerfully inspirational tale and a quintessentially Galtan one. At a young age, she lost both parents to the *final blades* but refused to be cowed by the Gray Gardeners, stubbornly continuing to speak out against their tyranny. When her fiery rhetoric earned her a midnight visit from the masked executioners, she somehow managed to escape, vanishing like a ghost only to return over a decade later and provide invaluable assistance to a new band of revolutionaries in toppling the latest Council, earning



GRIMALDA

herself a prominent seat on the one that replaced it. Camilia's cunning and political acumen have enabled her to survive three separate regime changes, and she's finally taken her place as chairwoman of the People's Council. Her stewardship of Galt hasn't only been the longest since the start of the Red Revolution, it has now overseen the unmasking and defeat of the monster behind it, stirring hope in the hearts of the people that some degree of peace and stability might finally be on the horizon. Though she and her Council walk a fine line as they attempt to heal the fractured nation while also mollifying those howling for vengeance, Camilia herself remains broadly popular, with many Galtans routinely wearing her signature red kerchief around their necks to display their solidarity.

First Citizen Camilia Drannoch also has a secret, one known only to a handful of her closest confidantes: she's been dead for over 40 years.

Popular narrative notwithstanding, Camilia didn't escape *Silent Lenore's* bite on that fateful night. Rather, she was summarily executed, her body unceremoniously dumped in a potter's field alongside hundreds of other anonymous corpses. There she lay, forgotten, for 15 years, until a ritual enacted by the hag Grimalda to siphon power from *Silent Lenore* went awry, for a split second allowing a handful of its trapped souls to escape. Some promptly passed on to the Boneyard. Camilia's didn't. It returned to what remained of the body that had served as its mortal vessel, and Camilia Drannoch clawed her way out of her own grave, now an undead creature motivated by the same revolutionary spirit that had driven her in life. She returned to the world of the living, soul partially fused with the souls of other victims, the result of a *final blade* driven far beyond its intended capacity. Her living appearance had been restored, save for the iron collar and red kerchief hiding the stitches holding her severed head in place. Undaunted, Camilia resumed her efforts to bring down the Gray Gardeners once and for all.

Today, having seemingly accomplished that goal, Camilia finds herself torn between her loyalties to the living people of Galt and her obligation to the thousands of restless spirits who shadow her every step, pleading for her to act as both their collective voice and the instrument of their vengeance. Seeking guidance on how best to serve these ghostly constituents, she recently sent emissaries to the undead nation of Geb, where its namesake ruler has offered his assistance in exchange for one of the last unbroken *final blades*. Wary of the ghost king's motives, Camilia has yet to agree to Geb's terms, but the escalating tensions around her will inevitably force her to make a choice—and soon.

Gray Blades: Despite their morbid but ubiquitous presence as symbols of the Red Revolution, a distressing number of Galt's infamous *final blades* currently remain unaccounted for. Several were destroyed during the events of the Night of the Gray

Death and many others were dismantled over the following months, but at least three blades—*Bloody Jaïne*, *Scarlet Elise*, and *Sophie the Carver*—are reported to have inexplicably vanished from their former locations, raising fears that they've fallen into the hands of unknown parties seeking to harness the blades' power for some inscrutable but undoubtedly wicked purpose. The terrifying revelation that the souls within the blades had coalesced into powerful and vengeful beings known as gray deaths only added further urgency to the issue.

The mystery of the missing blades took on a new dimension shortly after the Godsrain swept across Galt as eyewitness accounts began to spread of mysterious constructs, their bodies made from shattered guillotine blades bound together by a seething host of twisted phantoms. Whispered rumors abound that these "gray blades" are the remains of the lost *final blades*, animated by the spirits bound within and driven to seek out and exterminate the entire lineage of any person who ever used that blade to take a life. Camilia Drannoch is closely monitoring the situation but has yet to act, hoping first to learn whether she and her ghostly retinue might somehow be able to communicate with or even direct these strange creatures. Although she hasn't yet sought aid from Geb in unraveling their secrets, the temptation to draw upon the ghost king's incomparable knowledge of necromancy grows stronger by the day.

Martial Tensions: The Galtan army has operated as an effectively autonomous entity since its formal separation from the civilian government by decree of the fourth Revolutionary Council in 4678 AR, a naked attempt at self-preservation implemented in the wake of three successive military coups. It has played no major role in any Red Revolution since, instead safeguarding the nation's borders from external threats and providing security and governance to rural communities outside the reach of Galt's centralized government in exchange for resources and the right of conscription. In the interim, internal leaders and factions have emerged, most of whom feel no particular loyalty to whoever serves on the latest council in Isarn. Although Camilia Drannoch has sought the army's assistance in reuniting the more fractious portions of the nation, her requests have been rebuffed, mostly due to military leaders' displeasure over her willingness to invite foreigners with questionable motives onto Galtan soil. Many superior officers have begun to voice their belief that military leadership should play a larger role in plotting Galt's future or possibly even replace the Council itself, pointing to Brigadier General **Anatole Perrine** (ambitious and charismatic male human general) as a prime candidate for leadership due to the widespread acclaim and popularity he enjoys among the populace after repelling numerous attempted invasions from the River Kingdoms in recent years.

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NOTABLE FIGURES



ANATOLE PERRINE



CALE ANDASSARIAN



CASAL TARNE



CATACOMB QUEEN

Before the Red Revolution, Galtan society largely mirrored the norms of its fellow Taldan states, adhering to a deeply entrenched social order that defined the role of the individual primarily by birth and wealth. The Revolution abruptly and violently dismantled that order, but the subsequent decades of turmoil never allowed a coherent replacement to emerge in its place. With the architects of that chaos scattered to the wind, a diverse array of figures from all walks of life now find themselves vying to fill the sudden power vacuum, each harboring their own vision for Galt's future.

A rising star of the Galtan military machine, the young Brigadier General Anatole Perrine became a hero of the people for his decisive routs of foreign incursions along the northern border and, moreover, has proven nearly as adept at political maneuvering as he is at battlefield strategy. Like many of his compatriots, Anatole rejects the Reconciliation Council's claim to authority and perceived deference to foreign interests despite maintaining cordial if tense relations with Camilia Drannoch. He has loftier aspirations: he dreams of transforming Galt from historical footnote to nascent empire through the exercise of military might, privately expressing his belief that the time is right for Galt to enact its own Even-Tongued Conquest while external threats occupy neighboring Taldor and Andoran.

When Aric of Halvon decided to leave Galt behind after the end of the Red Revolution, he considered retiring his notorious alter ego, the red-cloaked vigilante known only as the Red Raven, as well. Ultimately deciding that the time of the Raven hadn't yet passed, he bequeathed his iconic cowl, along with the Edme estate concealing his hideout, the Raven's Roost, to a trusted friend and former lieutenant from his criminal past: the onetime bandit **Cale Andassarian** (flamboyant male elf sorcerer), formerly known as Cale the Calistrian. Although somewhat more enamored with the theatrics of playing the Raven than motivated by any particular interest in protecting the downtrodden, Cale has nonetheless taken up the mantle and vowed to keep his old friend's legacy alive.

Sheriff of the tiny River Kingdom nation of Gralton, nicknamed "Little Galt" for its large population of exiled Galtan aristocrats, **Casal Tarne** (pragmatic male human sheriff) is the cousin of Lord Hallidan Tarne, a hotheaded former noble who has spent many years and much of his family's fortune attempting to invade and retake portions of their homeland. Sympathetic to his cousin's goals, if not his methods, Casal has formed a covert alliance with Galtan senator Margaux Delacourt, who has pledged the return of Gralton lands to their rightful owners in exchange for their families' assistance in returning the Senate to power.

Despite Margaery San Trayne's role as the architect of the murderous devices that would drown Galt in blood for half a century, her name appears in no historical records after the fall of the first Council in 4672 AR, her only legacy being *Madame Margaery*, the *final blade* that bore her name. An early victim of her own creation, she now exists only in whispered ghost stories as the **Catcomb Queen** (spiteful female gray blade), a masked apparition said to lead the anarchist Broken Ghosts from the depths of a crumbling necropolis beneath Isarn.

Madeleine Talbot (remorseful female human vigilante) was raised in a family that fervently believed in the righteousness of the Gray Gardeners and eagerly joined their ranks herself when she came of age—only to experience a calamitous crisis of faith when the horrible truth behind their organization was publicly revealed. After years of soul-searching, she's recently taken up the mask once more, this time stalking the streets by night

to protect the good people of Litran from evildoers, just as she'd always believed the charge of a Gardener to be.

The privileged daughter of a Kyonin envoy and the head of a wealthy merchant house, **Margaux Delacourt** (scheming female aiuvirin senator) had just been elected to her third term in the Senate when the Red Revolution began. Now, having outmaneuvered most of her colleagues to emerge in 4721 AR as one of the few senators left alive, Margaux has set her sights on amassing political capital, elevating her own station, and subtly exerting pressure to expedite the Senate's return to power, courting both the Reconciliation Council and Galtan military as well as making secret overtures to various noble families in exile, pledging to restore their estates in exchange for their support.

Marius Deschain (conflicted nonbinary human officer), Brigadier General Perrine's second-in-command, is one of the young general's oldest friends and closest confidants. Colonel Deschain has risen swiftly through the ranks of the Galtan army thanks to their unmatched reputation for courage and dedication. Not one among their fellow officers would ever suspect them of disloyalty—a testament to their aptitude for spycraft that has served them well in their career as a covert agent of Andoran's Twilight Talons. Chosen for the assignment to monitor Anatole based on pre-Revolutionary family ties to Galt, Marius lately finds themselves increasingly torn between their allegiance to Andoran and a resurfacing patriotism for the nation of their ancestors, fueled by the general's fierce charisma and compelling nationalist rhetoric.

Despite holding the dubious honor of being one of only two former Revolutionary Council leaders to survive deposition, **Korran Goss** (vindictive male human demagogue) feels no gratitude to his former protégé Camilia Drannoch for sentencing him to imprisonment instead of execution when she usurped control of the People's Council from him in 4717 AR. Although confined to a prison cell, Goss maintains total control over a network of loyalists who work diligently from the shadows to spread his seditious rhetoric, their aim to bring down Camilia and the Reconciliation Council at any cost.

On the night before his execution, the condemned double of recently deposed Primarch Alberic Bremovir whispered a secret to his cellmate: sealed away in the Dread Dungeons, the primarch's secret prison in the Fog Peaks, was a special prisoner known only as **68432** (unknown male aiuvirin human prisoner), whose continued drawing of breath ensured that Galt would never know lasting peace. That tale would change multiple times in the telling, ultimately declaring that the mysterious prisoner held secret knowledge that *could* bring peace to Galt. However, the prison was never found, and the rumor faded into obscurity.

It's true that there exists a cell deep within the Dread Dungeons, housing a special prisoner whose name appears in no ledger and whom the dungeon's dero wardens have long been tasked with keeping imprisoned but intact. For 30 years, that prisoner languished in his cell, seemingly insensate, even as the sadistic deros subjected him to one horrific experiment after another. Over the course of this experimentation, they discovered that decades of exposure to a unique local strain of cytillesh fungus growing beneath his cell had seemingly rendered his body completely impervious to all magical and non-magical means of transfiguration—a curious revelation, but one his jailers found to be of no particular import.

When the prisoner's eyes abruptly flew open as the sun rose on the morning after the Night of the Gray Death, the deros were intrigued. Then, their intrigue gradually turned to amusement as days passed and the prisoner wailed and clawed at his cell's walls, demanding they free him or face his wrath. When they eventually grew weary of his strange antics and returned to their usual business, however, they relished finally having a test subject who could scream.



MADELEINE TALBOT



MARGAUX DELACOURT



MARIUS DESCHAIN



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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Armeline Jirneau (resourceful female aiuvarin human detective) is a former free agent whose work for the Pathfinder Society once nearly led to her execution. She's since risen through the ranks to become Venture-Captain of the Woodsedge Lodge. Despite some personal reservations, she recently made the decision to commit Society resources

to the property recovery initiative spearheaded by Firebrand agent and Reconciliation Council advisor **Ambre Morel** (righteous female aiuvarin human treasure hunter), hoping to lend the committee some much-needed nonpartisan credibility.

Prior to the Red Revolution, **Dr. Erszebet Lavenza** (brilliant female aiuvarin human surgeon) was among the most respected professors at Torvin University's surgical college. During the Revolution, she achieved notoriety for her contributions to the science of fleshcrafting, among them a new method for constructing improved charnel creations (*Monster Core* 61) from executed cadavers that earned her the patronage of multiple Revolutionary Councils. Today, she continues her work from the basement of an unremarkable cottage outside Delfort, a picturesque hamlet only occasionally plagued by unexplained disappearances.

Sole survivor of the hag coven that ruled Galt as the Eye of Law,

Grimalda (obsessive female hag occultist) has long been fixated on attempts to siphon power from the souls trapped in the *final blades*.

After her sisters were unmasked and burned at the stake in 4698 AR, Grimalda fled to a cave outside

Tregan, where she's begun her experiments anew after snatching the *final blade* named *Carmine Nell* as it passed by on its way to Litran, unaware of how close she's already come to inadvertently freeing the gray death inside.

Galt is a temperate land of sunlit plains and rolling hills, broken by the occasional expanse of untamed woodland. Outside a handful of major cities and towns that house roughly half the nation's population, the countryside is dotted with tiny fishing villages, temporary lumber encampments, rock quarries, and family farmsteads surrounded by the fertile fields and lush orchards in which the farmers of Galt diligently tend to the crops and livestock that sustain both the nation's urban and rural populations.

Azurestone: Named for a natural spire of shimmering blue crystal that rises 100 feet above its walls, the city of Azurestone was spared the worst of the Red Revolution by geographic isolation, enabling it to prosper even as the rest of the nation suffered through a crushing cycle of ruin and reconstruction. The spire attracts regular pilgrimages from the dwarves of the Fog Peaks, who believe it to be a spear cast down from the heavens by Torag eons ago, as well as visits from fortune seekers lured by tales of treasure-filled chambers below the spire. Azurestone is also the home of the *Vernal Key*, a magical artifact that protects the city and its environs from the ravages of winter, which was famously stolen in 4708 AR by local bandit and masked folk hero the **Red Raven** (dashing and secretive male vigilante) but ultimately recovered by a band of local heroes.

Boarwood: Also known as Erastil's Hunting Grounds, the Boarwood is a vast, uncharted boreal woodland stretching across eastern Galt. This wild realm served as the heart of the elven presence in the region during the Age of Legend, once boasting temples, spires, and other resplendent creations reaching as high as the forest canopy and rivaling the glory of its most ancient trees. Little remains of these once-magnificent structures, abandoned when the elves departed Golarion prior to Earthfall and razed centuries later by Taldor's First Army of Exploration, but one notable exception is a massive subterranean complex of crystalline caverns beneath the forest. It houses a bustling elven outpost, built around an ancient *aiudara* hub informally referred to as "Galtgate," from which the elves have spent centuries conducting a comprehensive study of the lands above.

Few outsiders are willing to venture deep into the Boarwood, as its known to be inhabited by all manner of dangerous wildlife and unpredictable fey. The Kantele River, a twisting waterway running along the southern edge of the forest, is said to be haunted by **Maven Mosslight** (vengeful female human ghost), the lantern-bearing phantom of a murdered noblewoman whose bones still lie somewhere in its murky depths.

Dabril: This unassuming village, located a short distance up the Sellen River from Woodsedge, is renowned for its vast fields of fragrant flowers, used in both the manufacture of exotic perfumes and the raising of bees for honey production. Considered too tiny to merit much attention from the Council, Dabril was able to play an outsized role as a locus of rebellion during the Red Revolution by funding various insurgencies with the proceeds from expensive perfumes smuggled up the river to Kyonin. It remains a center of information brokerage to this day, thanks in large part to Firebrand agent **Handish Tremmel** (clever male halfling subversive), who maintains a vast network of couriers and informants from his inconspicuous honey farm.

Dread Dungeons: Hidden away high in the Fog Peaks is the massive prison complex of Galtcreed, constructed to hold political prisoners by decree of Primarch **Alberic Bremovir** (missing and deposed male human despot) in 4687 AR. Beneath the prison sprawls a labyrinthine network of tunnels and cells known as the Dread Dungeons, some of which extend all the way down to the Darklands realm of Nar-Voth. It was in these dark passages that Alberic encountered and struck an alliance with the sadistic deros of Kmlin-Bru, who agreed to serve the primarch by seizing dissidents across Galt from their beds in the dead of night and spiriting them away to the Dungeons in

exchange for permission to perform whatever twisted experiments they liked on the unfortunates they delivered.

When the Galtcreed Pact fell in 4692 AR, Primarch Bremovir famously escaped the new regime's justice by sending a double to be executed in his place and fleeing to the Dungeons. Multiple expeditions into the Fog Peaks have been launched in search of the secret prison, but none have located it, and Alberic's ultimate fate—as well as that of the thousands of Galtans who disappeared into the Dungeons during his tenure—remains unknown.

Edme: Once one of the most renowned centers of learning in all Golarion, the city of Edme now struggles to recover from decades of structural decay. At the onset of the Red Revolution, its prestigious Torvin Academy was converted into a prison for dissidents, and its quad transformed into a staging area for public executions. Today, it's little more than a looted and vandalized ruin. Crime, pestilence, and disease have run rampant through Edme's streets for decades, driving the people to desperation and attracting ever more predatory criminal elements. Even the presence of the famed vigilante the Red Raven has done little to stem the tide.

Edme is also the former home of Hosetter, who was the dean at Torvin when Xoanthurund first began to infect his mind with the seeds of violent insurrection that would eventually sprout into the Red Revolution. His soul still resides within the *final blade* named *Razor Jenni*, which was stolen from the quadrangle on the Night of the Gray Death and secreted away to a hidden chamber far beneath the university's ruins by an occult society calling itself the Knowledge of Ages, who regularly enact strange rituals seeking to communicate with the spirits trapped inside.

Fog Peaks: Named for the thick fog perpetually shrouding its pinnacles, this forbidding mountain range separates southern Galt from northern Taldor. Millennia ago, the Fog Peaks were ruled by a mighty nation of frost giants who constructed great fortresses of ice and stone from which they warred against the rapacious brood of Keljanir, an ancient rime dragon who had laid claim to the mountains since time immemorial. The war ended with both the death of Keljanir and the utter destruction of the frost giants' kingdom, but small war bands of giants and the descendants of their hated draconic foes still roam the mountains, launching the occasional raid against a lowland settlement from the cover of the great fog banks that occasionally roll down to swallow the foothills below.

Isarn: Galt's capital city is rebuilding. For more information on Isarn, see page 116.

Litran: This bustling farming community was once hailed as the breadbasket of central Galt, situated at the epicenter of miles of fertile fields, pastures, and orchards whose abundant yields kept the city's mills and breweries working from dawn to dusk. Today, it's best remembered as the first city in Galt to fall to the mob violence and indiscriminate bloodshed of the Red Revolution. It's also the location of the imposing monastery—its halls overrun with sahkils, undead, and worse—where the Gray Gardeners metastasized from an isolated cell of anti-Chelaxian dissent into a nationwide conspiracy of masked executioners who trapped Galt in a stranglehold of terror for more than half a century.

Litran has faced significant challenges in adjusting to the fall of the Gardeners, struggling to maintain order in the absence of their

LOCAL CLIMATE

As an entirely inland nation, Galt's climate is characterized by balmy springs and scorching summers, swiftly followed by brutal winters as freezing northern winds collide with the Fog Peaks in the southeast and blanket the plains in heavy snow. Low to moderate precipitation can be expected throughout much of the rest of the year, resulting in high levels of humidity during the hottest summer months that occasionally culminate in spectacular thunderstorms.

For the farming communities that make up much of central Galt, the growing season traditionally begins in early Sarenith and concludes with a harvest in late Rova. Some of the more temperate regions in the southwestern lowlands also observe a second growing season for hardier crops, such as rye and winter wheat, which typically lasts from Rova through late Neth.



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FLORA AND FAUNA

The sun-dappled Horun Plain of central Galt is an emerald expanse of tall grass, painted with splashes of vibrant color by dozens of varieties of native wildflowers. Among them are several intoxicating fragrant blooms that grow only along the banks of the Sellen River to the west, where they provide the town of Dabril with a steady supply of raw materials with which to craft their highly sought-after perfumes. In the spring and summer, the plains teem with wild rabbits, a mainstay of the rural Galtan diet as well as that of the many predatory raptors wheeling through the skies overhead.

The nation's forests boast a wide variety of different trees, with the Boarwood consisting mostly of conifers, such as spruce, pine, and fir, and the northeastern Verduran Forest and southern Hymbrian Forest producing more beech, maple, and oak. Numerous species of wildlife make their homes here; the Boarwood, unsurprisingly, is home to a large population of wild boars, but wolves, bears, badgers, and small wildcats, such as bobcats and lynx, are also commonly found in Galt's untamed woodlands.

oppressive but stabilizing influence while also dealing with the legacy of paranoia they left behind—a key aspect of which is an unvoiced understanding that a sizable portion of the city's population were once either Gardeners or actively supported them. Aiding the transition whenever possible are several recently arrived religious organizations representing faiths outlawed during the Gardeners' regime, including a sect of Pharasmians seeking to restore the city's ruined shrine and a team of Nethysian academics investigating rumors of the *Amaranthine Pillar*, a minor artifact of knowledge supposedly located beneath the monastery.

The Minaret: Among the Fog Peaks stands a domed tower of seemingly humanoid construction. The tower's existence is a little-known fact and all attempts to reach it have failed due to its dangerous and remote location. The people of Galt are unaware that the tower is actually of Qadiran origin. After a *wish* ritual gone wrong, the tower became displaced from Qadira, landing in the Fog Peaks. Inside the tower is an immortal, tyrannical Qadiran noble, bound to the tower and kept alive by the power of his corrupted *wish*.

Murkfen: This dank morass, slouching along the southeastern edge of the Hymbrian Forest, is given a wide berth by the hunters and lumberjacks who ply their trade in the area. It's rumored to be the domain of dark Fey and hags—particularly the notorious **Crapaudine, Queen of Toads** (fearsome female mobogo shapeshifter), who along with her apocryphal stepson **Coco the Cockatrice** (wicked male boggard poisoner), is the subject of several bawdy drinking songs popular in nearby Dabril. To those who dwell within sight of the fens, however, the toad queen is no laughing matter, and her name isn't to be spoken aloud after the sun drops below the horizon.

Crapaudine is no mere legend, though neither is she a hag: she's an ancient and powerful mobogo (*Monster Core 2* 224) who possesses the unique ability to take on a grotesquely distorted human shape. She's served by a retinue of corpse-pale and whisper-silent boggards, who regularly waylay anyone foolish enough to trespass in their realm and drag them into the swamp to serve as a living sacrifice for their queen. Some legends insinuate that Crapaudine might occasionally show leniency or even extend special favors to those who offer her something in return for their lives, although none specify just what the toad queen might request.

Nordein Glacier: Among the Fog Peaks is a deep valley filled with ever-growing ice. The site used to be home to an exiled jathoom who became a local legend. After a group of adventurers collapsed a demiplane containing the jathoom, the residual magic crept into the depths of the glacier's ice, causing the glacier to begin to slowly grow. After the Godsrain, this growth began to accelerate, and now the glacier threatens to overtake the entire valley and the Fog Peaks in a matter of years.

Rosehaven: This tiny village (population 376) on the East Sellen River observes an annual fall festival celebrating their defeat of a hag coven in 4684 AR, which gained some notoriety a decade ago when the hags' spiteful ghosts unleashed a plague of animated jack-o'-lanterns on the festivities.

Stavintower: This large but remote town south of the Boarwood is most known for its majestic cathedral. Stavintower's masterwork of architectural splendor, crowned by four soaring spires—one dedicated to each of the deities Abadar, Erastil, Pharasma, and Shelyn—once drew visitors from across the Shining Kingdoms. The locals prefer not to speak of the mysterious and grisly murders that sometimes occur on moonless nights, nor of the blood invariably found splashed across the claws, teeth, and horns of the cathedral's grotesque statuary on the mornings after.

Thrylheim: The ruins of this cyclopean city once served as the home of an ancient frost giant ruler. The portions of the giant's keep that lie above ground have been claimed by the elements, but the underground areas are relatively intact. These underground ruins still house *Eldavar*, a legendary blade made of black metal and emblazoned with flaming runes. The frost giant stole *Eldavar* from the lair of a powerful rime dragon called Keljanir. Keljanir attacked

Thrylleheim in an attempt to reclaim her stolen treasure, but her attack culminated in both her death and the death of the frost giant. *Eldavar* remains embedded in Keljanir's body to this day. Keljanir remains imprisoned beneath the ruins, now transformed into a ravener waiting for her opportunity to escape.

Tregan: This small town stands directly on the border between Galt and Taldor, technically placing it within both nations. During the Revolution, it was common for displaced Galtan nobles and other refugees to seek asylum in Tregan, where they might—or might not—receive assistance from the detachment of Taldan Lion Blades that had been covertly stationed there to prevent people from crossing the border and watch for potentially useful defectors. Today, due to its unique position and history, Tregan plays a crucial role in the Reconciliation Council's efforts to reunite Galtan expatriates in Taldor with their surviving loved ones in Galt. Unfortunately, these efforts have also stretched local resources thin as the town struggles to accommodate an influx of newcomers from both sides of the border, all the while remaining vigilant against opportunistic charlatans seeking to take advantage of them.

Verduran Forest: Due to its shared borders with both Andoran and Taldor, the remote patch of woodland making up the very northernmost branch of the Verduran Forest is one of only a few consistently unmonitored and unguarded paths out of Galt, historically representing a prime escape opportunity for dissidents and refugees capable of convincing the local druids to shepherd them through. Although the demand for discreet border crossings has fallen somewhat since the end of the Red Revolution, the route remains popular with smugglers of all kinds.

Vugorak: Hidden in the Hymbrian Forest just south of the East Sellen River, the isolated village (population 91) is populated exclusively by werecreatures and maintains an open invitation to all others, infected or trueborn, who seek refuge within their community.

Woodsedge: Woodsedge is famously known as the birthplace of Darl Jubannich, but the city's reputation as an incubator for revolutionary ideas long predates the publication of *On Government*. Even during the Revolution, Woodsedge remained a consistent hotbed of opposition to whoever currently held power, making it the frequent epicenter of violent uprisings but also, ironically, a somewhat safe harbor for enemies of the state whose activities would've gotten them sent them to the *final blades* anywhere else.

This antiestablishment zeal is generally shared by the local Pathfinder Society, who have long considered it their duty to serve as a beacon of hope through the darkness of the Revolution. Despite some initial reluctance to get involved, the Society has recently taken on a significant role in the Reconciliation Council's attempts to aid the people of Galt in recovering heirlooms and property misplaced or stolen during the Revolution, spurred partially by their own hopes of relocating some of the magical, historical, and cultural artifacts that were looted from the Woodsedge Lodge in 4704 AR during a violent riot that saw the building burned to the ground. The Lodge has also become a travel hub for diplomats and other foreign agents involved in various humanitarian efforts, thanks not only to the many portals in the Maze of the Open Road, but also a hidden basement passage connecting to the Low Highway, a major Darklands thoroughfare that runs the entire length of Galt.

Whistling Plains: A rippling sea of golden grass stretches for miles beneath an endless blue horizon. The vast steppe known as the Whistling Plains extends all the way from Galt's nebulous eastern border to the deserts of Qadira in the south and the Padishah Empire of Kelesh in the distant east. Its primary inhabitants are the Tzorehiyi, a tribe of horse-riding nomads descended from the Kellids who once inhabited the region.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

Bergemonte (population 400) is a small logging town on the northern Boarwood best known as the namesake of the Beast of Bergemonte, a still-unidentified creature that gruesomely killed over a hundred people in the Halvon-Azurestone region between 4696 and 4699 AR.

Almost 2,000 residents of **Halvon** (population 263) died on the Night of the Gray Death when Xoanthurund deliberately freed the gray death inside the town's *final blade* as a demonstration of its power. The town falls further into ruin with each passing year, and its chances of ever recovering appear increasingly bleak.

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THE RED RAVEN



ISARN

If the glory of pre-Revolutionary Galt once stood among the crowning achievements of the Shining Kingdoms, its capital city of Isarn was surely one of the finest jewels adorning that crown. At its height, Isarn boasted stately buildings, magnificent monuments, and sweeping bridges designed by the most esteemed architects of both Avistan and Garund; plazas decorated with colorful mosaics and engraved cobblestones; and meticulously manicured public grounds bordered by tree-lined promenades. The wonders of this breathtaking metropolis were regularly compared to those of the long-lost Age of Destiny.

The horrors inflicted by decades of revolution have devastated both the city and its people. More than 50 years on, its opulent neighborhoods have crumbled to ruin, its monuments and statues lie shattered in the streets, and its parks and promenades have been reduced to squalid encampments occupied by hordes of displaced and desperate Galtans with nowhere else to go. Nonetheless, the fall of the Gray Gardeners and subsequent humanitarian efforts by the Reconciliation Council have begun sowing the first seeds of hope within most Isarnians' lifetimes. Multiple economic stimulus initiatives and civic projects endeavor to create new opportunities for its most downtrodden residents to lift themselves out of poverty.

Society in Isarn has long maintained at least the illusion of being unstratified: when revolution first came to Galt, its nobles and aristocrats were the first to kneel before the *final blades*, and Isarn's middle and upper classes quickly learned that to flaunt one's wealth or influence was to risk joining them. As a result, even the most well-off of Isarn's citizens can be difficult to distinguish at a glance from its working class, having abandoned the high fashions and elaborate hairstyles of the city's heyday in favor of the uniform of the proletariat: simple skirts or trousers, a modest coat, wooden clogs, and distinctive red caps. The only accoutrement most dared to wear openly was the tricolor cockade, a silk emblem of three colors arranged in concentric circles: gold for fidelity, white for virtue, and red for the blood of patriots.

Although some members of the moneyed classes have re-embraced high fashion since the end of the Revolution, most still proudly wear the cockade, now out of a genuine love for their country rather than a fear of being labeled its enemy. This fierce patriotism unites Isarnians from all walks of life as they gradually adapt to an existence without the ever-present threat of arbitrary arrest and execution, although it remains to be seen what will happen as class divisions inevitably reassert themselves.

Galt has been almost entirely self-sufficient since the early days of the Revolution, relying upon the fertile farmlands of its interior to feed its people. With the borders closed, most goods traveling in and out of Galt did so in the hands of smugglers, who usually sold them at a hefty markup that placed them well out of the financial reach of the average Galtan. The Reconciliation Council has made a concerted effort to revitalize international trade, hoping to refill a treasury drained by its various national programs, but much of Galt's commercial activity still operates as a closed ecosystem, with rural settlements subsisting on produce from their own farms and cities relying exclusively upon the nearest agrarian communities outside their gates. Prior to 4718 AR, it was customary for Revolutionary Councils to exact heavy taxes on wine, flour, fruit, and vegetables entering Isarn to fund their activities, dramatically driving up the price of food and forcing many residents into starvation despite the abundance that lay just a few miles beyond the city walls. In response, small shanty towns consisting exclusively of taverns and eateries quickly sprang up just outside each of the city's six gates. These guinguettes, as they're known today, proved highly popular among the working and middle classes, and have remained so even after the Reconciliation Council's substantial reduction of their tax burden.

Even during the leanest years of the Revolution, the people of Galt have always taken great pride in their national cuisine, but the death of international trade has long consigned its most beloved delicacies to the realms of fantasy for most. Today, the typical diet of an Isarn resident is bread, vegetables, cheese, and wine, with the poorest relying exclusively on bread. Even with the abolition of the city's formerly punishing taxes on imported goods, meat remains a luxury and is typically reserved for special occasions with the choicest cuts affordable by only the wealthy—although many a Galtan has opted to treat this limitation as a challenge, taking pride in the unique culinary delights they can produce from nothing more than a humble portion of salted pork and a handful of produce. The latest obsession among the people of Isarn is the rediscovery of coffee, which has recently become available following the reestablishment of trade with the Padishah Empire of Kelesh. Trendy cafes dedicated to the drink have begun to appear in well-to-do districts, offering unique and expensive concoctions incorporating milk and sugar, and Southside laborers often start their workdays with simple earthenware cups of the stuff purchased from traveling vendors who dispense it from tin urns carried on their backs.

Public squares throughout Isarn once boasted elegantly decorated municipal fountains, designed by the same sculptors responsible for the city's most cherished monuments and placed throughout to provide the populace with fresh water through a combination of engineered water abstraction and specialized purification magic. Unfortunately, since the onset of the Revolution, most have been destroyed or allowed to fall into disrepair, leaving many Isarnians no choice but to drink from the polluted waters of the Stormflood River. What few functional fountains remain are always crowded, and a fee is traditionally levied by local authorities for every bucket collected. Professional water bearers are sometimes hired to deliver water directly to the homes of the wealthy, although the less scrupulous among them often avoid the crowds and charges at the fountains by delivering water drawn directly from the river.

Despite the Temple Ward's many places of worship, most contemporary Isarnians aren't particularly religious in comparison to the average Galtan. Those who do devote themselves to a deity typically revere Milani or Calistria; however, some insinuate that Calistria's popularity is likely boosted substantially by those who regularly visit her temples for reasons having little to do with religious devotion. Still, the observation of holy days and religious festivals has steadily been on the rise since the Night of the Gray Death, even if the particulars of their celebration remain largely secular in practice.

Isarn can be a dangerous place. Without ever-present patrols of Gray Gardeners terrorizing the city, street crime has been on the rise, including roving gangs of vigilantes as well as the usual burglars and ruffians. Hoping to curb this

ISARN

SETTLEMENT 12

METROPOLIS

Capital of Galt and seat of the Reconciliation Council

Government Citizens' council headed by a chairperson

Population 46,320 (91% humans, 4% halflings, 2% elves, 1% gnomes, 2% other)

Languages Common

Religions Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Milani, Norgorber, Shelyn

Threats economic instability, insurgent activity, urban decay

Anonymity Thanks to decades of administrative negligence and a deeply entrenched reluctance on the part of its citizens to cooperate with authority, Isarn is an excellent place to disappear or become someone else. By spending 24 hours and bribes totaling at least 100 gp per character level (increased at the GM's discretion as appropriate), you can obtain forged documents and pay off the right locals necessary to create a new social identity, with the effects of the vigilante archetype dedication (*Player Core* 2 218), except that the identity can only be used within Isarn. If you're a vigilante, you can create a separate social identity here as well as the one granted by your archetype. If this social identity is exposed to the public, you immediately lose all its benefits and can't create another one until 3 months have passed.

Armand Gravelstout (dutiful male dwarf watch commander) Commander of the newly formed City Watch

Camilia Drannoch (tenacious female human politician) First Citizen of the Reconciliation Council

Korran Goss (vindictive male human demagogue) Deposed First Citizen of the Revolutionary Council, currently imprisoned in the Monolith

Margaux Delacourt (scheming female aiuvarin human senator) Vice Speaker of the Galtan Senate

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epidemic, the Council has been working to establish a city guard capable of both maintaining public order and taking on more menial but no less vital responsibilities, such as cleaning and lighting the streets. Unfortunately, despite community outreach attempts by **Armand Gravelstout** (dutiful male dwarf watch commander), decades under the Gardeners' reign of terror have left the people of Isarn deeply distrustful of any police force, and relations between guards and the general population remain strained at best.

GAZETTEER

Isarn is situated directly on the Stormflood River, a northwestward-flowing river that eventually joins the East Sellen River. The river bisects the city and provides a vital transportation route for travelers and goods as well as a convenient dumping spot for refuse and industrial runoff. The city is completely surrounded by thick defensive walls that have stood for over six centuries and are punctuated by six large gates, the largest of which opens onto the Aspek Passage, a major thoroughfare leading directly to Revolutionary Plaza at the heart of the city.

Outside the plaza, Isarn consists of four major districts. North of the river are the Temple Ward, once home to some of the grandest houses of worship in the Chelaxian Empire; Blackwood Heights, known for its picturesque rows of lavish mansions; and the Chelaxian Ward, the notorious haven for intellectuals and artists where the

city's revolutionary fervor first took root. Across the river sprawls Southside, a ramshackle expanse of working-class homes, boardinghouses, docks, and industrial buildings.

BARROWHILL

This mélange of weathered stone structures is all that remains of an ancient mining encampment, established over a thousand years ago by laborers who'd come to work the region's rich limestone deposits. Most have long since succumbed to the elements, although a few buildings providing access to unused portions of the old quarry have been partially restored and converted into storehouses by local merchants. For the past two decades, Barrowhill has been known primarily as the base of operations for the Grieving Shepherds, an enigmatic order of devotees to the psychopomp usher Barzakh. They've sworn to take on the solemn duty of ushering Isarn's dead into the lightless depths of the ancient tunnels below.

Catacombs: Isarn's notorious catacombs are a labyrinthine network of subterranean tunnels that extend beneath the entire western half of the city, vestiges of the quarry from which Isarn's founders extracted the stone they used to construct it. The catacombs were repurposed in 4693 AR as an interment site for fresh arrivals from Revolutionary Square. Since then, wagons laden with human remains have rolled through Deacon's Gate almost nightly to be received by the Shepherds, who dutifully

convey them into the tunnels below for arrangement into vast and macabre works of art that stretch for miles. Though the insular Shepherds rarely deign to speak with those outside their order, transportation of remains into their custody has been overseen for nearly 20 years by Dr. **Augustin Lucien** (somber male human coroner), whose meticulous recordkeeping has proven a boon to the Reconciliation Council's efforts to catalog the Revolution's thousands of victims.

Gates of Hell: This tongue-in-cheek moniker refers to a crumbling mausoleum generally considered to be the official entrance to the catacombs. However, the expanse of lightless tunnels has dozens, if not hundreds, of mostly uncatalogued ingress points opening to sewers and basements throughout Isarn. The mausoleum is watched at all times by a company of armed guards commanded by Captain **Mireille Giroux** (vigilant female human guard captain), all of whom are tasked with ensuring that nobody without proper authorization is permitted to pass through the gates in either direction, day or night.

BLACKWOOD HEIGHTS

Colloquially known as “the Heights,” this district has a rich history dating back to Isarn's founding. As the traditional home of the city's nobility and other wealthy families, it became renowned during the Age of Enthronement for its lavish aristocratic mansions, whose ornate facades of imported blackwood earned the district its name, and its wide streets, designed specifically for travel by carriage and frequently bordered by sidewalks—an innovation rarely encountered elsewhere in the city. Unfortunately, the district's wealthier demographics made its residents a prime target for populist uprisings when the Red Revolution struck, and angry mobs looted and burned most of their mansions. Today, the district lies mostly in ruins, with only a few neighborhoods bordering Revolutionary Plaza remaining somewhat intact.

Kyonin Embassy: Few nations have retained diplomatic ties to Galt through its decades of political turmoil, though the Reconciliation Council is working diligently to reverse this state of affairs. The sole exception is the elven nation of Kyonin, which has maintained a subdued presence in Isarn throughout the Revolution, headed by Ambassador **Melliflora Talyndriel** (circumspect female elf diplomat). Kyonin's gestures toward political partnership have increased substantially since the reemergence of Tar-Baphon and the Godsrain, for the elves recognize a newly stabilized Galt as a potentially powerful regional ally.

Viceregal Palace: Once the formal residence of the Chelaxian viceroys and their families, this glorious palatial estate has been all but completely destroyed. The charred remains of the palace lie engulfed by its own overgrown gardens, and the streets encircling its grounds, once lined with fashionable shops and popular cafes, have become graveyards of shattered colonnades jutting from the ground like broken teeth. The palace's western grounds were the site of the infamous student protest where beloved Galtan actress Iryna Vosh was assassinated, and local legends claim that her tormented spirit still haunts the area.

CHELAXIAN WARD

Marked by its eclectic architecture and meandering streets, the Chelaxian Ward has been a hotbed of bohemian ideals and radical thought since long before the Red Revolution. Many well-known Galtan thinkers have been associated with the area, including Hosetter himself, who regularly patronized its cafes, salons, and bookshops during his time as a university student.

Almandine Academy: Although never as prestigious or influential as its counterpart in Edme, the Almandine Academy hosted a large student community that historically accounted for much of the district's population, attracting scholars and philosophers from all over Avistan and ultimately playing a major role in catalyzing local revolutionary sympathies. Almandine was the alma mater of the philosopher Hosetter, and printing presses located on the university campus were instrumental to student-run efforts at disseminating revolutionary literature and pamphlets throughout the city. Abandoned during the Revolution,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Isarn has had no municipal government of its own since 4670 AR, the year the first Revolutionary Council relocated there after seizing control of Galt several years before. From that point onward, each Council held the same absolute authority over the capital as it did the rest of the nation—at least, until a few years had passed and a new Council came along to supplant it.

Many Councils have ruled since then, each bringing its own unique approach to governance, but some constants have persisted. The Monolith has served as each Council's seat of power; every Council has declared a First Citizen to represent it in public; the Senate has always promptly approved any edicts issued by the Council, lest they face sedition charges; and most importantly, it was always understood until recently that no matter who sat on the Council, the only true power in Galt would always rest in the gloved hands of the Gray Gardeners.

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ISARNIAN FACTIONS

Isarn's fortunes are influenced by numerous local groups, some more public than others.

Bladebinders: Formed by the Reconciliation Council to secure and deliver the last remnants of the *final blades* and any related artifacts, this covert agency of occultists headed by **Molthune Montague** (dashing male human thaumaturge) has recently branched out into the procurement and study of warshards scattered across Galt by the Godsrain.

Broken Ghosts: Led by the enigmatic Catacomb Queen, this shadowy association of anarchists, former Gray Gardeners, and vengeful spirits cloaked in human flesh lurks deep in Isarn's catacombs, plotting to plunge Galt back into chaos as a prelude to transforming it into a nation of ghosts.

Sons of Goss: This violent militia is made up of sworn loyalists to imprisoned former First Citizen Korran Goss. They execute directives smuggled out of the Monolith by **Marcel Keane** (compromised male human prison guard), their sole aim being to destabilize the Reconciliation Council by any means necessary.

THE LITRANAISE

*O royal guards on your patrols
Each of your crimes we will repay
We whippoorwills will catch your souls
We are the Gardeners in Gray
Cruel tyrants, hear the widows weep
The beggars howl like starving trolls
Galt's children in the Boneyard sleep
But Mercy's Blade will hold your souls
We come to blight the blooming rose
We shades of frost, we fateful fey
We mourning doves, we hooded crows
We are the Gardeners in Gray*

—verses from "The Litranaise," former revolutionary anthem of Galt

when what was considered subversive changed with every Council, the academy has recently taken steps toward reopening under the watchful eye of **Lorraine Delmas** (determined female human academic).

The Silent Sanctum: This cramped and dusty bookstore has stood in the Chelaxian Ward for nearly a century, dispensing popular literature, academic textbooks, and obscure historical tomes. During the Revolution, those needs more often than not involved the procurement or distribution of seditious material, which the Sanctum's elderly proprietor, **Aloysius ban Dreroc** (discreet male kayal bookseller) could facilitate through an extensive network of smugglers and fences for the right price. Its basement, a magically climate-controlled repository for the oldest and most fragile books in its collection, has also been used as a meeting place where at least three Revolutionary Councils have plotted the overthrow of their predecessors. Curiously, none of them have ever seemed to recall its existence after coming to power.

REVOLUTIONARY PLAZA

Revolutionary Plaza—formerly Gaspodar Plaza, in accordance with a pre-Thrunitic tradition of naming it after the latest monarch of Chelax—is a large public square originally commissioned as a space for celebrations of Galtan grandeur. A majestic equestrian statue of King Gaspodar once stood at its center, but it was torn down by revolutionaries in 4669 AR alongside much of the city's other royal memorabilia, and its foundation was converted into the resting place of the *final blade* named *Madame Margaery*. Today, both foundation and blade are gone, but the square remains indelibly stained by their presence, the blackened mortar between its cobblestones a lasting reminder of all the blood spilled over decades of mass murder.

The Monolith: A towering keep of black stone, Isarn's notorious Hall of Justice looms over the buildings around it, figuratively and literally casting a shadow across Revolutionary Plaza. Its upper floors have housed the offices and residential apartments of every Revolutionary Council since 4670 AR, while its ground floor is dedicated to municipal courts and administration of the prison below. A few smaller structures huddle outside the southern wall, including a private dock for the discreet transfer of prisoners and a modest barracks housing the keep's indigo-uniformed guards. The latter are led by Commandant **Vicus Arendt** (resolute male human guard captain), who has served for 30 years and across five Revolutionary Councils.

Parliament Building: This grand building houses the chambers of the Galtan Senate as well as apartments and offices utilized by senators and their staff. Pre-Revolution, its halls were lined with paintings, statuary, and historical documents celebrating the nation's heritage, most of which have since been destroyed—or replaced with something more sympathetic to the latest regime—in various cultural purges. Though no vote has been held in decades, senators still convene monthly in a horseshoe-shaped central chamber to discuss affairs of state and draft legislative proposals for presentation to the ruling Council. Historically little more than tacit approvals of the Council's latest policies, senatorial legislation has lately become more forward, with **Rene Renault** (shrewd male halfling Senate speaker) and his associate Margaux Delacourt regularly urging First Citizen Drannoch to respect traditional Galtan ideals by relinquishing more executive power to the Senate.

SOUTHSIDE

To visitors from elsewhere in Isarn, Southside can feel like an entirely different city. Its cobbled streets are winding and narrow, forcing pedestrians to jostle for the right-of-way with wagons and beasts of burden. Its buildings are compact but tall, sometimes towering over six stories and clustered so closely they block sunlight from reaching the streets below. Many are newer constructions, since most older buildings were burned to the ground during the Revolution and rebuilt—some more than once. The majority of Isarn's docks and warehouses are

located here along the Stormflood's south bank, where goods arriving by barge and riverboat can be received, stored, and distributed. Despite the city's best efforts, smuggling and illicit trade have always been common, and Revolution-era demand for black markets in basic necessities has only exacerbated the problem.

Southside Market: Southside was once famous for its enormous open-air market, where vendors sold all manner of goods, arriving before sunrise and often remaining past midnight. Better known during the Red Revolution as the site of regular riots and protests, in recent years it's regained some semblance of its former glory, with wagons now passing through Isarn's southernmost gates each morning to restock its stalls with fresh bread, fish, vegetables, and even luxuries like eggs, fruit, and flowers.

Deschamps Lumber: Officially, every *final blade* recovered by the Reconciliation Council has been identified, documented, and destroyed. Unofficially, a pair of blades known as *Red Molly* and the *Sanguine Countess* were recorded as destroyed but secretly hidden away in a chamber beneath this unremarkable warehouse, because First Citizen Drannoch is acutely aware of the powerful bargaining chips they could represent in dealing with potential allies and threats alike. The chamber is heavily fortified, warded against scrying and location magic, and guarded around the clock by a company of elite sentinels led by **Aveline Rousseau** (watchful female human guard captain), a staunch Council loyalist who knows better than to ask questions.

The House of Joy: The city's most well-attended church isn't in the Temple Ward. Nestled among the taverns and boardinghouses of western Southside, one can locate easily the Calistrian temple known as the House of Joy by the sweet fragrance emanating from its honeysuckle-filled temple gardens. For decades, it has provided the people of Isarn with spiritual counsel and entertainment of the flesh to distract them from the horrors of the Revolution. Currently administered by Mistress **Philomela** (well-connected female human high priestess of Calistria), the House of Joy has stood for over a century and is one of few buildings in the city to remain almost entirely unscathed through the entirety of the Red Revolution. Whether that can be ascribed to the protection of its goddess, the canniness of its clergy, or the dozens of dog-sized bees and wasps that continuously swarm about the massive statue of Calistria presiding over its central courtyard, none can say.

TEMPLE WARD

Perturbed by the idea of its playthings venerating deities over itself, Xoanthurund intentionally provoked violent schisms in Isarn's organized religious orders early in the Revolution. A brief resurgence in the form of the theocratic Illuminated Cloister, led by a priesthood secretly devoted to the conqueror worm, did little to mend these rifts, and the average Isarnian today is likely to regard gods with the same disdain they hold for the foreign nations they accuse of abandoning them. With few residential or commercial areas, the Temple Ward has become largely abandoned, and few Isarnians dare to venture too far into its derelict ruins.

Grand Basilica of the Last Azlanti: The largest temple dedicated to Aroden outside of Chelax and one of Isarn's most stunning architectural achievements, the basilica stands at the heart of the district, its magnificent spire visible from nearly anywhere in the city. Once a vibrant hub of communal worship, it's now a looted husk befitting its fallen patron; the spire's massive bells, which once echoed throughout Isarn every day at noon, have lain silent for decades, and the hands of the enormous clock adorning its southeastern face are rusted and immovable, perpetually frozen at the stroke of midnight.

Cemetery of Saint Alika the Martyr: Although associated primarily with the church of Aroden, this large walled graveyard's connection with the larger community made it a popular interment site for Isarnians of all faiths and creeds. Early in the Revolution, the Revolutionary Council commandeered it for the mass burial of executed dissidents, but as the body count climbed, these burials ceased, and victims of the *final blades* were instead piled into wagons and transported outside the city for disposal in the catacombs.

HERALDRY

The traditional heraldic crest of Isarn is the iris, a bright yellow flower that sprouts in vast quantities on the banks of the Stormflood to either side of the city. Before the Revolution, all irises in Galt were considered property of the Chelaxian crown, and plucking one without permission was a capital offense when House Thrune seized control of the nation in 4640 AR. Though Galt hasn't recognized Thrune authority in over 50 years, this law remains in force.

GALTAN HOLIDAYS

Galtans have always held a special fondness for holidays and festivals, especially those affording an opportunity to deploy the colorful fireworks produced by the Isarn Alchemists' Guild.

5 Neth: All King's Day commemorates Jubannich and Hosetter's declaration of Galtan independence. Lately, as Galt grapples with the Revolution's bloody legacy, many opt instead to observe 14 Neth, a Chelaxian commemoration of the Even-Tongued Conquest co-opted by Milani worshippers as a celebration of freedom from oppression.

13 Lamashan: The anniversary of the Night of the Gray Death is a day to celebrate the fall of Xoanthurund and the Gray Gardeners while memorializing their victims. Participants place candles in windows and shrines to honor lost loved ones, and then gather in public houses to celebrate the indomitable Galtan spirit in true Galtan fashion: with food and drink.

Crystalhue: This Shelynite winter celebration of light and rainbows is also a day to reconcile with those one has wronged. In Galt, participants exchange trinkets in an attempt to atone for deeds committed during the Red Revolution—a disproportionate number of which are placed upon graves.

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GALT OPTIONS

The following character options are found within Galt.

GHOST FEATS

Galt is one of the most haunted regions in Avistan, a legacy of the Red Revolution that has left the nation overflowing with restless spirits of the unjustly murdered. Freed from the confines of the *final blades* that held them prisoner for decades, some of these phantoms remain anchored to the living world by a thirst for vengeance against those responsible for their deaths, while others find themselves unable to rest until their beloved homeland has been restored to its former glory.

The following feats are suitable options for Galtan ghost characters who have taken the ghost archetype found on pages 46–47 of *Pathfinder Book of the Dead*.

HEADLESS HAUNT

FEAT 4

RARE ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Dedication; **Access** You were executed with a *final blade*.

You were condemned to death and executed with one of Galt's infamous *final blades*, where your soul was trapped for years or even decades. You might have been released alongside a host of other spirits when your prison was destroyed after the Night of the Gray Death, or powerful magic or other unique circumstances might have facilitated your escape. Whatever the method, you have unfinished business preventing you from passing on to the afterlife. You gain the Remove Head action.

Remove Head ◆ (manipulate) **Effect** You Interact to remove your head from your ghostly body and hold it in a free hand. While your head is detached, you can use it to look around and over obstacles while remaining behind cover, although you don't have line of effect to target creatures unless the effect originates from your head. You can leave your head behind and move your body around independently, but your head gains the paralyzed condition and your body becomes blind, deaf, and unable to take any action that has the auditory trait that requires speech or vocalization. You can cause your head to dematerialize and reappear atop your neck as a free action, which occurs automatically if it takes damage while detached or is separated from your body by more than 50 feet.

FLING HEAD ◆ TO ◆◆◆

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE AUDITORY MANIPULATE

Prerequisites Headless Haunt

Frequency once per minute

You Interact to remove your head, if it isn't already detached, and fling it at an enemy within 30 feet, where it emits a bone-chilling wail before dematerializing and returning to your body. Your target must attempt a Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. You can affect one additional creature within 20 feet of your original target for each additional action you spend.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is frightened 2 and can't reduce their frightened value below 1 while they remain within 30 feet of you.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature is frightened 3.

HAUNTING MEMORIES

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Headless Haunt

Your soul bears metaphysical impressions of the innumerable other spirits imprisoned with you in the *final blade* from which you escaped, allowing you to draw upon their memories. When you make your daily preparations, you can either gain the expert proficiency rank in one skill in which you're untrained or raise your proficiency rank to master in one skill in which you're trained or better. You also gain one skill feat with a minimum requirement of your new rank in the chosen skill. For the purpose of meeting level prerequisites for this feat, your level is equal to half your level.

This proficiency and feat last until you make your daily preparations again. Since the proficiency is temporary, you can't use it as a prerequisite for any permanent character option.

KLINGEGEIST ◆◆

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATION POSSESSION

Prerequisites Headless Haunt

Frequency once per day

Your imprisonment inside a *final blade* used to perform countless executions has instilled in you an aptitude for entering and possessing similar sharp implements of murder. You project your mind and incorporeal body into an unattended weapon of 2 Bulk or less that deals slashing damage.

While possessing a blade, you have a space of 5 feet, but you don't block or impede enemies attempting to move through your space, nor do you benefit from or provide flanking. You're trained in the use of the weapon, unless your proficiency was already better, and you can make Strike actions with the weapon as if you were wielding it. You gain a Fly speed of 30 feet and can only take Strike and Fly actions, which don't trigger reactions. You have an AC of 18 + your level and the Hardness and Hit Points of the weapon you're possessing, which for most one-handed slashing weapons is Hardness 5 and HP 20. You can't be Disarmed, nor can your true body be directly injured except by spirit damage, which bypasses both the weapon's Hardness and Hit Points to damage you directly.

If you're reduced to 0 Hit Points or the weapon you're inhabiting is broken or destroyed, you're immediately ejected from it and paralyzed for 1 round. Otherwise, the effect lasts for 10 minutes or until you Dismiss it.

GHOSTLY CONDEMNATION

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE DIVINE EMOTION FEAR MENTAL

Prerequisites Headless Haunt

Frequency once per day

You shriek a death sentence upon a single target within 120 feet, forcing it to experience the final moments of your mortal life as you were dragged through a howling mob and forced to kneel before the *final blade* that took your life and head. The target is subject to the effects of a 5th-rank *vision of death* with a DC equal to your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. If you slay a significant foe with this ability, its physical body is gruesomely decapitated, forcing its allies within 15 feet to attempt a Will save against the same DC or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

COMPANIONS

Galt is home to a number of creatures and entities found nowhere else on Golarion, some of which might be available to player characters as companions. These creatures function as animal companions in most respects, although the GM is strongly encouraged to limit their availability to characters meeting specific story requirements. A player character can have only one companion of any kind at a time.

GRAY BLADELING

RARE CONSTRUCT UNDEAD

Access You're from Galt.

Your companion is a vaguely humanoid construct composed of razor-sharp blades and animated by an amalgamation of restless soul fragments, similar to a miniature gray death. Although it possesses no identity or memories from the souls it contains, it's driven by a powerful but unfocused hate that its master must sometimes struggle to control.

Size Small

Melee ♦ blade (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d8 slashing

Str +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1

Hit Points 10 (void healing)

Skill Athletics

Senses darkvision, lifesense (imprecise) 30 feet

Speed 20 feet

Special A gray bladeling has the construct and undead traits instead of the animal trait. It has immunity to bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, and sickened. Unlike most undead, it becomes unconscious and dying rather than being destroyed instantly at 0 Hit Points; unlike most constructs, its Hit Points can be restored by only void healing instead of any other actions that restore Hit Points to objects or nonliving creatures.

Support Benefit The gray bladeling slashes viciously at your enemy when you create an opening. Until the start of your next turn, each time you hit a creature in the bladeling's reach with a Strike, the creature takes 1d4 persistent bleed damage or becomes frightened 1 if it's already taking persistent bleed damage. If the gray bladeling is specialized, the persistent bleed damage increases to 1d8.

Advanced Maneuver Possessing Strike

POSSESSING STRIKE

CURSE OCCULT MENTAL

Frequency once per hour

Your gray bladeling attempts to inject a malevolent soul fragment into a victim to seize control of their actions. The gray bladeling makes a blade Strike against a living creature. If it hits and deals damage, the target must attempt a Will saving throw against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. Regardless of the result, the target is temporarily immune to Possessing Strike for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target fights off the possessing soul fragment but is stunned 1.

Failure The target is confused for 1 round and can't use offensive actions against you or your gray bladeling.

Critical Failure As failure, but if the target takes damage from an attack or spell, the DC of the flat check to recover from the confusion is 15.

SEVERED HEAD

UNCOMMON UNDEAD

Your companion is an undead severed head. The Red Revolution left countless mass graves across Galt, filled with the beheaded corpses of those executed by the *final blades*. Most of the victims' heads were unceremoniously dumped alongside their bodies, but many were snatched by unscrupulous necromancers who found them to be a convenient (and unfortunately plentiful) raw material for the creation of simple undead minions.

Size Small

Melee ♦ jaws (finesse), **Damage** 1d6 piercing

Str +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 4 (void healing)

Skill none (mindless)

Senses darkvision

Speed 15 feet, fly 25 feet

Special A severed head has the undead trait instead of the animal trait, granting it void healing and immunity to death effects, disease, and poison. It's also mindless (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 37).

Support Benefit The head latches on to your enemy with its jaws when you create an opening, distracting them and hampering their movement. The next creature within range of your severed head that you successfully Strike before the start of your next turn takes a -5-foot status penalty to its Speeds and must succeed at a DC 5 flat check to use reactions triggered by your actions until the start of your next turn. On a failure, the reaction is lost.

Advanced Maneuver Gnash

GNASH

Requirements The severed head's last action was a successful jaws Strike.

Your severed head violently shakes itself back and forth, trying to tear away a mouthful of flesh. It makes another jaws Strike against the same target. If the Strike hits, it deals 1d6 persistent bleed damage in addition to its usual damage.

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A LIMITED RESOURCE

Although some of these options presume that a player character has somehow managed to obtain one or more fragments of a *final blade*, it's important to remember that despite their prominence in Galt during the Red Revolution, these murderous artifacts remain quite rare, with barely a score ever having been created and nearly all of those having been destroyed since the Night of the Gray Death. A character openly carrying a *final blade* or its remains will certainly provoke strong reactions from citizens who lost loved ones to the Revolution and is highly likely to attract attention from individuals who might seek to take it for their own nefarious purposes.

MAGIC ITEMS

Galt's bloody history has produced several unique magical items in addition to the infamous *final blades*, including at least one notorious weapon crafted from their remains.

JORNGARL'S HARM

ITEM 20

UNIQUE OCCULT

This oversized greataxe, infamous for the chilling laughter it emits whenever it takes a life, was crafted by the frost giant sorcerer Jorngarl from the *final blade* named *Toothy Morris* after it was stolen in an attack on a Gray Gardener convoy. It functions as a +3 *major striking vorpal greataxe* that retains the unique properties of a *final blade*, trapping the souls of any it slays and preventing them from being returned to life by any means short of divine intervention, even a *wish* ritual or similar magic.

SPLINTER OF FINALITY

During the events of the Night of the Gray Death, the *final blade* known as *Silent Lenore* was overwhelmed by a surge of psychic energy that shattered it into 13 fragments. While many *final blades* since recovered have been rendered inert and harmless by means of the *blunt the final blade* ritual (*Pathfinder Adventure: Night of the Gray Death* 63), the remnants of *Silent Lenore*—and perhaps some other *final blades* still unaccounted for—were recovered in secret and crafted into powerful talismans of cruelty.

The *splinter of finality* is an archetype artifact, a type of powerful item that's described starting on page 182 of *Pathfinder Treasure Vault*.

SPLINTER OF FINALITY

ITEM 2

RARE ARTIFACT INVESTED OCCULT

The sharpness of this dark metal splinter never dulls. By plunging it into your neck, you anchor your soul to the fragment, granting you protection from those that would harm it at the cost of weakening your body. You take a -1 status penalty to saving throws against effects that would give you the clumsy, drained, or enfeebled condition. At 10th level, the penalty increases to -2. However, you gain spirit resistance equal to your level and a +2 status bonus to saving throws against spirits or haunts and effects that would give you the confused, controlled, doomed, or stupefied conditions.

Destruction All 13 *splinters of finality* must be gathered and used to reconstruct *Silent Lenore*, which must then be destroyed by means of the *blunt the final blade* ritual.

SPLINTER OF FINALITY FEATS

SPECTRAL DAGGER

FEAT 2

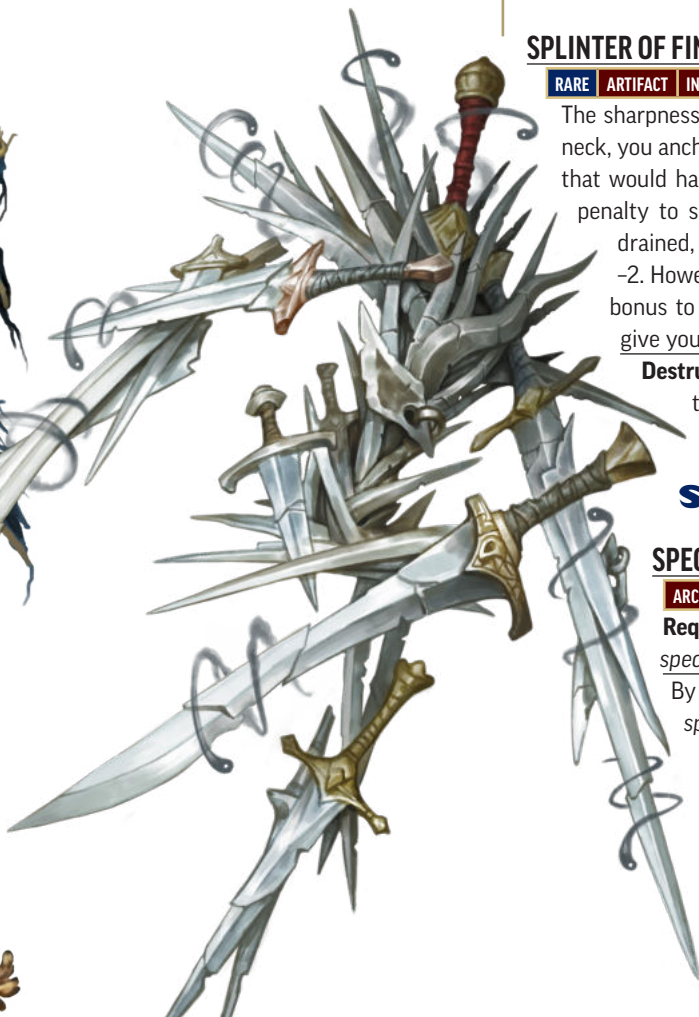
ARCHETYPE MANIPULATE

Requirements You have a hand free and aren't already wielding a *spectral dagger*.

By touching the *splinter of finality* in your neck, you conjure a *spectral dagger* into your hand that resembles the *splinter* wrapped in a crude hilt. This weapon acts like a +1 *ghost touch dagger*, and each successful Strike with it deals 1 additional spirit damage. If the attack is a critical hit, this damage increases to 1d6.

If the *spectral dagger* ever leaves your hand, it vanishes and you must spend an action to conjure it again. If this occurs as the result of you making a ranged thrown Strike with the dagger, you resolve the attack before the weapon vanishes.

You can increase the power of your *spectral dagger* with runes like you can other weapons, transferring the rune from a *runestone* or other weapon by meditating over the rune as a downtime activity that takes 1 day.



GRAY BLADELING

DREAD BLADE

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Spectral Dagger

Your strikes with your conjured dagger impart the chill of the grave. When you successfully Strike with your *spectral dagger* and damage a foe with the frightened condition, they can't reduce their frightened condition below 1 before the end of your next turn.

SOUL BLEED

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Spectral Dagger

Your blade can rupture an enemy's very soul, draining away its essence to empower you. When you score a critical hit with your *spectral dagger*, you deal 1d6 persistent spirit damage. If the target wasn't already taking persistent spirit damage when you scored the critical hit, you gain temporary Hit Points equal to the spirit damage dealt by the attack that last until the beginning of your next turn.

SOUL WELL

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE | MANIPULATE | OCCULT

Frequency once per hour

You brush your fingers across your *splinter of finality*, momentarily creating a metaphysical vortex from which mortal spirits struggle to escape. For the next minute, incorporeal undead treat all squares within 30 feet of you as difficult terrain and living creatures within the same area die from the dying condition at dying 5 rather than dying 4. As it comes close to tasting a living soul, the *splinter of finality* is empowered. If a living creature's dying value increases while within your Soul Well, your *spectral dagger* deals one additional weapon die of damage until the end of your next turn.

LETHAL EDGE

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Spectral Dagger

Trigger Your Strike with your *spectral dagger* hits a frightened creature and deals spirit damage.

When the terrified are struck by your spectral weapon, they feel the anguish of every life taken by *Silent Lenore*. You apply one of the following effects, which lasts until the end of your next turn.

- The target can't use reactions.
- The target is enfeebled 1.

HUNGRY BLADE

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE

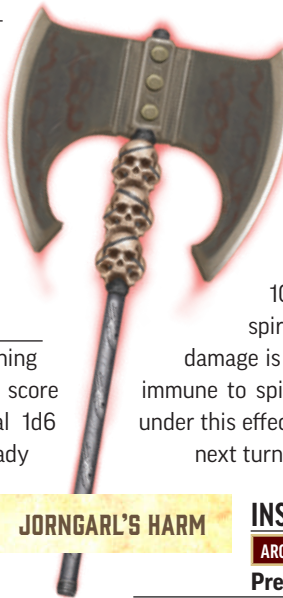
Prerequisites Spectral Dagger

Frequency once per day

Requirements Your previous action was a Strike with your *spectral dagger* that dealt spirit damage.

Once your *spectral dagger* has tasted an enemy's soul, your *splinter of finality* becomes increasingly relentless in its attempts to claim the soul. Your *spectral dagger* gains the

FEAT 4



JORNGARL'S HARM

effects of a *keen* property rune that applies only to Strikes against the target of the required Strike. This effect lasts for 10 minutes or until that target dies, whichever comes first.

VENGEFUL REMNANT

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE | MANIPULATE | OCCULT

Frequency once per day

You wreath yourself in the tatters of all the souls claimed by your blade. Until the start of your next turn, you gain resistance 10 to all damage except force, *ghost touch*, spirit, and vitality, doubled if the source of the damage is non-magical. If you slay a significant foe not immune to spirit damage with your *spectral dagger* while under this effect, its duration increases until the end of your next turn.

INSTRUMENT OF DEATH

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lethal Edge

Your *splinter of finality* has reached the apex of its death-dealing potential. Whenever you critically succeed at an attack roll against an enemy and use Lethal Edge, add the following effects to the list you can choose from.

- The target is cursed and can't benefit from circumstance or status bonuses. This is a curse effect.
- The target gains weakness 10 to spirit damage.

GUILLOTINE BLADE

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE | OCCULT

Prerequisites Spectral Dagger

Frequency once per day

The echoes of the *splinter of finality*'s original purpose resonate through the artifact. For the next minute, your *spectral dagger* gains the benefits of a *vorpal* rune. When you use Snicker-Snack with your *spectral dagger*, the DC of the Fortitude save is 37, your class DC, or your spell DC, whichever is higher.

SOUL OUBLIETTE

ARCHETYPE | CONCENTRATE | OCCULT | UNHOLY

Prerequisites Spectral Dagger

Trigger You reduce a creature to 0 Hit Points with an attack from your *spectral dagger*.

Requirements Your *splinter of finality* doesn't contain a trapped soul.

Your mortal strike wrenches the soul from your victim's body and imprisons it in your *splinter of finality*, with the effects of *seize soul*. The *splinter of finality* can only hold one soul at a time, but you can release a trapped soul as a free action. If you don't free a soul willingly, it escapes automatically after 24 hours. However, if you touch the *splinter of finality* to an unbroken *final blade* while a soul is trapped within, the soul is transferred to the *final blade* and imprisoned indefinitely.

While your *splinter of finality* contains a trapped soul, you gain fast healing 15.

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KYONIN

NATIONS



KYONIN
Capital: Iadara
Government: Monarchy
Ruler: Queen Telandia Edasseril

PEOPLES

Aiuvarins
 Elves
 Fey
 Gnomes

LANGUAGES

Common
 Elven

FACTIONS



Knights of
 Lastwall



Shieldwrought
 Striders



Wylderhearts

RELIGIONS



Alseta



Keteplys



Calistria



Nethys



Desna



Yuelral



Findeladlara

RESOURCES



Coffee



Gems



Honey



Lore



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Perfume



Precious
 Metals



Seafood



Tea



Textiles



Wine



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KYONIN





The six elements reign free in Kyonin through the soils that host life, the wood of its indomitable forests, the waters of its flowing rivers, the sharp winds of the Five Kings Mountains, the metal worked in the hands of dedicated elven smiths, and the fires in the hearths of every home. Rather than tearing down the land to make space for themselves, the citizens of Kyonin harmonize with the natural world and with the relics of their ancestors. The lush, verdant woods and rolling hills are peppered with unusual mementos of a history elves have no intention of erasing. Towns are built upon crumbled ruins, children compare their heights to statues whose significance has been forgotten, and aged trees are used as the foundations for tall towers. Civilization and nature don't vie for dominance in Kyonin but instead harmoniously intertwine.

Most of the land is dominated by the ancient Fierani Forest, which is divided by the Endowhar and Kyonin Rivers. Towns and villages can be difficult for outsiders to locate as elven architecture weaves its buildings into nature, making settlements nearly indistinguishable from woodland. The forest is left as untouched as possible, making it and its residents fiercely wild. Reclusive fey roam freely, and wildlife is abundant as elves rarely, if ever, domesticate livestock.

The forest's southern portion is peppered with freshwater swamps. Most of them teem with aquatic wildlife, but the farther one travels south, the more

the trees become sickly, the soil degrading into rot due to the corrupting influence of the nascent demon lord Treerazer. Demons scour the blighted swampland known as Tanglebriar for anyone unlucky enough to blunder into their territory. Trespassing within its boundaries is forbidden, and only the most foolhardy of adventurers have entered the area for centuries. With Treerazer's recent demise, however, there's hope that elves can drive out the region's lingering fiends and reclaim their ancestral land, restoring the Fierani Forest to its former glory.

Dotting Kyonin's landscape are numerous ruins, the relics of former settlements and other important sites from an age long past. The majority of them are located along the southern reaches of the region, just north of the Five Kings Mountains. While these ruins were initially abandoned after Earthfall, they remain neglected to this day due to their proximity to Tanglebriar and the dangers that lie within the corrupted portions of the forest. Many of Kyonin's residents see these remnants as possible sources of knowledge and power that might even help clear the corruption once and for all. For now, expeditions into safer locales and occasionally into the ruins within Tanglebriar have been increasing in number.

To Kyonin's southeast are mostly rolling hills and grasslands, while the southern border consists of the northernmost part of the Five Kings Mountains. Few elves live in either of these areas. The grasslands are

unappealing due to their proximity to the River Kingdoms and lack of natural defenses, and life so close to the tall mountain cliffs is hard and perilous. Those who choose to dwell in the mountains interact more with dwarves and their cliffside neighbors, the giant owls of the House of Sky, than with their fellow elves.

Kyonin's elves are as free-spirited and untamed as the Fierani Forest, maintaining a delicate balance between propriety and autonomy. Freedom and individuality are the nation's primary values; they allow all to live as they wish as long as it doesn't harm or impose on others. The long lifespan of elves allows for them to follow multiple different paths and occupations before settling on a vocation. This meandering might seem fickle to others, but elves believe their bouts of whimsy to be as natural as bends in a rushing river.

Despite their purported flightiness, many elves in Kyonin are devoted to tradition. They take great pride in their long history and culture, and they strive to rediscover parts of their story that have been lost to time, such as the secrets of creating *aiudara*, the magical stone archways found all across the planet. Some elves have devoted their lifetimes to studying these teleportation portals so that one day their magic can be recreated to build Kyonin up to wondrous new heights, though plenty still prefer to set their eyes on new ventures.

Aiudara are also key to a momentous occasion in Kyonin's past. As the threat of Earthfall loomed in Golarion's immediate future, Kyonin's elves made use of a powerful gate to transport them away from the planet. Elves returned some millennia later only to find that much of Kyonin and the rest of the world had changed, which led to many choosing to focus on their own families and nations for some time before slowly reaching to neighbors beyond their borders.

Few nations on Golarion besides Kyonin can boast such a continuous and peaceful history, though some question whether that peace came at the cost of alienating its neighbors. While Kyonin has a history of isolationism and paranoia, it has opened its once-closed arms to those around it to protect its people and become a better version of itself. More recently, Kyonin has begun to write a new chapter of its story: its people now lead its neighbors to stand against vicious foes like Tar-Baphon.

GOVERNMENT

Kyonin is ruled by Queen Telandia Edasseril, who ascended the throne when the previous king had no heirs to inherit the position. Her power is symbolized by the *Viridian Crown* historically worn by Kyonin's monarchs. A peacekeeper and diplomat, Queen Telandia has best exemplified her grace and caution by the fact that her crown of vines and flowers has never sprouted thorns to indicate she has entertained thoughts of war. The queen entrusts many of the smaller tasks required to keep Kyonin running smoothly to those qualified to carry them out while she tends to the larger issues at hand.

There are two Major Laws in Kyonin, followed by minor laws. The first Major Law is to never impose on another's freedom, and the second is to obey the edicts of the ruling monarch. The First Law implicitly covers most basic aggressions, such as murder and theft, while the monarch's role is to create edicts to supplement what's left ambiguous or deemed necessary. One important edict is that all children must receive formal education until they're of proper age to choose an apprenticeship if desired, which is roughly around age 20. Below these Major Laws and edicts are the minor laws, which are created and applied by individual cities and towns.

Laws are enforced by a town or city's guards and local judicial system, though the queen has secret adjudicators who quietly check up on areas to weed out any corruption. These royal Threshers have the authority to deal justice themselves but commonly report to the queen or members of her council. Criminals guilty of serious crimes are transported to Kyonin's capital, Iadara, to face judgment from the Council of Justice. Crimes of national concern are judged by the queen herself.

Official councils are created by the monarch to aid them in governing Kyonin. The oldest and most powerful council is the Council of Justice, which rotates its members every half century. Conversely, the Council of Guidance holds the most political influence and supports the queen in policymaking, and royal advisors constitute its members. The third of the most notable councils is the Council of Sanctity, which settles religious disputes and researches lost elven history, sending droves of diplomatic envoys throughout Golarion to demand the return of elven artifacts.

The majority of those in court are elven nobles, simply referred to as lady or lord. Titles such as duke or baron don't exist in Kyonin, with courtiers expected to remember and recognize who's of what rank. Higher-ranked nobles can often be identified by unique jewelry that might have been gifted by the royal family in previous centuries. Although nobility is more likely to serve in court than commoners, it isn't uncommon for ordinary civilians to join the ranks of the queen's many advisors.

While a rare few in court have the will and social standing to be an individual power, most form small coteries of like-minded politicians. The largest groups are made up of those who tend toward tradition; they're often comfortable with Kyonin's history of isolation and uninterested in the merits of interacting with other cultures. However, new generations are forming their own factions to counter the old guard, gaining traction as Kyonin opens itself to neighboring nations.

Kyonin has no formal military force, instead relying on elite guards and rangers to protect its people. In times of strife, volunteers are the first to join the temporary army while others train in case they're called upon. Though elves prefer to live freely, they're aware that sometimes one must commit to actions they might not ordinarily choose to protect such freedoms. When necessary, the monarch's word supersedes the First Law.

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HISTORY

TIMELINE

Age of Serpents (Unknown) Elves arrive on Golarion with the *Sovyrian Stone*, founding Kyonin.

- 5293 AR After receiving portents of Earthfall, most elves leave Golarion. Some remain behind to guard the *Sovyrian Stone*, and others become founders of other elven nations.
- 2497 AR Treerazer arrives in Kyonin and begins to corrupt the nation's forests.
- 2632 AR Treerazer attempts to corrupt the *Sovyrian Stone*, causing a mass return of elves to defend Kyonin.
- 2633 AR Treerazer's forces overtake Shevaroth, corrupting the

Kyonin's storied history has been long protected by its elven residents, who were reticent to share their struggles to their neighbors and admit the loss of culture that ensued after their exodus.

THE FIRST ELVES

It's believed that elves first arrived on Golarion during the Age of Serpents, bringing with them the immensely powerful crystal known as the *Sovyrian Stone*. These elves made their journey through two mysterious sister arches, one in the realm of Sovyrian on the planet Castrovel and one in the nation of Kyonin on Golarion, the origins of which are still undiscovered. These immigrants founded the nation of Kyonin and explored the vastness of a new world with great joy and curiosity, building their society within the great forest they'd arrived in and exchanging knowledge with other groups of people. One branch of elven explorers found a home on the continent of Garund and founded the nation of Mualijae, amicably splitting off from Kyonin to lead a new life in the Mwangi Expanse.

The most famous name from this early part of elven history is that of Candlaron the Sculptor, who's credited with creating the *aiudara* network of portals across Golarion by taking inspiration from the gates connecting Golarion and Castrovel. Candlaron is also said to have created the *Sovyrian Stone*, which powers each and every *aiudara*, connecting them all through its vast magical power. The Sculptor personally crafted most of the magical gates found on Golarion that allowed elves to freely travel across the globe, but it's said he disappeared before the secret to creating *aiudara* could be disseminated. To this day, elves have been attempting to recreate Candlaron's magical techniques and uncover the lost secrets of the gates.

THE EXODUS

Elves were among the first to learn of the danger about to befall the world at the time of Earthfall. Noting prominent human nations' extreme hubris and their continued denial of visible warning signs, the leaders of Kyonin chose to leave the planet to preserve their people, using the *Sovyrian Stone* to activate the gate that connected Golarion to Castrovel and escape back to the home of their ancestors.

Despite the dangers, not all chose to leave Golarion. Some elves stayed to protect their neighbors of other ancestries, and many volunteers remained to guard the *Sovyrian Stone*, a potent source of magic that might be coveted or abused by those with ill intent amid the chaos of an apocalypse. Others even preferred to stay with their homes, determined to embrace whatever fate came knocking. Most notably, the famed wizard Aelthian simply locked himself in his manor to continue his magical studies, confident his power would keep him from harm, while other elves fled to the Darklands, forming a new lifestyle underground and becoming known as ayindilar.

For centuries, few knew of Kyonin's elves or of the wondrous things they'd accomplished. A group of wandering gnomes found a home in the empty town of Omesta, but Kyonin was otherwise left alone except by looters exploring and pilfering its ruins for artifacts. The *Sovyrian Stone* lay undisturbed beneath the abandoned nation, quietly guarded for centuries by its sworn protectors with little issue—until the nascent demon lord Treerazer's dread arrival.

THE CORRUPTION

Thousands of years later, Treerazer, a nascent demon lord who fell afoul of his progenitor, wandered Golarion after being exiled from the Outer Rifts.



CANDLARON THE SCULPTOR

Kyonin wasn't of special note to the demon until he learned of the *Sovyrian Stone* and its magical power. Coveting the crystal as a power source and the keystone to his plan to return to the Outer Rifts, Treerazer raised an army of demons and invaded Kyonin. His very presence corrupted the lush nature into a blighted swampland, infecting the landscape with his evil intention. There were few available to fight off the demon hordes, and Treerazer easily conquered much of Kyonin without significant resistance.

THE RETURN

When Treerazer drew close to the *Sovyrian Stone*, its guardians were able to sound an alarm to their brethren on Castrovel. Elves returned en masse to defend the stone, led by the god Ketephys himself. Even the wizard Aelthian, who'd spent centuries ignoring the perils outside his home, joined the battle against the demons. As the war raged on, Treerazer's forces were pushed southward, where they captured the city of Shevaroth and transformed its temple of Calistria into their new base, renaming it Deathstalk Tower. This event has long been a sore spot for elves, who have tried and failed to retake the city multiple times.

Eventually, Kyonin's forces wore down Treerazer's army and penned him in a corrupted swatch of land in the southern part of the Fierani Forest, an area that came to be called the Tanglebriar. Though his demonic influence poisoned these lands, the demon was at least contained until a permanent solution could be found. With Treerazer's nefarious plans stymied by elven efforts, Kyonin entered an era of relative peace and intense isolation as the elves worked to rebuild their fallen nation, ignoring their neighbors and allowing few outsiders within their borders. They built new settlements over forgotten ruins and began the long journey to reclaim their lost history and discover the changes wrought to Golarion in their absence.

REIGN OF TELANDIA

Though the elves soon engaged with the rest of Golarion's ancestries, Kyonin cultivated an isolationist reputation, positioning itself as a refuge for elven culture within Avistan. Much of this attitude was due to the pain elves experienced when dealing with shorter-lived peoples, as non-elf friends and colleagues could age and die in a metaphorical blink of an eye.

Centuries later, the ascension of Queen Telandia Edasseril marked the beginning of change in elven society. Telandia was much less prone to supporting isolationist policies than her predecessor, instead working to improve international relations and guide her people to collaborate with outsiders. The queen chose to seek a partner in marriage outside of Kyonin to build potential alliances, becoming acquainted with the Alijae elf Zazirele while on a diplomatic mission in the Mwangi Expanse. She's also allowed Razmiri civilians to cross Kyonin's borders, a controversial gesture that has been the source of many debates among elves.

Though Tar-Baphon's return threatened Kyonin, it also presented them with an opportunity to form alliances. Through intermediaries, the queen reached out to the nations bordering Lake Encarthan that Tar-Baphon's presence on the Isle of Terror threatens, and she proposed a pact of mutual defense against the Whispering Tyrant. These talks were interrupted by Treerazer's forces, as the demon lord once again strove to conquer Kyonin and claim the power of the *Sovyrian Stone*. Battle between elves and demons commenced once more, with the elves finally emerging victorious against the foul creature who'd despoiled their beloved forest for so long.

With Treerazer's threat ended, Kyonin has turned all of its focus toward Tar-Baphon. Through Queen Telandia's diplomatic efforts, the Encarthan Alliance has been mostly solidified, with each nation pledging varying levels of support to the Lake Encarthan region. Though some elves cling to Kyonin's history of isolation, the nation has been actively working to become a powerful player in global politics and shows no signs of stopping.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 2988 AR | The wizard Aelthian attempts to banish Treerazer and his forces, weakening the nascent demon lord and disappearing in the process. His home of Arabrecht is obliterated, becoming the site known as Dimcrater. |
| 2989 AR | Elves drive Treerazer into a concentrated area, reclaiming much of southern Kyonin. Treerazer is trapped but undefeated and lays claim to the Tanglebriar. |
| 3050 AR | Led by the witch Silisifex, a group of Calistrans attempts to take back Shevaroth but never return. |
| 4445 AR | Queen Telandia Edasseril ascends the throne. |
| 4633 AR | A cult of Rovagug breaches the Tanglebriar, invades Shevaroth, and takes over Deathstalk Tower. |
| 4708 AR | Queen Telandia ousts the Winter Council from the government. |
| 4718 AR | The Worldwound is closed. Some remaining demons approach the Tanglebriar, though Treerazer and his minions slaughter most of them. |
| 4719 AR | The Whispering Tyrant escapes Gallowspire and settles on the Isle of Terror, embroiling the nations bordering Lake Encarthan in political tension. |
| 4725 AR | Treerazer acts against Kyonin but is defeated, thus ending the longstanding battle between him and the nation's elves. |

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CURRENT EVENTS

The current chapter of Kyonin's history is yet to be defined as the nation strides onto the global stage to take on threats with a more united front than it's ever had before. Tar-Baphon's return has pushed Kyonin to seek alliances and strengthen its relationships with its neighbors, and the nation is finally seeing the fruit of its labors. That said, while Kyonin has long maintained a healthy relationship with the dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains and remained cordial with Taldor and Andoran, it's long been in a quiet war with the neighboring nation of Razmiran, ever since its tyrant, Razmir, declared all elves heretical. Nevertheless, Queen Telandia has allowed Razmiri citizens into Kyonin so long as they aren't priests. Recent issues along the Razmiran-Kyonin border have civilians on edge, fearful of the havoc spies and saboteurs might wreak, and many believe that Razmiri priests have found an alternate entrance into Kyonin that avoids the border guards. The queen has launched a secret counterattack in the form of her special operatives, the Threshers, and has created a subdivision under their purview whose sole duty is to root out Razmiri spies and deliver them to the capital.

Despite political tensions and wariness between the involved nations, the Encarthan Alliance's successful formation (with the exception of Molthune, which has

held back due to their ongoing war with Nirmathas) has brought some relief to the citizens of Kyonin, as they can now rely on their neighbors for aid should Tar-Baphon strike against them. Moreover, the Knights of Lastwall have been trickling into Kyonin to train volunteers into hardy warriors against the Whispering Tyrant's undead forces.

However, there are those who argue that these problems could be wholly avoided by leaving the planet and returning to Castrovel. A small but vocal faction called the en-Aiudeen, discontent with the constant political turmoil and demonic troubles of Golarion, have begun petitioning the queen to activate the *Sovyrian Gate* and permanently abandon Golarion to a future without elves. Much of the en-Aiudeen's argument hinges on Treerazer's defeat, which they claim was elves' final duty and gift to Golarion. There are few who agree—many elves see Treerazer's defeat as an opportunity to reclaim and restore the Tanglebriar before another evil can swoop in, thereby redeeming their ancestors' failure to protect their lands from the foul influence of the Outer Rifts. The Wylderhearts (page 27) have taken the lead in the attempt to cleanse Tanglebriar of its demonic remnants, training up a massive number of new recruits.

Reclamation of Tanglebriar: Expeditions into the Tanglebriar have been delayed by the fallout of the Godsrain, which made its strongest mark in Kyonin on the various *aiudara* throughout the nation. Previously inactive gates have suddenly opened portals to uncharted destinations and threaten to spill hordes of unknown and potentially unfriendly visitors into the land. Mages and warriors have been working tirelessly to shut the rogue *aiudara* down and cut off invaders before any lasting harm can be done, but Kyonin's recent expenditure of resources has strained its ability to police its borders and rein in dissidents. Queen Telandia has removed the *Sovyrian Stone* from its underground sanctum so it can be studied in tandem with the affected *aiudara* and hopes to gain insight into how the mysterious networks function.

Worse yet, Treerazer's death wasn't a clean one. The demon lord exploded into a far-ranging mess of spores, body parts, and gore, and the elves of Kyonin have no good estimate of how far the fallout might have reached. Local demonologists fear that Treerazer's remains might corrupt anything they touch or empower any foul creatures who encounter them. The Godsrain adds an extra layer of concern, as the divine power that rained down in the aftermath of Gorum's death might react strangely with Treerazer's remains. With Kyonin's resources depleted by recovery efforts after the war, Queen Telandia has been reduced to warning other nations of the danger and hoping her allies can handle any problem that arises.



SOVYRIAN STONE

The most unique challenge to restoring the Tanglebriar is Treerazer's axe, a powerful artifact that slipped from the demon lord's grasp and remains embedded where it fell. Unable to move the *Blackaxe* and having no simple means to destroy it, Kyonin's elves were left to erect a protective structure around the weapon so as to prevent it from corrupting the surrounding wilderness further.

Reclamation of the Past: The current greatest threat to Kyonin might be its own people, who struggle to find balance between tradition and progress. Many still hold a grudge against other nations, particularly the River Kingdoms, for their histories of looting Kyonin and stealing elven artifacts after Earthfall, and they demand compensation for their cultural loss. The queen has lowered the priority of these demands to encourage the formation of the Encarthan Alliance, leading some to protest that Kyonin is holding hands with thieves. In response, the Council of Sanctity has formed an open organization called the Aiulor (or "rebuilders"), where scholars and researchers can receive training and build the connections required to study and reclaim the missing pieces of Kyonin's history. Many of the Aiulor have become adventurers or have sponsored adventuring parties in their efforts to retrieve elven artifacts from other nations.

Treerazer's death has proven both a distraction and a reprieve for the queen. A literal treasure trove of history has been hauled back to Kyonin, as 2,000 years' worth of elven artifacts have been retrieved from the demon's lair. While this reclamation is a source of great joy to elves, it leaves Kyonin busy, its officials tasked with returning these items to their original owners—or their next of kin. While Queen Telandia has demanded that these recovered heirlooms be strictly scrutinized to ensure they aren't corrupted or cursed, she fears that many elves will be unwilling to lose their beloved artifacts a second time and that some families might skirt necessary safety precautions to protect the relic (or relics) of a lost ancestor.

Royal Wedding: Many have eagerly awaited the news of Queen Telandia and Zazirele's official betrothal, which was recently confirmed by the Viridian Palace. This union cements an alliance with elves in the Mwangi Expanse but is also the first royal marriage in centuries. Excitement for the event has spread throughout the nations, and thousands have sent gifts and well-wishes to the queen and her betrothed, though a wedding date has yet to be established. Many hope the marriage will take place before Tar-Baphon can strike so that Kyonin can call for the Alijae to aid them when he does, while others insist it's safer to wait. Many are also curious to see what changes an Alijae elf might bring to Kyonin's cultural sphere and how heavy his hand will be in politics.

None of these factors have stopped Kyonin's artisans from preparing for the event, in typical long-term elven planning. Such an event is certain to be

rare even by elven reckoning, and no one wants to be caught without their finest. Florists have been ordering saplings and seeds from across the globe, paying large amounts of coin for anything they think might strike the queen's fancy. Professional chefs have fallen into a flurry of research, looking for enticing dishes that still maintain Kyonin's standard for sustainable food; some distant preservationists and druid circles have found themselves with a sudden increase in foreign aid. The Five Kings Mountains have been bombarded with requests for raw gemstones of the highest quality, and while dwarves are hardly loathe to indulge such orders, keeping up with demand is starting to become a challenge. Most bemusing of all is a massive influx of missives to Alijae elves, who have spent much of their history relatively unimportant on the global stage, only to now be inundated with Kyonin's questions about their wedding customs.



AIULOR

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NOTABLE FIGURES



TELANDIA EDASSERIL



ZAZIRELE



CULRADORI DIADAITHI



MINVAREL SADNEN

Kyonin is home to several powerful individuals, some of whom are rooted in the nation's politics and some of whom have made their mark more recently. Others still hide in the shadows, biding their time until they're ready to reveal their plans to the world. As the nation takes a stronger stance in global politics, movers and shakers emerge to claim their space in Kyonin's affairs, while those who operate in secret make ready to take advantage of what might ensue. Treerazer's fall and Tar-Baphon's looming threat have only contributed to the chaos as Kyonin struggles to stand firm amid the winds of change.

Queen **Telandia Edasseril** (diplomatic female elf wizard) is a patient and strategic ruler who desires to open the hearts of elves and share their knowledge and creativity with others. Her hand is so light that her people rarely notice its weight as she works tirelessly to keep them free from threats both outside and within their nation. Few have seen the regal queen outside the palace—or so they believe, as one of the Queen's few hobbies is to soar the skies with her pet falcon, Nyranin, freer as a bird than she'll ever be as an elf.

Zazirele (contemplative male elf guardian) is an Alijae elf and Queen Telandia's betrothed, and his very presence in Kyonin is a symbol of the bond between the two nations. Though he hasn't yet taken a direct hand in Kyonin's politics, his hatred for demons is well-known, and he can often be seen taking meetings with Wylderheart leaders and messaging the great owls of the House of Sky to discuss cleansing the Tanglebriar of demonic influence. Many keep a close eye on Zazirele to take measure of his influence on the queen.

Culradori Diadaithi (fiery genderfluid werewolf elf veteran hunter) leads the Wylderhearts with pride and enthusiasm, easily outlasting their brethren in drinking challenges and loudly conducting impromptu concerts. They're constantly adorned with trinkets and talismans yet make no sound during a hunt, boasting of outlandish stories where they've killed three demons with a single arrow or tied in a dance competition against 15 devils. Though they're a skilled warrior and unparalleled hunter, Culradori is best known for rallying everyone around them to live life to the fullest, lest their inner demons make them vulnerable to external ones.

Hinira Validil (stern female elf politician) is a royal advisor who's grown tired of Golarion and its myriad troubles. Passionate about her people and their grievances, she believes Queen Telandia's efforts to ally with other nations only stymies the true path of their ancestry: to return to their home world of Castrovell. Each step Telandia takes to bridge the gap between elves and non-elves only increases Hinira's bitterness as she bides her time for the day when she'll make her move to rid Kyonin of its undeserving queen and take her people back where they belong.

Fedrian Iledin (unethical male elf scholar) has an endless passion for researching anything predating Earthfall, whether they be creatures or artifacts. His discoveries of lost knowledge have made him popular among those who wish to learn more of Kyonin's history, and many patrons support his research with both money and magic. Unknown to his benefactors, Fedrian has been experimenting with his findings to try and recreate extinct species, spawning abominable monsters in the depths of his hidden laboratory. When his experiments are deemed failures, he simply lets the creatures loose with little regard for their impact on the environment or the people they might run into as he continues to perfect his work.

Winglord **Kreiagh** (imposing male giant owl commander) leads his people from the House of Sky in the Five Kings Mountains, ending even the most

vicious squabbles with a single click of his beak. Stern and practical, Kreiagh has little interest in diving into the troubles of those on the ground below, only keeping an ear out for potential issues that affect his people. The taciturn owl is infamous for his policy of refusing to rescue those who become lost in the precarious mountains, though he rather pointedly flies out to go hunting when his tenderhearted cohorts report sightings of stranded travelers.

Minvarel Sadnen (exuberant nonbinary elf mage scholar) is a prodigious academic and the founder of the School of Gates (page 148). Their tendency for bluntness gets them mistaken for a misanthrope when in actuality they greatly enjoy camaraderie and fellowship, often pestering their neighbors for gossip and inviting random strangers to tea. Enamored with the spirit and spontaneity of travel, Minvarel has studied the *aiudara* network for centuries and hopes to uncover the lost method of creating new gates so elves can freely explore the Universe and even the places beyond it.

Solare Redriach (passionate male elf anthropologist) is the head of the Aiulor, leading a frenzied campaign to restore and reclaim as many elven artifacts as possible. His enthusiasm for elven history tends to outweigh his common sense and occasionally leads him to hire obviously shady mercenaries or allow aggressive measures without considering the ramifications to international relations or his mission. Solare can often be seen wandering the streets of Iadara, admiring the works of local artists and happily explaining the city's history to visitors who understandably tend to mistake him for a tour guide.

Lady **Jasika Lyranir** (gallant female aiuvarin human knight) was trained by a Knight of Lastwall and has taken charge of training up Kyonin's volunteer army in preparation for the seemingly inevitable war against Tar-Baphon. When she isn't working with recruits, she can be found cleaning her armor or meditating alone. Calm and dedicated to her work, Lady Jasika works tirelessly to turn ordinary civilians into warriors against tyranny and despair. A devotee of Arazni, Lady Jasika hopes to have a personal hand in ending the undead tyrant who so grieved her deity and is quietly prepared to sacrifice anything to see the job done.

Shalelu Andosana (standoffish female elf silverbranch sentinel) has never sought out positions of authority but has an unfortunate habit of falling into them anyway. Formerly a ranger and a wilderness guardian of Sandpoint, a chance friendship with the local bartender saw Shalelu travel across the continent to reach the nation of Minkai in Tian Xia and later help to overthrow the Jade Regent and place Empress Ameiko on the throne. Wanderlust sent Shalelu across Tian Xia until she stumbled upon the nation of Jinin, settled down, and unintentionally formed a group of elven naturalists and scouts known as the Silverbranch Sentinels. When Queen Telandia called for aid from other elven nations, Shalelu returned to Avistan with her Sentinels to help fight. Now that Treerazer has been vanquished, Shalelu finds herself being dragged into the role of unintentional ambassador between Kyonin and Jinin, a fate she's trying and failing to avoid.

Always accompanied by Lumina, her rainbow-scaled snake familiar and backup vocalist, **Channa Greystar** (charismatic female aiuvarin human bard) has been making waves in Kyonin by modernizing traditional elven ballads. Her unorthodox fashion, love of foreign cultures, and increasing popularity have many naming her one of Kyonin's most influential musicians, pushing its people to further open up to outside influences.

Venric (zealous male human priest) is a Razmiri spy who infiltrated Kyonin in the guise of a craftsman named Orin, using his skill with sculpting to apprentice under an elven master. Outwardly kind and reserved, he's an obsessive devotee of Razmir in private who'll stop at nothing to enact his lord's will. His fanatical devotion only brings him pain, for he must hide his true beliefs to serve his god.



FEDRIAN ILEDIN



KREIAGH



HINIRA VALIDIL



SOLARE REDRIACH



JASIKA LYRANIR

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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

While not all people in Kyonin have high status or powerful positions, there are many whose presence shifts the tides within the elven nation.

Mother Teeth (possessive female iron hag kidnapper) quietly resides in the Tanglebriar, content in her tower made from forgotten ruins and demon bones. This manipulative maternal figure has spent numerous centuries kidnapping children to raise as her own, finding elves preferable targets due to their long lifespans and confining them to lonely lives with only their mother and “siblings” for company.

A master partier, **Jaylin Sinder** (energetic male gnome daredevil) travels from town to town to perform elaborate feats of skill and entertain anyone he meets. Desperate to stave off the Bleaching, his stunts have grown increasingly dangerous, and the gnome has earned a reputation for recklessly joining up with adventurers to delve into wild dangers—though perhaps the wildest thing about him is that he always makes it out alive, claiming the goddess of luck owes him one.

The following are some of the more notable locations in Kyonin.

Avennara: The town of Avennara (population 892) is best known for its previously inactive *aiudara*. Post-Godsrain, complaints have been raised of unusual animals escaping through the gate and wreaking havoc on the town. Bounties have been set to capture the beasts alive, with the highest price on a blue flying squirrel creature that has been stealing baby clothes. The creature, nicknamed Nanskit, has also been witnessed bribing children with stolen candy in exchange for shiny stones and shells. It’s said to be able to pass through solid walls.

The Berm: Along the edge of the Endowhar River that borders Razmiran is a large grove of semi-sentient trees called the Dancing Forest, or the Berm. The Berm was originally enchanted to serve as border protection from Razmiri raiders, though it’s since been stood down as Kyonin has allowed Razmiri civilians to cross its borders. Currently, the Berm sits in wait for further instruction, though there are rumors that a voice can be heard amid the trees complaining of boredom.

Bloomwreath: Though this settlement might appear to be a quaint gardening town dominated by decorative topiaries on the surface, botanists recognize Bloomwreath as one of the great wonders of Golarion. This small river settlement is home to ancient plants that bloomed before Earthfall. Rendered effectively extinct in the fallout of the meteor, these trees and herbs returned to Avistan alongside elves, who brought certain cultivars back to Sovyrian when they departed the planet. The High Gardener of Bloomwreath now seeks to preserve samples of all plant life on Golarion to prevent them from being lost in the event of another planetwide disaster.

Caruskei: These ancient ruins are the only known memorial to a long-forgotten god. The temple is made of seven obelisks of amber, each 10 feet tall with a single bone trapped within them, that surround the broken remains of a crystalline tower. Caruskei has become a popular place for meditation. On stormy days, many gather to watch the tower alight with blue flame when webs of lightning are pulled from the sky into the ruins; the stone and crystal are seemingly immune to damage from such energy. Caruskei is especially popular with amateur archaeologists, and members of the Aiulor are determined to uncover the secrets of this mysterious site.

Century Root: Deep in the Fierani Forest is a half-mile wide stump sacred to the arboreal regents, who gather at the Century Root for large (and long) moots. It’s been suggested that this stump is what remains of what was once the greatest tree in Golarion, more ancient and wise than any other to have ever planted roots in the earth. The arboreal regents hold moots only in times of celebration or strife; thus, it’s curious and alarming to the citizens of Kyonin that they’ve been holding court at the Century Root for several years now. Attempts to infiltrate the moot or learn its purpose have been gently but firmly rebuffed by the arboreal regents, who continue to speak in secret.

The Cicatrix: This devastated wasteland of barren earth and charred stumps is ruled by oozes that blend in with the desolate landscape and prey on whatever meal comes their way. The Godsrain appears to have somehow elevated the intelligence of some of these oozes to the level of dogs, which in turn has led foolhardy trainers to attempt to domesticate them. So far, only one person has successfully “tamed” an ooze, though it’s debatable whether the creature truly feels an affinity for its master or whether it’s simply keeping track of an easy meal.



NANSKIT

Coralesian: Coralesian is the largest of the few mountainside elfen settlements in the nearby Five Kings Mountains, with a population of 460. For generations, these elves have made their homes in cabins and modified caves, some settling in small glens and others inhabiting the cliffside. Spiked boots and gauntlets are a must for those living along the crags of the mountains, and magical tokens to prevent accidental falls are especially popular among cautious parents. Ranger Captain **Jaychen Endrani** (earnest female elf scout) is considered the leader of the community, though major decisions are generally made through group consensus.

Cutter's Holdout: This village of barely 200 lies right on the border between Kyonin and Druma, and both nations have routinely disputed who controls the territory it sits on. As war with the Whispering Tyrant grows increasingly likely, debate within the town itself has intensified to match the two nations, for its citizens endlessly argue over whether Kyonin or Druma will afford them better protection.

Dimcrater: A large, grassy clearing stands eerily still in the muck and ruin of Tanglebriar, a perfectly concave crater at its center. The only thing one can find in the area is a strange sphere of pure darkness that hovers above the hollow earth where a great wizard's resplendent manor known as Arabrecht once stood, beckoning both the bold and the foolish to approach for a closer look. None who have investigated the site have ever returned, and even demons are wary of the place.

Endless Cairn: This stone tower, built in the middle of a swamp just north of the Tanglebriar, has served as a mausoleum for hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of elves. As it sank into the earth, elves built new levels atop it for more to be laid to rest, yet the latest to be interred has been delaying construction. **Vivenna Sondric** (outspoken female elf ghost maiden) has refused to move on to the afterlife. Instead, she harangues visitors with two demands. Before anyone else can join their ancestors in the Endless Cairn, whoever murdered Vivenna's missing lover, Adawan, must face justice, and Adawan's remains must be found and brought to rest beside her.

Erages: Situated along Lake Encarthan, this large fishing community of 5,700 residents is in a state of emergency due to its proximity to the Isle of Terror. Much of the city has taken up arms in preparation for conflict, and some have called for the repurposing of the subterranean tunnels beneath the city as a potential means of escape. Erages's leadership has been reluctant to allow any forays into these ancient ruins due to a history of explorers going missing, but desperate times push them toward desperate measures.

Erithiel's Hall: Located in the western part of the Fierani Forest, this gigantic serpentine mound of earth is named for the fey hero Erithiel, who's said to have slain the dread earth serpent Garukresh long ago and built this site from its remains. Excavation of the mound has always been prohibited due to vehement opposition from local fey. Lately, however, more and more fey have been gathering at the mound as if to pay homage before disappearing into the burrows within, seemingly compelled by an unknown summons. Alarmed elves have reported gnomish friends attempting to travel to Erithiel's Hall as well, which has prompted calls for the site to finally be investigated as it now poses a potential danger to Kyonin's citizens. Some believe the Godsrain has awoken something within the mound or even revived Garukresh, though no evidence has been found for either claim.

Greengold: Greengold, best known for its yellow rooftops and bustling trade, is one of the largest cities in Kyonin, boasting a population of 11,440. It's also becoming Kyonin's trendsetter thanks to being a melting pot of influences from other cities as well as hosting the most diverse population in the nation. Fashion, cuisine, art, and news all funnel into

LOCAL CLIMATE

Kyonin has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. Though the trees change color in the autumn and leaves cover the forest floor in a carpet of red and orange, there never seems to be a season where the canopy is bare. Its winters see thick snowfalls that rarely harden, leaving white banks that are easily cleared and perfectly primed for packing snowballs. Southern Kyonin is where the nation's most unusual weather patterns form due to a combination of the mountain range's natural effects and the warped effects of magical and demonic influence. It rarely gets cold enough to snow in the Tanglebriar, and the Cicatrix is near-arid, though with Treerazer's defeat, there's hope to restore the Tanglebriar back to its natural state. Past these magically shifted landscapes, the Five Kings Mountains bring cold winds and humidity to the parts of southern Kyonin yet untouched by the scars of the past.

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FLORA AND FAUNA

The Fierani Forest is home to many unique species of plants and animals, some originating from Castrovel and others from the First World. One of the most iconic creatures in Kyonin is the gem wasp, a breed of wasp with a pupa that resembles a precious gemstone. The shining husks left behind are prized by crafters, and worshippers of Calistria sometimes wear jewelry that incorporates the unhatched pupae so they can witness the wasps emerge.

The iridescent mist lily is believed to be a hybrid with roots in the First World, whereas the shimmering maw likely came from Castrovel. Though the two swamp flowers appear similar in coloring, the mist lily has a rainbow sheen, while the shimmering maw's shine is silvery; the maw is also carnivorous, clamping its petals down on its prey. The lily's roots are often used as a sweetener, and the maw's leaves can be chewed to relieve pain and calm anxiety.

Kyonin through Greengold's large ports, seeping throughout the nation to give elves a taste of the wider world.

House of Sky: The exact population of this citadel of intelligent giant owls is unknown due to the owls' reluctance to share information with outsiders, but it's estimated to be roughly 783. The sky-high aerie in the Five Kings Mountains is impossible to access for those without flight, granting its citizens near-total privacy and lending them an aura of mystery—just as they like it. The denizens of the House of Sky rarely mingle with those below the mountain except in times of dire need, such as in the first war against Treerazer.

Iadara: Kyonin's capital is a city of intricate illusions and complex politics (page 140).

Lasinavel: A city to the west of Iadara, Lasinavel is known as the city of unending feasts to its many visitors. Its center is built around an outdoor kitchen that has been magically enchanted to preserve food and ingredients. Visiting chefs are welcome to cook a meal within it, while visiting guests are encouraged to partake in the results.

Lethaquel: The wide hills and grasslands to the east of the Fierani Forest are home to a tall hill with a strange well that features a single rune carved into every weathered stone. At the foot of the well are four small canals that trickle down to its base. Though water as sweet as nectar flows through each canal, there's no water in the well itself. A small carved bowl rests on the ground next to the well, and it's said that those who deposit an offering into the well will receive the thing they need most in the bowl when they leave. Those who have done so confirm the story and claim that hours, days, and even years have passed on their journey downhill after receiving their reward.

Moonpool Causeways: The beautiful pools of the Moonpool Causeways are believed to hold the secrets of chronomancy within their silver waters. Crossing the ornate footbridges built over the pools on a moonlit night causes those bold enough to make the attempt to experience odd shifts of time. The dragon **Ekhazarean** (introverted male sage dragon scholar) has quietly studied the pools for centuries and has now deemed his work ready to be shared; he's announced his desire to find a worthy apprentice who might help him disseminate the knowledge he's accumulated. Unfortunately, the reserved dragon is picky about whom he deems acceptable company, delaying the day his research is finally revealed to the world.

Omesta: When elves left Golarion, gnomes moved into the empty town of Omesta (population 2,390) and built their own homes in the trees to respect the livelihoods elves had abandoned by necessity. Upon the return of Kyonin's elves, the two groups agreed to live in harmony. Tree houses line the canopies, and the entire town is inundated with a mix of zip lines, ladders, ramps, and basket elevators. A unique gnomish-elfen culture has emerged in Omesta that touts a blend of cuisines and a calendar constantly filled with festivals and contests in the hopes of staving off the Bleaching for the gnomes who live there.

Riverspire: The town of Riverspire was once just a single family of elven sculptors living in a tower, but it's grown over centuries into a population of 3,450; the town's eponymous tower is as much a work of art as might be expected. The Morgethai family is still the social epicenter of the town, with **Kanrial Morgethai** (stern female elf homemaker) at its helm, serving as matriarch for the entire community. Prepared to be the first line of defense against the undead hordes on the Isle of Terror, the town has been magically stockpiling food and reinforcing its buildings. Should Tar-Baphon attack the people of Kyonin, Riverspire will be ready.



CARUSKEI

Ryvanthnyl: This memorial site more resembles an open air museum, as it's clustered with relics and pieces of art that are magically protected from the elements. These artifacts come from disparate locales, peoples, and time periods and have little in common save that the cultures or people who created them are now gone. Elves' long lifespans mean that most will see the loss of human friends, cities, or even empires as well as the loss of other peoples who live for similar lengths of time. Ryvanthnyl is a place of mourning for these lost traditions and practices.

Unfortunately for many historians, the private nature of this grief means that many of these artifact troves don't have labels. The gravekeepers of Ryvanthnyl likewise don't seek out the stories of these memorials as a means to respect the elves who donated them. As a result, it's become the mission and challenge of many scholars to uncover the mysteries behind Ryvanthnyl's secrets, the answers to which likely reside only in the minds of the elves who put them there.

Shevaroth: The ruined city of Shevaroth has long been a sore spot for the worshippers of Calistria, for within the city's walls, their goddess's mighty temple was twice corrupted into a site of fiendish worship. Now that Treerazer has been defeated, his followers diminished, and the cult of Rovagug within the city cast out, the time is ripe for elves to reclaim Shevaroth and cleanse the temple of Calistria of the demonic influence that has stained its reputation for centuries.

Sun Dagger: This crumbling, ancient solar observatory was abandoned pre-Earthfall and never restored. Members of the Aiulor have marked it as a project of significance and have begun its restoration, though recently, strange shrieks at night have halted their progress. The discovery of a secret passage deep within the tower has unveiled a trove of unidentifiable, alien equipment that doesn't appear to be of elven origin. There has been intense debate over the jurisdiction of these items, as the Aiulor wish to study them even though they don't fall under the purview of historical elven artifacts.

Tanglebriar: The blighted swamplands of the south were once Treerazer's territory and are still a swarming hive of demons and opportunists. Now that the demon lord has been defeated, elves have begun a large-scale operation to cleanse the region of Treerazer's fiendish influence and revitalize it to its original state. This mission is proving difficult due to the presence of demons embroiled in fighting to take their fallen leader's place and the emergence of others who seek to take advantage of the marshland's sudden power vacuum.

Walking Man: This 30-foot-high humanoid topiary of unknown origin resides in the Fierani Forest, taking one step westward every summer solstice toward Erages. Evergreen in the winter and flowering in summer, the Walking Man has been the root of many conspiracy theories over the years but now possibly symbolizes hope as a potential weapon against Tar-Baphon. Druids have attempted to communicate with the Walking Man, and the most powerful have reported hearing the faintest voice emitting from its leaves, though the words were indistinguishable. Missives have been sent to the Wildwood Lodge of Verduran Forest asking for aid, and there are hopes that the druids of the Isle of Arenway might hear the Walking Man's voice more clearly and communicate the elves' plea for aid.

Wandering Spheres: This ruined orrery in the middle of the Fierani Forest has slowly been repaired through the immense efforts of civilians and scholars. Its human-sized planetary spheres, none of which match Golarion's sister planets, are embossed with incredible detail and have been attached to metal stands as researchers debate over how to place the pieces where they belong. One scholar was able to activate a puzzle code on one of the models, leading the researchers to conclude that the orrery might have been a key to an even greater mystery.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

There are numerous smaller settlements throughout Kyonin, some of them well hidden through magic or a seamless blending with nature.

The swamp village of **Bieralei** (population 184) is famous for hosting huge feasts every full moon. Enormous crayfish shells are shined and hung outside of homes to show off each family's largest catch, though none would ever disrespect the swamp by going after the giant crayfish called Kavakex, who's believed to keep the swamp's water free of pollutants and disease.

Siavenian (population 420) is a small town outside of Iadara that houses an inactive *aiudara* connected to the Darklands. The gate melted when exposed to the Godsrain, creating a strange lump of stone and crystal.

The remote town of **Valanyne** (population 203) has fallen eerily silent post-Godsrain, with many concerned citizens reporting that they're unable to contact friends and family who live there. Those who try to approach the settlement return with reports that they "couldn't find it," seeming strangely at peace with this fact.

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IADARA

Twisting towers of stone, wood, and crystal entwined with living trees upon a road of inlaid wooden tiles are the first sights one will lay eyes upon in Iadara. Vibrant magic fills the City of Silver Spires in every corner, a casual luxury for its citizens, who idly move on paths that roll forward to their destinations and who admire dancing statues reenacting famous legends. The majority of the city's architecture is designed with aesthetic and sturdiness prioritized over efficiency, entwining with nature to create beautiful pathways and courtyards to explore. Visitors might be perplexed by the lack of direct routes; the locals, however, prefer to enjoy a nice walk over getting somewhere quickly. Those with time-sensitive tasks to complete often carry teleportation lodestones in case of emergency.

Iadara is adorned with unusual textiles and sculptures that can't be found anywhere else on Golarion, with alien design schemes and impossibly intricate details. Some crafters will work on a single piece for a century, honing their skills to perfection. The most prominent craft in Iadara is architecture; the goddess Findeladlara has a significant following within the city that's dedicated to the study and preservation of traditional elven engineering, which has led to a distinct

and occasionally alien uniformity among buildings. Iadara's districts aren't as formally structured as those of non-elven cities. Homes and workshops pepper every area because the city's architecture forms around the landscape, not the other way around. As such, Iadara's "districts" range from a small grove of trees to a row of buildings spanning the entire city. The largest buildings, such as the palace and several ancient towers, are also the oldest, constructed in large forest clearings.

Part of a nation once renowned for its secrecy and isolation, Iadara is arguably the most secretive of all with innumerable layers of magic disguising it from outsiders. This reputation isn't helped by the fact that Iadarans take particular pride in safeguarding the secrets of elven crafts and showcasing the beauty of their work while refusing to sell or teach their arts to outsiders. Most of Iadara's residents are elves—many of whom have never left the nation—who communicate exclusively in Elven and are bemused, but just as often annoyed, by visitors who don't bother learning how to say hello. Citizens pride themselves in preserving tradition, and the elven dialect of Iadara is thought to be the closest to that spoken on Castrovel. Linguists note that Iadaran Elven has a more songlike

quality that's noticeable even when the locals speak in other tongues, which gives their speech a distinctly musical tone.

Despite its people's tendency to hew close to tradition, Kyonin's policy of open borders has allowed new ideas and foreign tastes to trickle into the city. Clothing trends in Iadara reflect a clash in longstanding tradition and burgeoning new ideals, leading to the development of kinvyk (translating roughly to "hummingbird wings") styles that mix foreign fashion trends with traditional elven wear. An influx of foreign ambassadors and traders has also contributed to kinvyk styles with hybrid dresses based on Taldan formal wear gaining immense popularity in Iadara. Traditionalists prefer clothing that accentuates their physical features, choosing shapes and colors based on the current season and wearing accessories of gold and silver. Meanwhile, experimentalists have started incorporating puff sleeves, jeweled headbands, and bustles into their outfits.

The typical day in Iadara is dedicated to work throughout the day and relaxation at night. Despite the seemingly lackadaisical nature of the citizens, they're fiercely devoted to their occupations as it's almost always something they chose out of passion. Artists and mages thrive in the city, adding to its splendor moment by moment. Hunters go out into the thick of the Fierani Forest to make their living, often forming strong relationships with families and neighborhoods for trade. While livestock isn't generally raised by elves—as they prefer the taste of wild game—pearl farming is a common practice. Farmers mark their oysters with symbols of their family or their shop, often taking pearls from the same oyster multiple times, and it's a great faux pas to harvest someone else's oysters. Pearls are common accessories among nobles and especially with worshippers of Yuelral.

Iadara's proximity to the Endowhar River has led its citizens to feast on plenty of fish and river oysters. While herbal teas are the most common drink besides wine, coffee has become extremely popular, and several cafes have gained loyal patrons, especially with the ongoing rumor that the queen's betrothed is an avid drinker of Kelish coffee. Restaurants featuring foreign cuisine are becoming more common, and non-elves are ever so slowly trickling into the city, though they're still a minority. Shrines have been built for non-elven gods throughout the city in an effort to be inclusive, though they see much less traffic than even the least popular elven god's temple.

Lately, the average conversation often turns to whispers of Tar-Baphon. The lich's proximity to Kyonin has Iadara on edge, and there have been more diplomats and visitors to the city than ever before. Some elves are considering leaving Iadara for the first time in their lives to seek safety elsewhere, while others have pivoted from their daily work to learn how to wield weapons in defense of their friends and family. For the first time in centuries, Kyonin is raising an army, and Iadara is right at its center.

GAZETTEER

The following are some of the more notable locations within Iadara.

The Cornerstone: Considered the paragon of elven architecture, this beautiful ancient temple has been constructed with stone and crystal around three trees that serve as living pillars. Bird nests and beehives sit in the wooden eaves, and good-natured priests maintain the temple so thoroughly that it looks nearly new. Worshippers of Findeladlara claim that her temple was the first structure to be built in Kyonin, and many of the city's buildings appear modeled to emulate its structure, lending credence to the theory. The crystalline peak of the building reflects an unfamiliar sky with distant planets and unknown constellations.

The Cornerstone is truly the foundation of the city, as nearly all Iadara's structures were built by worshippers of Findeladlara, who insist that traditional elven architecture is both the most beautiful and most secure against disaster. Priest **Rudeniell Antridin** (chatty male elf architect) has

IADARA

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METROPOLIS

Ancient city serving as a hub of elven culture and home of the Sovyrian Stone.

Government Monarchy

Population 61,982 (20% aiuvirin, 70% elves, 10% other)

Languages Common, Elven

Religions Alseta, Calistria, Desna, Findeladlara, Ketephys, Nethys, Yuelral

Threats political dissidents, spies

Elven Craft Uncommon elf items, including magic items, are common in Iadara, and magic items up to level 17 are available.

Masters of Gates Iadara has a high concentration of *aiudara* and mages who have studied them. Including one of these individuals as a secondary caster in a teleportation ritual decreases the ritual's DC by 2.

Anbatha Lor (silver-tongued female elf cleric of Calistria) High Priestess of Calistria, Dagger of Trickery, and member of the Council of Sanctity

Telandia Edasseril (diplomatic female elf wizard) Queen and ruler of Kyonin

Ophelia Wisternine (curious female aiuvirin human historian) Founder of the Aiulor and member of the Council of Sanctity

Vedlon Taragid (belligerent male elf activist) Head of the en-Aiudeen, a vocal minority faction

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been put in charge of overseeing the construction of new buildings and frequently brings non-elves to the Cornerstone to extol the virtues of elven craft, though he's reluctantly approved aesthetic amendments to cafes. Because of these slight compromises, a unique new hybrid of elven architecture is beginning to form, though the priests often grumble that such change goes against their goddess's way. An ever-increasing amount of accidents among the construction of these hybrid buildings has the non-elven architects accusing Findeladlara's faithful of sabotage. The faithful insist these accidents are simply coincidence but have assigned vindicators to investigate the matter further.

Floodspire: A tall singular tower peeks out of the Endowhar River in this district made up of old buildings covered by the river's waters and a scant number of floating homes. This area was originally above water but became submerged when Earthfall affected the environment. Floodspire is now populated by aquatic elves who live comfortably in the cool waters and occasionally surface for supplies or to visit friends. These elves are nearly independent from the rest of the city and have a representative, **Aaluria Waveweaver** (friendly female aquatic elf diplomat), who communicates with the Council of Spires (see the "Local Government" sidebar on page 143) on their behalf. Much of Iadara's seafood is caught by aquatic

elves, who trade pearls for gemstones and food that doesn't last underwater.

Lately, elves of Floodspire have begun seeking shelter on land in case Tar-Baphon attacks by sending undead forces through the waters of Lake Encarthan into the Endowhar River. Disgruntled aquatic elf children learning to walk on land for the first time can be heard complaining of the dryness of the air and the strange texture of the ground, though the sight of flowers calms them quickly. Fortifications, spike traps, and magical hazards have been added to the waterlogged buildings, and aquatic elves watch warily for any hints of invasion from the west.

The Gallery: The Gallery is a magical art display in the form of a large block of crystal that showcases the crafts and creations of artists who have presented their work to it. Once someone shows the Gallery their work, the crystal can display illusions of the piece when requested. The Gallery showcases random pieces throughout the day, changing them by the hour and displaying them alongside the names and faces of their creators. Many obscure and amateur elven artists have been discovered centuries later after someone admired their work through the Gallery, and the magical catalog gives historians great insights into the past.

There's only one known piece whose artist the Gallery hasn't identified: a carved silver mask that appears

to speak to the viewer. Though experts in lip reading have attempted to decipher the speech, it doesn't appear to be a language currently known on Golarion. Some theorize that the mask predates Earthfall, while others claim that its crafter was erased from the world for offending the gods and that this small memory remains as the only piece of them. Recently, claims of a similar-looking mask being found at the Sun Dagger observatory have stirred up even more theories and conspiracies, the most popular of which suggests that the mask is actually a remnant of visitors from a sister planet.

New Sovyr: Once derisively called the Lesser Quarter by traditionalists, the district of New Sovyr is the place to go in Iadara for non-elven cuisine and merchandise. The first to set up shop was an aiuvarin from Taldor who had come to Kyonin to learn more about their roots but quickly found themselves immensely homesick. They stockpiled ingredients from Taldor, and curious neighbors would come by for their—by elven standards at the time—foreign meals. These shared meals became a neighborhood tradition, then transitioned into a small, comfortable business where elves could eat Taldan cuisine and learn how to cook it themselves. Other aiuvarins with a desire for diversity in their lifestyles joined the neighborhood, which quickly became a mostly aiuvarin community dedicated to sharing and trading trinkets from other cultures.

What started as a small group of individuals is now a booming marketplace filled with new fashions, imported goods, and delicious restaurants of all kinds. Most fashion and cuisine are from surrounding nations in the Shining Kingdoms, but one cafe boasts treats from Tian Xia, wowing customers with taiyaki and sparkle tea, and a local curry shop has received a boost of popularity after Channa Greystar (page 135) sang its praises. Even with the locals cautiously trying new things, New Sovyr is still most popular with homesick visitors who find comfort in the small bits of familiarity they can find. The queen's betrothed, Zazirele, has occasionally been seen visiting an immigrant from the Mwangi Expanse who regularly cooks him food from his homeland.

The district has recently garnered growing attention thanks to a local basilisk league. Local aiuvarins "imported" the sport from beyond Kyonin and gathered enough players to have a rotation of six local teams. While elves have common games and pastimes, most of them are generally subdued and tranquil compared to the likes of basilisk. The high contact nature of the sport initially turned off many Iadaran elves, but the explosive energy of the game and the aiuvarin crowds soon won over the rest of the populace. The league's regular games now draw crowds too large to comfortably fit within the district's parks and have even seen an appearance from Queen Telandia. The league's players now look to petition for the creation of a proper stadium and playfield but lack the funds and political support necessary to reach their goal.

Pavaryt: Pavaryt functions as part restaurant, part culinary academy, and part food festival and is dedicated to preserving and improving on traditional elven cuisine. The team of chefs at Pavaryt works all day to create large elven-style banquets for those who don't have the time or skill to make meals, highlighting the catch of the day brought by fishers and hunters. These elaborate feasts show off the exquisite flavors of elven cuisine, though visitors might find the food skews a little too raw for their tastes.

Head chef and founder **Adrethal Shivrathi** (stoic male elf master chef), famous for his recreation of a 30-course meal found in the diary of a royal cook whose work was dated pre-Earthfall, recently retired, and his replacement is likely to be one of his many apprentices. Many believe his son, **Yethral Shivrathi** (unenthusiastic male elf chef), should step up as the head chef, but Yethral has claimed he plans to leave the culinary business. While most accept this choice as the elven way, his friend **Mikir Asuryl** (passionate male elf cooking prodigy), another forerunner for the position,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Council of Spires governs Iadara through five members who can't join any other councils. **Danir Kasalon** (boisterous male elf negotiator) most often resolves public disputes while **Ironira Hax** (shrewd female elf economist) oversees trade and deals with merchants. **Marinlara Trewvyn** (disciplined female elf soldier) is in charge of Iadara's guards and personally trains new recruits. **Lethel Boregin** (clumsy male elf anthropologist) takes charge of social reforms, suggesting new minor laws and researching the ways of other nations. Lastly, **Vessa Yanoven** (insightful nonbinary elf rogue) is rarely seen in public, as they move among the populace in disguise to observe the most current social issues. The five work together to keep the peace in Iadara, putting final decisions to a vote. The Council of Spires rarely involves the queen in their work unless an issue demands her attention or a final decision can't be made.

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LOCAL FACTIONS

Iadara is home to many groups vying for influence and authority.

The Woven Nest: The three heads of Calistria's temple are the most prominent religious authorities in Iadara. There are rumors that the temple has a secret network of Waspkeepers who'll help one get vengeance on their wrongdoers.

The en-Aiudeen: This group of dissidents believes elves would have better lives back in Castrovel and that their duty to Golarion is minimal. This belief has only increased after Treerazer's defeat, with many en-Aiudeen petitioning Queen Telandia to activate the portal that will take them to the home land.

The Song of Harmony: This fledgling movement desires for Kyonin to fully open its heart (and its doors) to the rest of the world, sharing elven culture to benefit others. Most of the group's prominent figures are younger elves and non-elves, which has led some to take them less seriously.

has stirred up drama with his claim that Yethral is defying his father's wishes by leaving the world of cooking. He's since challenged Yethral to a cooking duel to convince him to stay. Anticipation builds as the community wonders who'll become head chef—and, more importantly, what tomorrow's menu is.

Skyspire: The tallest tower in Iadara serves as an academy for mages and scholars and acts as the central hub of Iadara's illusory defenses. Skyspire is unusual in that it's one of the few buildings in Kyonin that incorporates metal into its structure, sealing each stone with thin layers of adamantine. This quality gives the Skyspire a unique appearance, as if each individual piece of its structure shines in light, making it especially mysterious at night when one can only see the gleam of the metal against the stones.

Skyspire holds numerous magical secrets as well as artifacts and laboratories. Many great wizards and academics of Kyonin studied at this tower, including Minvarel Sadnen (page 135). Minvarel is but one of many proud elves who strive to use elven magic to its fullest potential, though few have found the success they have. Mages can be seen floating around the tower while leading animated discussions or performing experiments on the roof, and a prototype pair of *aiudara* built by Minvarel sit in the tower's yard, where mages attempt to send small objects through the gates.

After the Godsrain, the building has seen its share of problems, the most obvious of which is the tower's reluctance to keep its shape. In the months following the Godsrain, it's twisted and warped slightly, changing its appearance and structure every few weeks. The building's structural integrity seems unaffected, but the fact that the tower continues to contort as if in pain concerns the academy's scholars.

The Sovyrian Gate: This immense stone archway is the original gate elves traveled through from Castrovel and is the progenitor of the *aiudara*. Its simple stone is etched with unknowable runes and holds countless mysteries yet to be unraveled by anyone in this age, though many have tried. With Treerazer's defeat, the *Sovyrian Stone* has been hung within the vines encroaching on the ancient stone as a sign of victory. To some, the gate is a symbol of elven bravery in coming to a new world, but to others, it's a reminder that there's a distant land away from the troubles of this world that might be called home.

The Sovyrian Gate has become the center of controversy: a vocal few have formed the en-Aiudeen, elves who wish to use it to emigrate back to Castrovel. This function is currently impossible due to unknown risks posed by the Godsrain's influence, which has wreaked havoc on the *aiudara* network, but some believe the queen exaggerates the issue to control the populace. The head of the en-Aiudeen, **Vedlon Taragid** (belligerent male elf activist), has accused the crown of ignoring the peoples' needs and continually leads petitions to allow travel to Castrovel. So far, the queen has remained firm in holding off on traveling through the gate until it can be proven safe, but the small voice of dissent grows louder by the day.

Viridian Palace: The residence of Kyonin's ruler is a splendid palace of marble and crystal befitting royalty. Its high ceilings and wide windows were designed so natural light pours into the halls, making torches unnecessary until nightfall. The palace is considered a prime example of elven architecture second only to the temple of Findeladlara. Queen Telandia holds court in the vast palace halls, her royal advisors dueling with words and deals to push their agendas. The palace gardens serve as both a place of relaxation and as a mausoleum for monarchs, whose burial places are marked by topiaries resembling how they appeared in life. Rumors claim that one of the trees in the garden has fruit comprised of jewels, which the royal treasury used to fund the crown.

The centerpiece of the palace grounds is an enormous kumaru tree, a gift from a visiting diplomat planted centuries before Earthfall. The massive tree has served mostly as an impressive fixture in the palace courtyard, as

its unique leaf shape resembling peacock feathers stands out among the rest of the region's foliage. The millennia-old tree served as a background element for many of the palace's inhabitants until recently. When the Godsrain occurred, the tree seemed to "awaken" and began to flow with great magical energy. It soon became the nexus for a burgeoning ley line, and the excess magical energy flowed out from the tree's roots into the palace, causing strange and erratic phenomena to occur. While local mages were able to control these magical overflows, thoughts soon focused on what to do with the new ley line that ran along the palace. The queen hopes to make use of it for the betterment of Iadara but also intends to track down someone familiar with the tree to better aid her in the matter.

Currently, the palace is filled with royal advisors rushing to update each other on new developments and budget changes, spread thin due to the sprawling number of exigent issues: the need to reclaim Tanglebriar before one of Treerazer's lieutenants can take his place; the number of *aiudara* randomly activated by the Godsrain; and the queen's upcoming nuptials. The council halls have hosted more non-elves in the past few years than in the rest of Kyonin's history as alliances are built to defend against Tar-Baphon. The queen has held audience with the Knights of Lastwall, Taldan diplomats, and even spies from Andoran—but no Razmiri will ever step into the hallowed halls of the Viridian Palace if Telandia has anything to say about it.

Discussion of the queen's wedding is loudest among the various hot topics, with many hoping to use it for morale as people grow more fearful of potential war with Tar-Baphon. The queen has been so hounded by royal wedding planners that she tasked one of her advisors to serve as the new Minister of Marriage. **Revina Athaniel** (nervous female elf secretary) has taken her new position with utmost gravity, taking meticulous notes of popular wedding trends and contacting Alijae elves for information on wedding customs as well as interviewing married couples for tips. As the chaos of wedding planning unfolds, a pair of birds can sometimes be glimpsed fluttering about the royal gardens, looking childishly smug as advisors ask each other where Telandia and Zazirele have gone.

The Woven Nest: This temple of Calistria is an ornate building designed to resemble a wasp hive and is the most popular place of worship within the city. Its many inner chambers hold secrets its parishioners whisper to Calistria, and none may enter without the permission of a priest. There's often the sound of buzzing wasps in every corner; the Woven Nest allows Calistria's favored animal to find shelter in her temple, freely landing on worshippers or on the hundreds of flowers cultivated to give the sacred insects unending meals. So far, there's never been a report of any parishioners being stung, though legend has it that a swarm of 3,000,000 wasps attacked Treerazer's forces when he entered Iadara during his initial invasion.

The Woven Nest's three high priests work in tandem to personify their goddess's aspects in a way that suits their needs and serves their people. **Anbatha Lor** (silver-tongued female elf cleric of Calistria) is the Dagger of Trickery, serving on the Council of Sanctity and spinning her words to get the temple's needs met. She is the most politically powerful of the three heads of church and is rumored to serve as the queen's spymaster. **Kalin Hironel** (charismatic male elf cleric) serves as the Dagger of Lust and is often found helping worshippers find new partners. He refuses to give advice on relationship troubles, redirecting anyone who seeks more than a warm body to the shrine of Shelyn; despite this stance, Kalin is the most renowned matchmaker in the city and has been credited with always clocking potential matches. The third head priest, **Erani Lin** (secretive nonbinary elf cleric), has the most judicial role as the Dagger of Revenge, helping worshippers seek retribution for their woes. The exact parameters of their role are unknown to any but themselves, and it's whispered that Erani will destroy entire bloodlines in exchange for an offering to the temple.

THE BEAUTIFUL DEAD

Elves are generally interred in a way that allows their remains to become one with nature. The Fierani Forest is the grave of many elves throughout history, often planting trees or flowers to mark the body. There's normally little to report once one has been buried, but Iadara's places of mourning have been the sites of intriguing magical phenomena. A strange combination of Iadara's illusory magics and the surrounding forest's connection to the First World has created an unusual effect on Iadara's dead, and afterimages of the deceased will sometimes appear at their burial sites. These images have been determined not to be undead and don't interact with the living, but an even more unusual occurrence is that dryads will sometimes be born from such trees. In these rare occasions, the afterimages of the dead cease to appear, and the dryad often has physical traits resembling the person buried beneath their tree.

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WYLDERHEART

You're a defender of nature, called to protect the world from the corrupting influence of demons. You might use a bow in the vein of your organization's patron deity Ketephys, wield a sword in the style of valiant knights, or harness the primal magic of nature itself against your foes. No matter your chosen tool, your greatest assets in the battle against evil are the strength of your heart and your bond with your allies.

Additional Feats: 6th Barreling Charge (*Player Core* 143), Mature Animal Companion (*Player Core* 159); 10th Incredible Companion (*Player Core* 161); 16th Whirlwind Strike (*Player Core* 150), Specialized Companion (*Player Core* 162)

WYLDERHEART DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Wylderhearts; **Access** You're from Kyonin.

You're primed to face off against threats from the Outer Rifts. You gain the Additional Lore skill feat for Demon Lore. If you were already trained in Demon Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice. You gain a +1 circumstance

bonus to initiative rolls in encounters against fiends, and if you tie with a fiend's initiative roll, you go first.

Certain wylderheart feats give you focus spells. The rules for focus spells appear on page 298 of *Player Core*. When you gain your first wylderheart focus spell, you become trained in the spell attack modifier and spell DC statistics. Your key spellcasting attribute for the wylderheart archetype spells is Wisdom, and they're primal spells. You can Refocus by celebrating life or spending time in nature.

DEMON-HUNTING COMPANION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Wylderheart Dedication

You gain a young animal companion that has been specially trained to help you fight demons. You can choose any common animal companion, which gains scent as an imprecise sense with a range of 30 feet that can be used only to smell fiends. If the animal companion already has scent, it gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception when using scent against fiends.

WYLSINGER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Wylderheart Dedication

Passion and song are your weapons of choice. You learn either the *menacing lament* (page 147) or *valiant anthem* (page 147) focus spell. If you don't already have one, you gain a focus pool of 1 Focus Point.

Special You can take this feat a second time, gaining the focus spell you didn't gain the first time.

BLESSED SENTINEL ♦♦

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Wylderheart Dedication

You infuse a weapon with the blessing of Ketephys and attack. Make a Strike. This Strike gains the holy trait and deals an additional 1d4 spirit damage, or 2d4 spirit damage against fiends. This counts as two attacks for your multiple attack penalty.

PRIMAL GUARDIAN

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Wyldsinger

You grow in power as a guardian of nature. You learn either the *elemental sheath* (page 147) or *vicious howl* (page 147) focus spell.

Special You can take this feat a second time, gaining the focus spell you didn't gain the first time.

WILD DANCE ♦

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE FLOURISH

Prerequisites Wylderheart Dedication

The combination of your passion for both life and the battle against evil makes you graceful and unpredictable. Stride up to your Speed. A creature that attempts a reaction triggered by this movement must first attempt a Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is fascinated by you until the end of your next turn.



Failure The creature is fascinated by you until the end of your next turn, but your movements might be too hard to follow; if the reaction requires an attack roll, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against that attack roll.

Critical Failure The creature is fascinated by you until the end of your next turn, and it loses its reaction.

FIEND SLAYER ◆

FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE DEATH VOID

Prerequisites Wylderheart Dedication

Requirements Your last action was a successful Strike against a fiend that dealt damage.

Your attack tears through a fiend, possibly sending it back to where it came from. The fiend you just struck takes 80 void damage with a basic Fortitude save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. On a critical failure, the target is also stunned 1. Regardless of the results of the saving throw, the target is then temporarily immune to Fiend Slayer for 24 hours.

SACRED WEAPON

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Wylderheart Dedication

You're a living weapon honed to destroy fiends. Whenever you critically Strike a fiend, your attack deals an extra weapon damage die, and the fiend is enfeebled 2 and clumsy 2 until the beginning of your next turn.

WYLDERHEART FOCUS SPELLS

MENACING LAMENT ◆

FOCUS 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE EMOTION FOCUS MENTAL

Range 30-foot emanation

Duration 1 round

You wail a dirge for your enemies. Enemies in the area are off-guard against your attacks and gain no benefits from flanking you for the duration.

VALIANT ANTHEM ◆

FOCUS 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE EMOTION FOCUS MENTAL

Range 30-foot emanation

Duration 1 round

You chant a rallying cry to bolster your allies. Your allies in the area gain a +10-foot status bonus to all Speeds and a +1 status bonus to attack rolls.

ELEMENTAL SHEATH ◆◆

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE FOCUS MANIPULATE

Duration 1 minute

You coat yourself in nature's power. Choose air, earth, fire, metal, water, or wood; the spell gains that trait. You become completely covered by armor formed from that element, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus to AC and resistance 5 to two types of damage based on the element you choose.

Air bludgeoning and electricity; **Earth** bludgeoning and poison; **Fire** fire and slashing; **Metal** acid and slashing; **Water** cold and piercing; **Wood** piercing and void.

Heightened (+2) The resistance increases by 5.

VICIOUS HOWL ◆

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATE FOCUS

Duration 1 minute

You howl with passion for your cause, empowering yourself to push beyond your limits. You gain a number of temporary Hit Points equal to your level and a +4 circumstance bonus to damage. If you reduce a fiend to 0 Hit Points during this duration, you regain a number of Hit Points equal to the creature's level.

JOINING THE WYLDERHEARTS

The Wylderhearts welcome any who are stout of heart, though not all have the skills necessary to hunt down and vanquish fiends. The most common way to join these stalwart warriors is training under a mentor. This grueling training includes extensive study of demons, magical tutelage, and building up emotional fortitude. On rare occasions, a senior Wylderheart will extend an invitation to a seasoned fighter or devotee of nature to join their ranks without the initial training.

Those unable to fulfill the requirements to fight on the front lines are trained as support, learning how to heal physical wounds and soothe emotional ones. These support bands, dubbed Wylderhands, are sent out to help towns recover from attacks and teach civilians to bolster their hearts against demonic influences. Many Wylderhands do learn basic combat skills to serve as backup for Wylderheart warriors, and some eventually become warriors themselves.

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KYONIN OPTIONS

The following character options are found in Kyonin.

ANCESTRY FEATS

The following ancestry feats are available to elves.

FREE HEART

FEAT 1

ELF

You follow all your passions, unlimited in creativity and zeal. Choose a common background that relates to a passion you've pursued; you're trained in the skills and gain the skill feat associated with that background in addition to those in your normal background. As usual for backgrounds, if you would gain the trained proficiency rank for one of these skill from your class at 1st level, you instead become trained in another skill of your choice.

ELVEN PERSISTENCE

FEAT 5

ELF FORTUNE

Frequency once per day

Trigger You fail a skill check you're at least trained in.

Elves don't give up easily on their pursuits. Instead of the result you received for the triggering skill check, you receive a result of 12 + your proficiency bonus (don't apply any other bonuses, penalties, or modifiers).

SCHOOL OF GATES (UNCOMMON ARCANE SCHOOL)

Some are content to stay in place and let the world shape them, but you prefer to move at your own pace. You've studied the ancient *aiudara* and other structures to learn the magic of transposition, using your knowledge to move across great distances and even planes. With knowledge as your path and magic as your key, there's no door you can't open, and no world you won't explore.

Curriculum cantrips: *message*, *telekinetic hand*; 1st: *fleet step*, *lock*, *thoughtful gift* (Player Core 2 253); 2nd: *knock*, *warping pull*^U (page 149); 3rd: *echo jump*^U (page 148), *trade items*^U (page 149); 4th: *flicker*, *translocate*; 5th: *king's castle*^U (page 149), *magic passage*^U; 6th: *collective transposition* (Player Core 2 243), *teleport*^U; 7th: *interplanar teleport*^U, *planar seal*^U; 8th: *quandary*, *sudden transposition*^U (page 149); 9th *forest of gates*^U (page 148)

School Spells initial: *friendly push*^U; advanced: *rapid retreat*^U

FRIENDLY PUSH

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE FOCUS MANIPULATE WIZARD

Range 60 feet; **Targets** 1 willing creature

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You exert magical force to propel a willing creature up to 10 feet in a straight line, including upward, though if they aren't on solid ground or have another way to maintain their height (such as a fly Speed) when the movement ends, they fall. When you Sustain the spell, you can move them again or choose a new target within range and move them instead.

You can cast this spell on an unconscious ally, and if you do, the movement from this spell doesn't trigger reactions.

Heightened (4th) The distance increases to 20 feet.

Heightened (7th) The distance increases to 30 feet.

RAPID RETREAT

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON FOCUS TELEPORTATION WIZARD

Trigger You take damage from an attack or spell

Range 20 feet

You know how to swiftly escape from harm. You instantly teleport out of danger into an unoccupied space within range, and you gain resistance to all damage against the triggering damage equal to your level. You can't Cast this Spell if there's no space to move into.

TRANSPOSITION SPELLS

The following spells have been pioneered by elven sages studying the effects of the *aiudara* and similar teleportation devices.

ECHO JUMP

SPELL 3

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE FORCE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Traditions arcane, occult

Range 30 feet; **Area** 10-foot emanation

Defense basic Reflex

You teleport to an unoccupied space within range, leaving behind a faint echo of your form that explodes with magical force. Each creature within a 10-foot emanation from your previous location takes 4d8 force damage.

Heightened (+2) The range increases by 10 feet, and the damage increases by 3d8.

FOREST OF GATES

SPELL 9

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Traditions arcane, primal

Cast 10 minutes

Range 1,000 miles; **Targets** you and up to 6 willing creatures touched

Duration 1 hour

You transport yourself and your allies to a peaceful extraplanar realm of towering trees, each of which holds a misty gateway to another location. When you Cast this Spell, you choose a specific destination within 1,000 miles that you can identify by its position relative to your starting position and by its appearance (or other identifying features). Incorrect knowledge of the location causes the spell to fail. You and your allies walk for 1 hour through the forest, and each of you regains Hit Points and reduces the value of any doomed or drained condition as if you'd taken a full night's rest. At the end of the journey, you attempt a DC 40 Arcana or Nature check to find the correct gate to your desired location.

Critical Success You and your allies arrive within 1,000 feet of your desired location.

Success You and your allies arrive within 1 mile of your desired location.

Failure You and your allies arrive within 10 miles of your desired location.

Critical Failure You and your allies exit the forest within 1 mile of your original location.

KING'S CASTLE

SPELL 5

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Traditions arcane, divine, occult

Range 60 feet; **Targets** 1 willing creature

You and a willing creature swap places. You appear in the target's former space, and the target appears in your former space. You and your target must each be able to fit in the new spaces within range; otherwise, the spell fails.

SUDDEN TRANSPOSITION

SPELL 8

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Traditions arcane, occult

Area 60-foot emanation; **Targets** up to 2 creatures

Defense Fortitude

You wrench the targets off their feet, forcefully teleporting them within the area. The creatures must each be able to fit in their new space, and their positions must be unoccupied, entirely within the area, and in your line of sight. Each target attempts a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target can teleport if it wants, but it chooses the destination within the area.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure You teleport the target and choose its destination; the target takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage.

Critical Failure You teleport the target and choose its destination; the target takes 20d10 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone.

TRADE ITEMS

SPELL 3

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Traditions arcane, divine, occult

Range 60 feet; **Targets** 1 item you're holding and 1 item in another creature's possession you can see, each no more than light Bulk

Defense Reflex

You magically swap an item you're holding for another that someone else has. The second item appears in the hand you were holding the first item (or it falls to the ground in your square if you're unable to hold it), and the first item appears in the same place on the other creature's possession where the second item was (held in a hand or attached to a belt, for instance). If the second item is in the possession of a creature unwilling to relinquish it, they can prevent the transposition with a successful Reflex save.

Heightened (5th) Each object's maximum Bulk increases to 1. If one of the items is 1 Bulk and the other isn't, an unwilling creature gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their saving throw.



RESONATING CRYSTAL BOOTS

WARPING PULL

SPELL 2

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MANIPULATE TELEPORTATION

Traditions arcane

Trigger An effect would deal damage to an ally within range.

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 willing creature that would take damage from the triggering effect

You get an ally out of danger with a teleporting pull. You teleport the target to an unoccupied square up to 10 feet closer to you. The target gains resistance 5 to all damage against the triggering effect.

Heightened (+2) The resistance increases by 5.

MAGIC ITEMS

Elven artisans produce some of the finest magical wares on Golarion.

RESONATING CRYSTAL BOOTS ITEM 8

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 475 gp

Usage worn; Bulk L

These supple leather boots are studded with tiny crystals.

Activate—Chiming Steps ◆ (auditory, concentrate, sonic)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** Stride up to half your Speed. The crystals ring out with pleasant-sounding chimes that reverberate painfully in the ears of others. Each creature that you pass adjacent to during your Stride takes 4d8 sonic damage (DC 24 basic Fortitude save); a creature takes this damage only once. A creature who critically fails the save is also deafened for 1 minute.



SHAWL OF SEASONS

SHAWL OF SEASONS

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 150 gp

Usage worn; Bulk L

This woven shawl changes its color, material, and abilities with the seasons. In its usual state, it reflects the current season of the environment the wearer is in. The handsome embroidery grants you a +2 item bonus to

Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression.

Activate—Change of Seasons 10 minutes (concentrate);

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You arrange the shawl on your shoulders to gain the benefits of a season of your choice until your next daily preparations. If the season you choose is the current season, you also gain a +1 item bonus to Fortitude saving throws.

- **Spring** The shawl becomes smooth silk covered in delicate flowers. You gain a +5-foot item bonus to your Speed.

- **Summer** The shawl becomes light cotton with the hues of fresh grass. You're protected from the effects of severe heat.

- **Fall** The shawl becomes thin leather with an ombre of red and orange leaves. You treat falls as 10 feet shorter.

- **Winter** The shawl becomes warm wool as white as snow. You're protected from the effects of severe cold.

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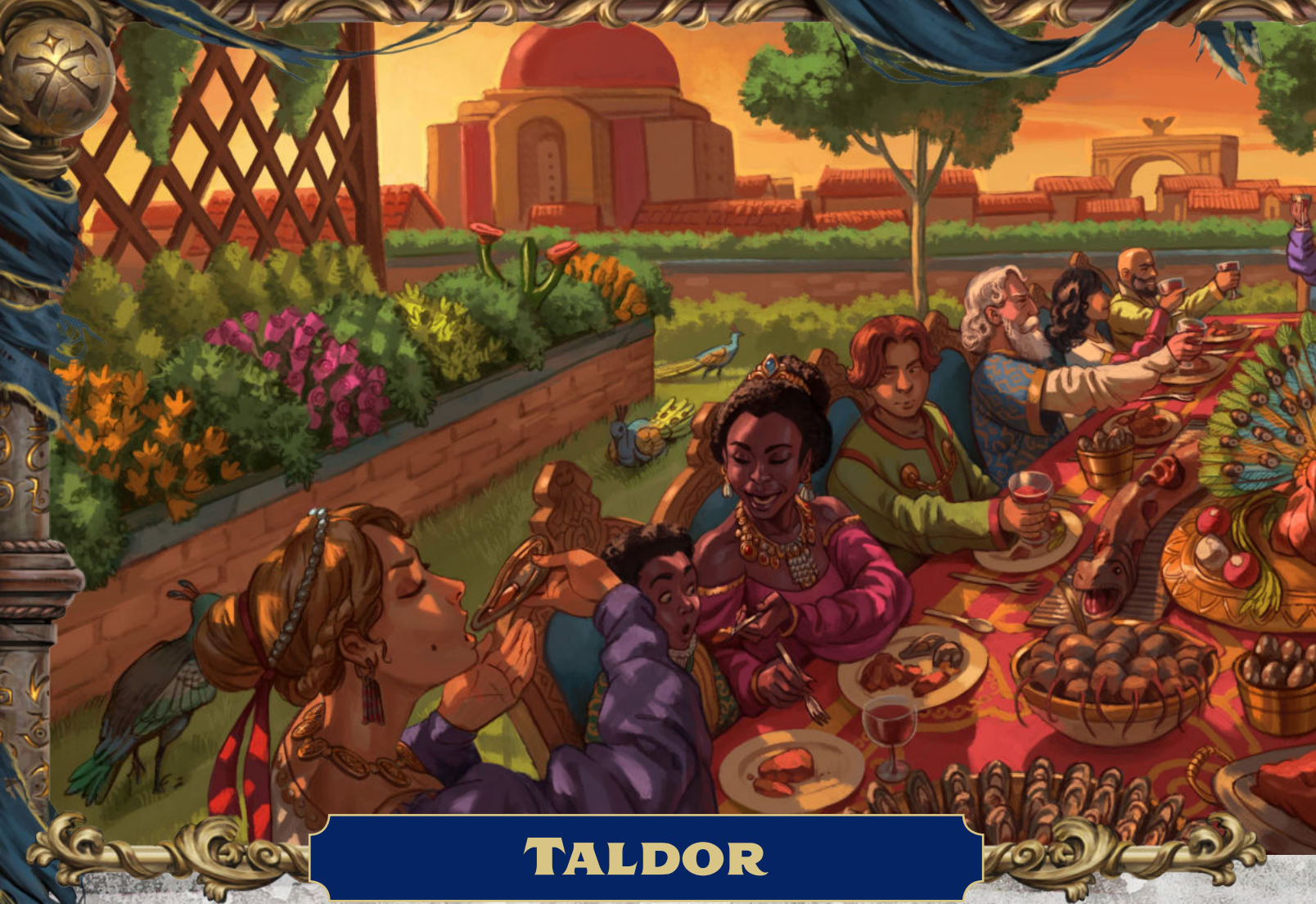
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TALDOR

NATIONS



TALDOR

Capital: Oppara

Government: Bureaucratic Empire

Ruler: Grand Princess Eutropia Stavian

PEOPLES

Aiuvarins

Azarketis

Centaurs

Empyreans

Dwarves

Halflings

Humans

Kholos

Orcs

LANGUAGES

Common

Kelish

FACTIONS



Lion Blades



Knights of
Lastwall



Ninth Army

RELIGIONS



Abadar



Aroden



Calistria



Cayden Cailean



Iomedae



Kurgess



Norgorber



Sarenrae



Shelyn

RESOURCES



Alcohol/
Drugs



Art/Books



Coffee



Gems



Grain/Fruit/
Vegetables



Livestock



Lumber



Luxury
Goods



Magic
Items



Ores



Seafood



Ships



Stone



Tea



Textiles



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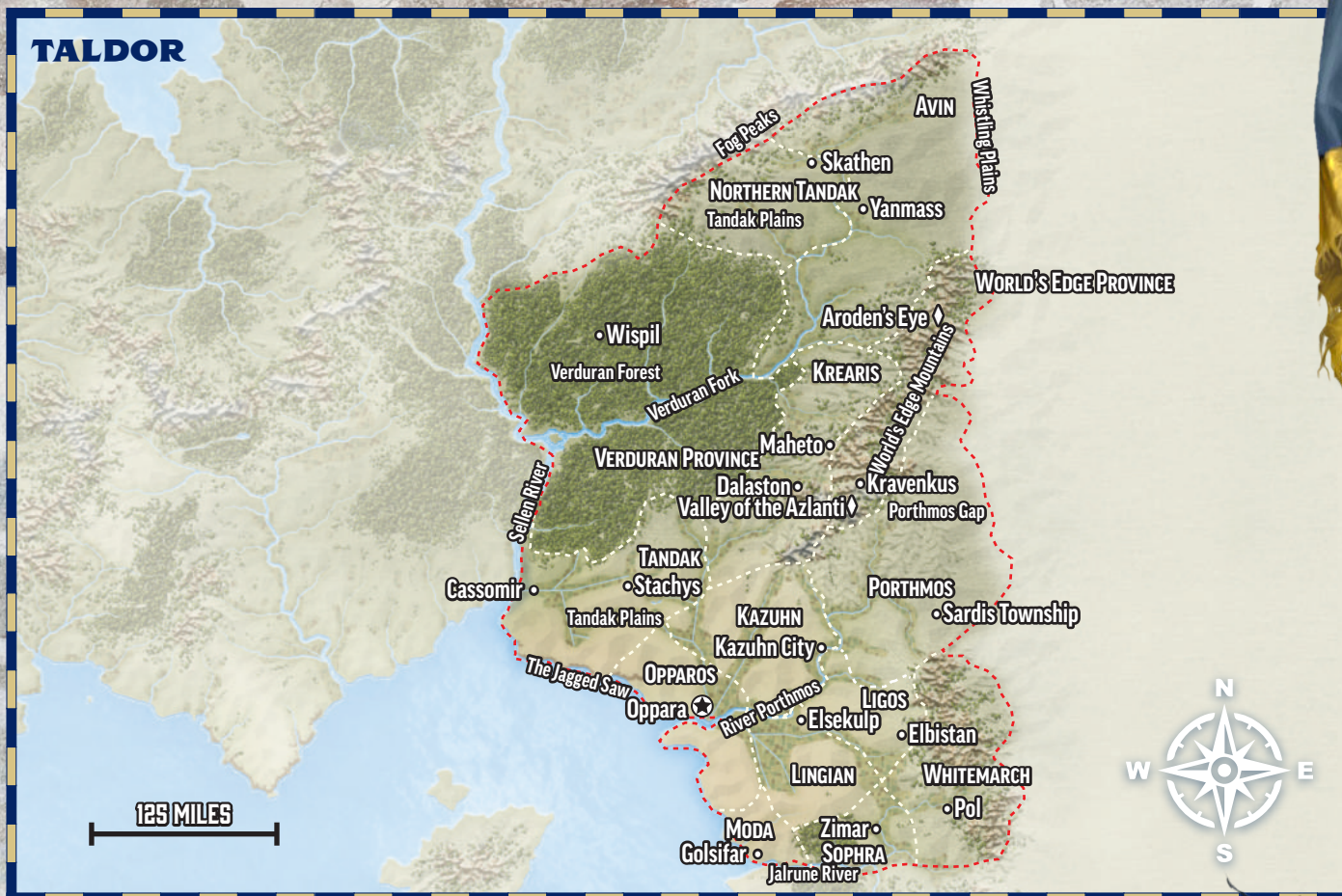
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Taldor embodies the typical Avistani fairytale, from the humble village threatened by dragons to the heroic knights who come to the rescue. So ubiquitous is this romantic tale that most of the Inner Sea region would agree that, once upon a time, Avistan was the Taldan Empire. Its territories were the flesh, its tongue the hymn, and its triumphs the pulse of the subcontinent. At its height, Taldor stretched across the southern Avistani coast and encompassed Lake Encarthan. This massive territorial claim was the fruit of many conquests made during the first half of Taldor's history. Within the rest of its sweeping six-millennia annals lie more tales of campaigns and schemes, committed in the name of nation and sovereign. While the glamor of that fairytale cannot conceal the empire's current bloat, Taldor remains a place where someone unassuming can rise in station with the right opportunity.

Taldor predates the ascension of Aroden; where other countries came to be, Taldor simply was. Calling it the progenitor of many modern nations is no understatement. The offspring nations might scoff and deride the notion, but they can't deny Taldor's indelible influence and perpetual power. Inner Sea culture is full of references to Taldane books; operas call back to Taldane ballads. That Taldane is the common tongue of the Inner Sea region gives the empire a convenient edge in diplomacy without resorting immediately to swords and shields.

Having resiliently survived many devastating perils, Taldans don't let anyone—least of all themselves—forget their cultural immortality and influence on regional politics. Yet today, the empire's glory is reduced, galvanized and haunted by its mythic once-upon-a-times. The nation's territory is only slightly larger than when the empire was founded. In the west, the Sellen River marks its border with Andoran. The northern border runs along the Fog Peaks. The south follows the Jalrune River, beyond which lies the empire's historic rival, the Kelesh province of Qadira. The eastern boundary, meanwhile, is contested. Some maps cut off at the World's Edge Mountains, while others include the Whistling Plains further east, all the way up to the borders of the Padishah empire of Kelesh.

Though significantly smaller than it was in its prime, Taldor remains an economic powerhouse. Ancient forests and towering mountains provide wood, gems, and metals for crafting and export. Fertile plains see bountiful harvests, topping the emergency granaries and cellars with plenty to spare for fermentation and preservation. A healthy shipbuilding industry fueled by lumber from the Verduran Forest supports the nation's economic power. While Taldor's capital, Oppara, cannot compete with Absalom as a port of call, the commerce of the Sellen Passage trade route and the caravans going between Avistan and Casmaron keeps the coin flowing. Scholarly and cultural pursuits

likewise flourish, with archaeologists seeking sites to excavate and bards coming to attend the prestigious art colleges.

The peace upon which this wealth sits is a frail one, however. The country is still recovering from the civil war known as the War for the Crown years ago. For the greater populace—the farmers, laborers, and artisans—the political fallout has fortunately been distant and minimal. Concerns over crumbling infrastructure, incompetent administrators, poor harvests, crime, and monsters remain the greater troubles. The aristocrats, armies, and various power players, meanwhile, experienced seismic shifts both bloody and bloodless. Grand Princess Eutropia, the first woman ruler in Taldor's history, has been trying to mend the wounds while pursuing reforms. Her progressive policies and compassion have won her the heart of the common people. While Taldor remains human-dominant, Eutropia's openness toward non-human citizens have slowly changed people's perception on one another based on ancestry or geographic origin. Many once considered non-citizens now enjoy full citizenship, providing they generally contribute to Taldan society.

Eutropia's detractors disdain her for the same reasons she's popular, and the detractors with power keep her position precarious. Change is slow, and backlash common. International diplomacy under the empress, meanwhile, has had mixed results despite her increased efforts in this area. Taldor's neighbors are wary of the country's renewed vigor, but are equally interested in seeing what they might gain from the shift. Taldor's neighbors can't help but wonder: can Taldor reinvent itself? Is it prepared to face old enemies who have learned new tricks, take on forgotten dangers lurking in the shadows, and weather the plots being hatched to weaken its foundations?

GOVERNMENT

Historically, the title of Taldor's monarch, the grand prince, went exclusively to male heirs of the imperial family. This was abolished in 4718 AR in favor of the eldest legitimate child of any gender—though the cost of this change was the murder of half the Senate and a civil war. In the past, adoption of a male heir with military or political accomplishments (preferably of noble birth) often resolved any issue regarding a lack of male heirs. As many nobles can trace their lineage back to the founding emperor, however, there is never a shortage of candidates during a succession crisis. Questions of possible heirs' worthiness can quickly become a flash point. At the height of the recent civil war, for example, there were well over 20 claims with merit. The contest only ended after the Mantle of Kings glowed upon Eutropia's shoulders, settling her right to rule.

As grand princess, Eutropia theoretically holds complete authority over both the government and the

military, symbolized by the Lion Throne and Primogen Crown respectively. In reality, the minutiae of day-to-day governance have long been delegated to Taldor's aristocracy and nigh-incomprehensible bureaucracy, while the military answers more to their charismatic leaders. Landed nobles—or those who command a battalion—in particular can resist imperial demands, effectively diluting the monarch's power down to their own political skills.

Taldor's peerage was meant to put the country in the capable hands of those who saw the duty of caring for Taldor and its people as sacred. For millennia, most have instead abused their privilege to build a personal or generational bastion of power. In extreme cases, the servants toil while their rulers indulge in luxuries or pursue misguided projects and ventures. The three basic rights of citizens, that of liberty, freedom of movement, and rule of law, are often neglected and mired with debt traps and corruption.

Entrenched as the issues are, even the empress cannot easily uproot the rot for fear of massive repercussions. That Eutropia manipulated the Senate to amend away patrilineal primogeniture shows, perhaps, how much power this legislative body holds above all else. As Eutropia says, an empress without the Senate's favor is as good as a high strategos without the loyalty of the Phalanx. Other than a place of influence, the Senate is responsible for converting imperial decree to laws, passing those too minor to escalate to the empress, and occasionally acting in her stead should she be absent or recused.

Many senatorial seats are hereditary noble titles. Despite laws citing many ways it can deviate from patrilineal primogeniture, Taldor's adherence to tradition and other inheritance laws had, for a time, overwhelmingly placed men who were also the head of their house in the seats. That a family would let anyone else represent them was, in fact, rather unorthodox. The Exaltation Massacre, in which half of the Senate was slaughtered, made many noble families reconsider their stances.

Vacant seats invite schemes, and senatorial positions have always been good bargaining chips. After the massacre, Eutropia flooded the Senate with her supporters. The survivors—including those that once supported her—took a stand, stalling senatorial functions for nearly a year before a compromise emerged. Today, of the 222 seats, 74 follow historic laws and remain hereditary; another 74 are appointed on five-year terms by landed nobles to represent a prefecture, province, or an arm of the military.

The last third—once the amendment passes—shall be publicly elected by the people as inspired by Andoran. As 148 senators is enough for the Senate to function, Eutropia's proposal for this public election is still cycling between her supporters and detractors. Many are curious if the Queen of Spies might resort to subterfuge again to achieve her goals.

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HISTORY

TIMELINE

- 1287 AR Taldaris slays the great leonine beast and terror of Taldor, the Grogrisant.
- 1281 AR The Principalities of Taldaris renamed to Taldor Empire, with Taldaris declared its first emperor.
- 632 AR The Armageddon Engine rampages through Taldor, destroying Oppara.
- 4 AR Qadira and Taldor clash at the Battle of Urfa.
- 1 AR Aroden ascends as a living god, with Oppara as the center of his worship.
- 37 AR Taldor's First Army of Exploration destroys the druidic Gorothe Lodge.
- 1552 AR General Coren dies to Qadiran assassins targeting Urios III.
- 1553 AR Xerbystes I and Urios III sign a peace treaty.
- 1629 AR The Lion Blades are officially founded.

Dives into Taldan history should be prefaced with the understanding that, barring well-preserved primary sources, most accounts were written to put the empire in a righteous light that deviated from reality. The discovery of Nacar-Azen, for example, has overturned the idea that most pre-Taldor city-states were founded in the Age of Anguish. Rather, they were likely Azlanti outposts from long before Earthfall. The Azlanti epic *Thallai* even suggests Garundi, Keleshites, and Kellids came to the outposts.

Some city-states appeared to eagerly adopt Jistkan or Osirian traditions. Yet if the cities did not desire to be Azlanti, why war at all over who was the true inheritor of that empire? A new hypothesis proposes that perhaps the ambitions of the grand princes fueled the wars—some rulers had been descendants of Azlanti authorities that survived Earthfall, who held dominion over what remained of the dead empire and could instigate war. City-states that adapted to the rise and fall of other civilizations were rebels at best, an invasion at worst, making them prime targets.

Even with this new context, the legend of Taldaris, Son of Lions, remains one of conquest. The rediscovery of his tomb and other ruins have provided some new details into his mortal life. In -1312 AR, Captain Sellen of Oppara adopted Taldaris after he was peacefully relinquished by lions on the Tandak plains. Taldaris grew up in her touring army, defending settlements that, like Oppara, had long moved away from their Azlanti roots. Taldaris's skill with blade, tactics, and words grew with experience. When the army finally returned to Oppara in -1300 AR, Grand Prince Balentrius recognized Taldaris's potential and promoted him to general upon adulthood (likely at 15).

Two years later, Oppara came under siege by a coalition of Azlanti fundamentalist city-states. While Taldaris led Oppara to freedom, the victory was costly. Many, including Balentrius and Sellen, were mortally wounded or dead. Balentrius named Taldaris the heir with his dying breath, leaving the young grand prince to rebuild and recruit. On the second anniversary of the siege, Taldaris announced his intent to bring an end to the warlords and unite the region into the Principalities of Taldaris, beginning the mythical 12-year campaign.

Taldaris targeted the coastal Azlanti fundamentalists first before turning to the settlements inland. He was efficient and merciless. It wasn't until he slew the Grogrisant—driven berserk by a curse—then lost the Match of the Mantles that he reflected on what he'd impressed upon the people. To subjugate through fear and awe seldom led to trust or respect. The First Emperor thus changed his approach, becoming an honorable and fair ruler during his supernaturally long reign and life.

Ten generations of relative peace followed until a Spawn of Rovagug, known as the Armageddon Engine, tore through the empire. Taldor struggled as it built infrastructure that would become instrumental for its longevity. Aroden's ascension both bolstered confidence in this defense and reignited ambitions of conquest, and the early Age of Enthronement is marked by Taldor's many Armies of Explorations. The First—a campaign against the hostile druids of Gorothe Lodge—went up the Sellen River into modern Kyonin and Galt and returned through the Porthmos Gap. The Second Army mapped lands north of Lake Encarthan. The Third, the largest, used Taldor's burgeoning navy to claim the southern Avistani coast.

The social and economic reality of the expeditions, however, was that they were bloody and costly. By the cusp of



GROGRISANT

the Fourth Army, there were calls to cease such pursuits. Distant city-states abhorred the heavy taxes and military obligations that eroded their self-defense. Resentment erupted in 1673 AR when Boy Prince Tralian V confirmed the Fourth Expedition. Many nobles relocated. The entire navy of Corentyn left—or more accurately, was stolen by local aristocrats in an outrageous heist.

From the 17th to 21st century AR, wealth disparity, corruption, and violence grew rampant. This age included the likes of Bastard Prince Penticus IV, First King Alvistus IV, and the five Struck Emperors, each so despicable that Taldor erased their shared name. The genocidal campaign on the Kellid nations was a constant backdrop. The Great Fire of Oppara nearly brought the empire to its knees, as many aristocrats, the Senate (both the people and building), and the king's court—the first of the Struck Emperors—perished or disappeared in the flames. The city somehow rebuilt, this time in resilient stone. A bare-bones Senate weathered a 50-year succession crisis until the Mantle of Kings crowned Dahalvian I. The Banker Prince restored the use of the title “grand prince” and the term “king” became derogatory.

While Dahalvian was eccentric, he accomplished the near-impossible task of funding the *Worldbreaker*. The magical siege engine's rumored might was so great a linnorm king traveled to Oppara to offer peace, promising to cease raids if Taldor turned elsewhere. The Fifth Army agreed, instead invading the modern River Kingdoms. Less than a century later, the Sixth Army set off for North Garund, but lost both army and *Worldbreaker* in the Battle of Nagisa to the Gorilla King.

The terror of Taldor imperialism significantly subsided, though there were notable moments during this slow disintegration. While Daronlyr XII (the only emperor nominally greater than V) seized the crown through homicide, he's regarded as the architect of modern Taldan law and institutions. The ascendancy of Cayden Cailean renewed a fervor in faith. The Shining Crusade is glorified, though Taldor highlights General Arnisant significantly more than Iomedae for reasons not well justified—lack of historic accounts of the Inheritor's mortal life remain a curious mystery. Lastly, the Treaty of the Wildwood negotiated by Adavarine II gave the empire a start in lumber trade that simply cannot be outpaced.

During the same span of time, relations between Taldor and Qadira fractured, especially after the genocide of Isgar and the White Wardens conspiracy, which claimed Qadiran Rovagug cults caused the 4920 AR earthquake. In 4079 AR, with the Padishah Empire distracted by a succession crisis, Qadira attacked and seized Zimar. The Grand Campaign launched in return heralded Taldor's shattering. Governor Aspek's treachery with the Even-Tongued Conquest shrunk Taldor to nearly the size of its infancy. Qadira, meanwhile, almost reached Oppara until Gennaris III drove them back, reclaiming Zimar in 4307 AR.

Taldor's recent dynasty featured the Stavians most prominently, starting with Stavian I, who persecuted the Sarenites on pretense of witchcraft and Qadiran influence. Stavian II, meanwhile, was crowned young and at the mercy of advisors who would not stop killing each other. In 4603 AR, the young monarch took initiative, declaring the Grand Campaign's end. He then established trade with Qadira, legalized the worship of Sarenrae, and sanctioned a naval Eighth Army.

Unfortunately, Aroden's death threw everything into disarray. Stavian II's rule stagnated. His son, Stavian III, possessed a sharper edge, but inept counselors and Stavian's poor mental health dulled potential. The emperor's relationship with his children, Eutropia and Carrius II, was strained and essentially ceased after Carrius's death in 4698 AR. Twenty years later, Stavian III orchestrated a mass assassination after learning of Eutropia's bid for the throne. The resulting Exaltation Massacre deposed him and instigated the War for the Crown, which lasted nearly a year before Eutropia emerged victorious, a miraculously revived Carrius beside her.

1707 AR	The province of Andoran is officially annexed by Taldor.
3007 AR	Cheliox becomes a province of Taldor.
3129 AR	Ulfen Guard founded by Grand Prince Hyrotte I after Qadiran assassins kill Grand Prince Jalrune.
3660 AR	The Dragon Plague, a period of terror perpetrated by dragons, plunges northern Taldor into chaos.
3754 AR	The Shining Crusade is launched to destroy the lich Tar-Baphon.
3841 AR	The Treaty of the Wildwood is signed, granting druids of the Wildwood Lodge autonomy in protecting the Verduran Forest.
4079 AR	The Grand Campaign begins when Qadira invades Taldor, capturing Zimar.
4081 AR	The Even-Tongued Conquest.
4528 AR	Grand Prince Stavian I criminalizes Sarenite worship in Taldor.
4603 AR	The Grand Campaign ends as peace is declared between Taldor and Qadira. Worship of Sarenrae in Taldor is legalized.
4606 AR	Aroden's death. The Eighth Army of Exploration sets sail toward new lands.
4608 AR	The Taldan colony of Amanandar founded in Tian Xia.
4718 AR	Beginning with the Exaltation Massacre engineered by Stavian III, the War for the Crown sweeps through Taldor. Stavian's daughter Eutropia is eventually crowned grand princess.
4725 AR	The present year. Stavian III dies after a brief period of lucidity.

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CURRENT EVENTS

After all these years, it is difficult to say if the War for the Crown has ended or merely entered a new stage. While she may be wearing the crown, Eutropia's choices and policies determine whether those with power rally to or away from her. She's needed to compromise many times to enact the sweeping changes she's proposed for the most disenfranchised of Taldor. Most of Eutropia's progressive ideas boost her reputation among the common folk, but equally damage it among the nobility. As many of her political allies were promoted out of the Senate, her plans often end up rejected on the Senate floor. What few education or public health programs do pass are usually part of a greater infrastructure project or investment.

Eutropia's attempts to reform inheritance and legitimacy laws likewise met considerable objections from Taldan traditionalists. Many accuse her of undermining Taldor's ancient values and sowing discord to weaken the aristocracy. The current Ulfen Guard commander, **Bothild Koldotter** (zealous female human pugilist), has a knack for shutting these accusations down with a scathing jibe. The military is also quick to come to Eutropia's defense in this battlefield of words, as several of her reforms have been related to military spending and allocation, especially in improving veteran care.

That said, even the military cannot stomach some of Eutropia's controversial decisions on the empire's sovereignty. Granting Linvarre its independence with only a handful of trade memos and not a single mention of the navy was widely criticized. Renegotiating the Treaty of the Wildwood in Verduran's favor was a similarly severe offense that sparked a few protests and many early retirements. As such enormous matters are ultimately up to the grand princess to decide, those in opposition could do little but grit their teeth and save their denouncements for later. In both instances, there was a surge of subversive activity in the months after. Some secret societies plotted how to weaken Eutropia's rule, depose her, or overthrow the entire monarchy.

The lax attitude on imperial sovereignty naturally casts doubt on what the empress's intentions are for the contested Whistling Plains. Taldor has long claimed to rule the plains yet never officially named the region a prefecture nor province. Eutropia recently sanctioned a diplomatic mission, reportedly to determine how receptive the Tzorehiyi Keleshites and other residents are to Taldor rule. The effort is set to be overseen by General **Relyson Gwein** (pragmatic

female human cavalier) of the Taldan Horse. While most know Eutropia offered the opportunity to help the general escape a developing scandal, what Relyson experiences and reports back will be a deciding factor on the region's political future.

The least controversial reform Eutropia enacted was funding the cultural sector, including a reexamination of historical items and records. A curiosity that turned up during one such search was the Mantle of the Grogrisant. Moral panic and indignation erupted over the potential that robbing Taldaris's tomb for the Mantle of Kings might have been unnecessary.

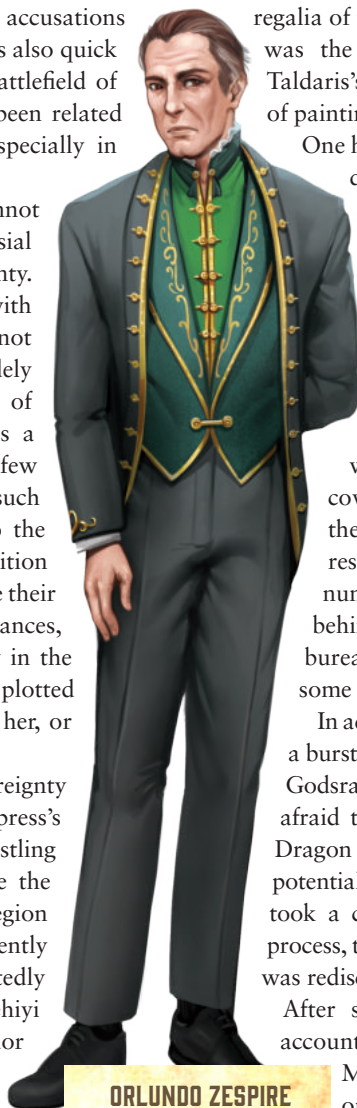
Fortunately for the perpetrators, curators found irrefutable evidence that the Mantle of Kings was created by Taldaris, as rumored, and did identify if one had the right to rule. The Mantle of the Grogrisant, meanwhile, was what Avenya the Tailor created to humble Taldaris during the Match of the Mantles, a contest "to create a garment most befitting a ruler." It later became the regalia of the spouse of the grand prince, for Avenya was the diminutive name of Veyna of Nazili, Taldaris's first wife. This revelation led to a wave of paintings, literature, songs, and at least six plays.

One had the unfortunate fate of debuting on the day of Godsrain.

The Godsrain brought with it a massive potential for power and influence. Eutropia initially issued a bounty for Godsrain materials to further Taldan interests and welfare. The generally lax application process led to a massive amount of issued grants to fund anything from legitimate research on warshards to arming personal guards to covering costs of massive galas purely for the sake of decadence. Eutropia has since rescinded these grants and requests, but a fair number of nobles and other figures—hidden behind the veil of several layers of mismanaged bureaucracy—still retain these funds and in some cases, a warshard or two.

In addition to falling warshards, Taldor suffered a burst of monster activity as a consequence of the Godsrain, especially draconic hostility. Some are afraid this belligerence might turn into a second Dragon Plague. As Taldor prepares itself for a potential slaughter, the Imperial College of Heraldry took a closer look at the warshards. During the process, the name of a lost and ancient siege weapon was rediscovered: the *Worldbreaker*.

After searching through contradicting historic accounts, scholars realized the dwarves of Maheto must have been the builders of the original siege engine. The dwarves' own



ORLUNDO ZESPIRE

oral history instead places events much earlier, saying the best craftsmasters of Taggoret moved to Taldor on the invitation of Alvistus V in the 1880s. This detail sent the scholars on another hunt, ending with them “recovering” a heavily encoded blueprint from the Lotheed family archives. The design, while it resembles the *Worldbreaker*, was more the size of a heavy crossbow.

The ransacking of a private family lodging was how Eutropia and the Senate caught wind of what the college found. Eutropia allowed the project to continue, though she removed it from the college’s hands. Both the Senate and the court were highly divided on whether reviving the *Worldbreaker* was permissible or diplomatic suicide. The arguments were so intense one day that Stavian III made a rare appearance to demand silence and deference to the grand princess’s will, much to Eutropia’s shock.

For a week, Stavian was coherent with no signs of dementia, able to hold conversations and take walks with his children. Some thought perhaps Godsrain had brought about a miracle. Alas, his period of lucidity was temporary, and the emperor died peacefully in his sleep shortly after. Taldor entered national mourning. As is customary for the Stavian family, his body was to be buried in the family crypt at Songbird Palace.

On the journey there, however, Eutropia was targeted by assassins twice, and Carrius once. The grand princess experienced a massive anxiety attack over these attempts. Rumors spread by her detractors suggested that during her breakdown, the paws and teeth of the Mantle of the Grogrisant fell off the garment, signifying how Taldor had become toothless and directionless. While Commander Bothild blasted the disloyal rumors as propaganda, stating the regalia was damaged from the multiple assassin attacks, it did not curb the spread of the story.

After consulting a close circle of allies, Eutropia agreed to take a year of mourning. The grand princess and her entourage traveled to Merratt, entrusting the court to Carrius. The prince valiantly faced Taldor’s intrigue for several months before escaping to Merratt as well, using the Tanager Jubilee as his cover. Count **Orlundo Zespire** (persistent male human swashbuckler), one of Taldor’s best administrators, was then appointed as the head of the Senate to lead the legislative body in acting on Eutropia’s behalf until the grand princess returns.

Though she’s still officially in mourning, Eutropia receives regular briefings, and holds a small

court every other day. Pressing issues are passed to the empress expediently through magical means, such as credible reports of a grogrisant roar being heard in the Verduran Forest, the Fog Peaks, and the World’s Edge Mountains. What omen three separate roars represents is unknown—there has never been more than one grogrisant until now.

One of the few things Orlundo reported, which Carrius refrained from bringing to his sister, was giving the Knights of Lastwall permission to travel and recruit within Taldor freely. However, even with the assistance of Eutropia’s allies, the knights’ efforts have borne little fruit. For one, the population’s faith in Eutropia has declined due to the highly biased stories depicting her as a weak ruler. The nobility is divided between apathy and polite righteousness. The former don’t want to offer assistance; the latter are too mild-mannered to get involved. Overall, the Knights of Lastwall have found Taldor to be eerily placid about the threat of Tar-Baphon. Save for those that work closely with them, most Taldans are exceptionally confident that either the Tyrant will never reach Taldor, or that the empire has plenty of time to prepare and prevail against him. Not even heroic tales of Taldor’s shining historical crusades against Tar-Baphon seem to be stirring public sentiment, a fact that many Lastwall knights consider particularly unnatural.

It is rather unusual that Taldor isn’t as vigilant as it was in the past. Unbeknown to most, the silent fracturing of the Lion Blades may be to blame. The secretive network has always been a political free agent, having been left to decide for themselves how to best serve Taldor’s ideological and practical interests. Some agents wish for there to be accountability and oversight, while others wish to maintain the Lion Blades’ independence. This disagreement, along with loyalties to different Lion Blades schools or leaders, caused the organization to turn on itself as factions seek to discredit each other.

With the Lion Blades so focused on internal affairs, enemies both old and new have been emboldened to come out of the woodwork. What’s worse is they may be in contact with one another. The immortality-seeking Immaculate Circle, the Carrius-obsessed Cult of the Twilight Child, and the anti-Eutropia Ninth Army may be foes with different goals, but woe comes the day when they realize that they certainly share an enemy or two in common. And if Eutropia and Carrius could be revived from their untimely deaths, what’s stopping their enemies from reviving past foes?



GRAND PRINCE STAVIAN II

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NOTABLE FIGURES



EUTROPIA STAVIAN



CARRIUS II



DOMINICUS RELL



LAURISA TROMAINE

In the vicious social circles of Taldor, being notable goes beyond name and title, though they most certainly help. There are two types of somebodies. The first are those who are at the center of an issue, whose every step is monitored by the greater society—secret or not—to forecast what comes next and plan their move. The second are those with a clear desire, a plan of how to satisfy that desire, and the determination of carving or dancing their way to the goal with grace, viciousness, or both.

Grand Princess **Eutropia Stavian** (progressive female human empress) fits the description of both. Though she's away from the capital until her health recovers, Eutropia is more aware of the goings-on in Taldor than ever. In promoting her allies, she has loyal ears and eyes in all regions of Taldor ready to share news faster than the speediest couriers in the Taldan Horse. As such, Eutropia already knows about the dangerous situation developing among the Lion Blades. While she does not know what the right solution is, she believes there needs to be one soon. If she cannot prevent it, at least she can recruit in preparation for the secret war.

Eutropia's younger brother, **Carrius II** (gentle male human prince), has not been informed of this, but his supernatural intuition warns him to be alert. Carrius has been picking up Eutropia's political acumen. He recently refused to accept being named heir officially, as doing so would likely encourage Eutropia's enemies to use lethal action against her. This has been rendered even more difficult by Gorum's death—a drop of silver rain, drawn like an arrow to the prince's fractured soul, struck the prince as he ran to a window to witness the Godsrain. The powers inflicted by the incident have left Carrius disturbed, as he recognizes he would appear as even more of an idealized king to those who would usurp Eutropia. As a result, he has kept his new surge of potential secret, even from his own sister.

Carrius still remains the heir presumptive, which also gives him some breathing room on the matter of marriage. While his escape from public life means he is no longer swarmed by suitors, Carrius is still coming to terms with his polyamorous nature and whether it might be incompatible with modern Taldor's monogamous expectations. The identities of Carrius's six lovers are a closely guarded secret, though it's said they're all aware of one another and work amicably, even on personal missions for the crown.

Currently, the silent war of the Lion Blades is centered around **Dominicus Rell** (imposing male human mastermind). Dominic of the noble house of Rell has been the master of the shadow schools and de facto leader of the Lion Blades since Stavian III was crowned. He's a known maverick who often ignores shadow school consensus to issue his own orders. As his decisions usually turn out for the better, Dominic has developed quite an ego and believes he always has Taldor's best interests in mind. While he opposed Eutropia's bid for the throne and was notably absent during the civil war, Dominic does currently advise her, often as a contrarian who cautions against the perils of misplaced trust. When he isn't arguing with her, Dominic negotiates with Eutropia's detractors; exactly what threats or bribes he might be using as an incentive, he doesn't share.

Dominicus's absence during the civil war and his eagerness to reform the training regime of the shadow schools upon his return has shaken many of his agents' faith. Some feel as if Dominic intends to turn the organization into his own private army. This has driven several schools and agents into alliance with **Laurisa Tomaine** (calculating female human spymaster). Laurisa's early detection of the Exaltation Massacre taught the senior agent that to best protect Taldor, the Lion Blades must have eyes and ears both within Taldor and beyond its borders. She seeks to elevate the organization into an official entity—potentially the fourth branch of the military.

Dominicus and Laurisa did attempt to negotiate, facilitated by Lady **Gloriana Morilla** (graceful female human bard). Despite Gloriana's extensive experience as a diplomat, the talk fell apart rather quickly after Dominicus insulted Laurisa's "willful blindness toward the stained legacy within." What Dominicus means exactly is unclear. Both Laurisa and Gloriana became occupied by reports of the Ninth Army's seditious activities against the Pathfinder Society. After helping the society retreat safely from Oppara, Gloriana has been juggling multiple responsibilities. The most important include keeping an eye on the civil war traitors exiled to Absalom and making sure they stay alive; helping Taldor spread its cultural influence in the arts; and tracking Samel Maleagant (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Absalom* 67) to ensure the Norgorberite lawyer can never approach Eutropia again.

Unfortunately for Gloriana, she has become the target of harassment from Countess **Phisetta dis Alavir** (gregarious female conspirator dragon witch) whenever she's back in Taldor. The seemingly human countess—whose draconic name is Vixalla—is picking on Gloriana in part out of cruel entertainment, and in part to distract Gloriana from detecting the Immortal Game. This secret society of extremely long-lived (but not immortal) creatures makes bets on Taldor's future, then inserts themselves into its politics to nudge it in the direction they have a stack on. While the next bet is still a few years away, Vixalla decided to start early, especially after Godsrain has seemingly boosted her power of disguise.

Countess Phisetta has identified three areas of focus. The first is **Thestro Briarsmith** (sadistic male human sorcerer), the grand duke of the Porthmos prefecture. Having been in power since before Eutropia was born, Thestro is an infamous politician who administrates his region with an iron first. Not only was he able to remain in power unscathed after the civil war, he also openly defies Eutropia's decrees. Thestro has specifically become an obstacle in Eutropia's diplomatic efforts in the Whistling Plains, as he has a working relationship with the centaurs there. General Gwein has already sent a few reports about tense standoffs, seemingly from paranoia sowed by the grand duke, though these have been swept off the table by Thestro's spies. Phisetta suspects if Thestro were to team up with the Ninth Army, Eutropia's reign might become shockingly short.

The second is the contentious Warshard Worldbreaker project. **Hemlin of Taggoret** (greedy male dwarf merchant), a cousin of the grand duchess placed in charge of the project, is particularly invested in the success of said program. Aware that many are concerned that the project would escalate tensions between Taldor and its neighbors, Hemlin has been using his trade network to accentuate how the project is aimed specifically toward what he believes to be an upcoming new Dragon Plague. The mix of truths and falsehoods has been incredibly effective in undermining petitions against the project within Taldor, and confusing spies trying to assess whether this is a real threat or not. Hemlin is also rather indiscriminate in who might get their hands on the weapon, and it's rumored that Grand Duke Briarsmith has already secured a pre-purchase somehow through a proxy buyer.

Lastly, not everyone in the country supports a new Shining Crusade. In fact, Carrius and Eutropia are divided in opinion, something that might be exploitable. Carrius has an ally on the subject in Duchess **Myantha Merrosett-Lotheed** (bookish female human necromancer), who agrees that the forces Taldor and its allies can muster today can never match the original Shining Crusades. Rather, Taldor should investigate the Whispering Tyrant's source of knowledge, the Runelord Zutha, and the rumors on how he was reportedly destroyed by a group of adventurers. Prince Carrius took pause at the suggestion at first—it's hard not to suspect any necromancer who openly discusses lichdom—but the duchess responded by dryly inviting the prince to babysit her two rambunctious toddlers, who shall be joined soon by a third in several months. Lichdom and bearing a child, as far as she is aware, are mutually exclusive.



GLORIANA MORILLA



PHISETTA DIS ALAVIR



THESTRO BRIARSMITH



HEMLIN OF TAGGORET



MYANTHA MERROSETT-LOTHEED

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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

After her uncle thoroughly tarnished the Vernisant name by aiding in the orchestration of the Exaltation Massacre, **Alarain Vernisant** (shy female human cavalier) and her extended family were cast out of their ancestral home of Ridonport. The cavalier has been desperate for a chance to restore her family's name.

A strong proponent against the Worldbreaker project, Duke **Leonard Centimus** (erudite male aiuvarin human aristocrat) has collected over a thousand signatures from experienced politicians and diplomats citing the dangers of a potential military arms race. Despite being turned away from Songbird Palace several times, Centimus has virtually parked his wheelchair outside the holdings to seek an audience with Eutropia before it's too late.

Baroness **Martella Lotheed** (innovative female human investigator) is Eutropia's spymistress. Essential in the grand princess's success during the War for the Crown, she was awarded her new title to signify her place as a close advisor of the empress.

Leader of one of the Whistling Plains' oldest settlements, **Narishan Solzakarr** (pious nonbinary human gravekeeper) is an influential voice among the Tzorehiyi and also a diplomat who keeps the peace between the humans, kholos, and orcs in the region. They are highly suspicious of Taldans in general, and resistant to Taldor's rule.

The **Night Swan** (radical female human vigilante) is the alter-ego of Lucretzia Marthane, an ex-noble bent on dismantling Taldor's greedy aristocracy.

Originally active only in Tandak, Lucretzia's activities have spread to Opparas, Ligos, and Lingian.

Morrin Zellvyngian (paranoid male human fugitive) is the disgraced ex-grand duke of Lingian. Morrin escaped with his family to Porthmos and sought the protection of Grand Duke Briarsmith. He now serves as Briarsmith's secret negotiator, unable to leave Taldor while his family is held hostage in Sardis Township.

As obtuse as its other laws, Taldor's territory is divided as the Lands Partition Decree of 3246 AR dictates into 62 prefectures, of which 50 are redundant for administration and cartography. It also has two recognized provinces, with a third being planned. The section below showcases some locations of interest and the 12 prefectures.

Avin: The Brokenbridge River and Falling River roughly outline the largest of Taldor's prefectures. Though far from Oppara, Avin is exceptionally prosperous, producing almost half of the nation's wheat. The capital city, Yanmass (population 6,631), maintains a busy trade with central Casmaron. Avin is also home to the imperial cavalry, the Taldan Horse, which safeguards the caravans and transports.

Avin is still dealing with the scandal of the affair between Grand Duke **Broyse Renginán** (dutiful male human cavalier) and General Relyson Gwein. The potential succession crisis their children might instigate is far away, but nevertheless makes for effective political ammunition. The last the two lovers saw of each other was during a brief bout of diplomacy with Avin's kholos and centaurs, who agreed to help fend off the ogres in return for full Taldan citizenship. Relyson then departed for the Whistling Plains, reportedly on poor terms. Without the full support of the Taldan Horse, Broyse is left vulnerable to manipulation from the likes of the politically savvy Merrosetts.

Fog Peaks: This mountain range is perpetually cloudy, with snow accumulating in fall and lasting well into spring. Frost giants and monsters that prefer the cold dwell here, preying often on the fishing villages at the foot of the mountains, especially near Fog Creek. Landgrave **Ogvai Jarlbjorn** (vigilante male human barbarian) frequently invites the Ulfen Guard to repel the attacks.

Jalrune River: This river partially defines the border between Taldor and Qadira. Despite Eutropia's promises, Taldan corsairs still frequently raid Qadiran merchant vessels. The river bisects a dense forest called Border Wood. The northeast edge of the woods is particularly famed for its perpetual snowfall, reportedly due to a magical portal to Irrisen.

Kazuhn: Kazuhn provides specifically for Oppara at the expense of all else. Grand Duchess **Mellea Denzarni** (duplicitous female human aristocrat) has selectively applied Eutropia's reforms to keep the common folk content while visiting nobles continue to conspire and indulge. As Oppara's food supply is in Mellea's clutches, few in the city dare move against her nor her ally Countess dis Alavir.

Kazuhn has always been a hotbed of subversive activity. Its capital, named Kazuhn City (population 5,560), has become the new headquarters for the Brotherhood of Silence within Taldor. The Eagle's Head amphitheater now hosts both a summer and winter festival for schemers to meet, ironically enabled because of Eutropia's funding of the arts. That the winter festival takes place around the time of one of Norgorber's religious holidays is not lost to the Lion Blade agents who monitor these events.

Krearis: Krearis is the fourth-most populated prefecture due to its variety of isolated terrain. The diversity of resources makes it perfect for crafters and artisans. For an empire like Taldor, this naturally means it is the weapons development and manufacturing center of the empire.

Krearis's capital, Maheto (population 12,860), arms and armors Taldor's militaries with the finest of dwarven artisanry. The city is heavily fortified and defended to ensure the supply line never breaks. Grand Duke **Borand Heskillar** (diplomatic male human politician) thus almost prevailed in the

civil war with his own claim through Micheaux III, the fourth son of Stavian I. In the trials after the war, his wife, Grand Duchess **Grella of Taggoret** (witty female dwarf fighter), eloquently argued that her husband's bid was necessary to prevent bloodshed between the historically feuding earls. The pair's combined charisma and sincerity won Eutropia over, and she only gave them a token fine. Grella has since become a close friend of the empress and was thus entrusted with the Warshard Worldbreaker project.

Ligos: Mostly rural, Ligos is home to some of the largest ranches of Taldor, including the Stavian Ranches founded by Stavian I which supply the imperial family with their horses. The prefecture likewise hosts many equestrian sports, including the famous 100-mile Emperor's Mile race. While its destination at Sureshire Ranch remains despoiled, the starting point, Emperor's Pass, became volatile after Godsrain as the various giants in the area started a war.

Grand Duchess **Destelita Solari** (cruel female human spymaster) threw many of the allies she made during the civil war under the chariot. This has left her bereft of goodwill. Recently, the prefecture's capital, Elbistan (population 2,000), was besieged by giants and kobolds with magical siege weapons from the Grand Campaign era. Only the Porthmos prefecture came to her aid in time. The grand duchess dreads what favor she now owes to the infamously ruthless grand duke.

Lingian: Once outshined by other prefectures in all but corruption, Lingian is hailed by its supporters as an example of what might be if Eutropia's reforms were passed. After stripping the last grand duke of his title and his ill-begotten wealth, Eutropia was persuaded to appoint Lord **Remilliard Kastner** (principled male human paladin of Ragathiel). That this happened shortly after Tar-Baphon's return is no coincidence. Even the most reserved of the Senate backed the attempt to prevent Remilliard from throwing himself into war, if only because he descends directly from Dominus I, the eldest of Stavian I's younger brothers.

The paladin reluctantly accepted the duty on the stipulation that Lady **Zariyah Clement** (diligent female human aristocrat) be named attending duchess. Eutropia agreed as Zariyah was her first candidate. The two ex-senators managed to pool their connections and allies together, bypassing senatorial approval to initiate some of the reforms Eutropia wants. Lingian is now beyond self-subsistence thanks to new irrigation, and its capital, Elsekulp (population 4,930), hosts many furniture artisan guilds, construction trade schools, and an architectural college in its infancy.

Moda: The smallest of Taldor's prefectures, Moda thrives primarily off its navy-supplemented maritime economy. Its inland has farming potential that remains neglected. Grand Duke **Nester Delriddia** (composed male human swashbuckler), a veteran and continued supporter of the Imperial navy, recently disappeared during one of his long fishing trips. Searches have been inconclusive and continue to this day.

Nester's rival, Baron **Zahid Passara IV** (hotheaded male human aristocrat), has been capitalizing on the opportunity. He nearly pushed the navy out of the capital, Golsifar (population 3,750), until Baron **Becher Railford** (calculating male human ex-Pathfinder) persuaded him not to. In return, the navy has helped the Pathfinder Society reach the baron's eponymous village, which has become a temporary lodge after the society's original lodge in Oppara was lost.

Northern Tandak: This prefecture's down-to-earth atmosphere makes it an attractive place to relocate to for common folk. Its remoteness and lack of major settlements, however, means one can expect a hard life. Life was easier once, until Galt's revolution reduced its trading opportunities and added considerable political instability. The prefecture is therefore occasionally willing to invest in stabilizing politics in Galt.

LOCAL CLIMATE

Taldor's weather, in modern times, is known to be exceptionally stable and pleasant all year round. There is just enough rain and snow during winter and spring to keep the land nourished through summer and fall. Droughts come roughly twice a decade for most regions, and floods at most once. Neither are therefore considered extenuating circumstances by law. So predictable are weather patterns that if there are any anomalies, it's assumed foul magic is at work and requires investigation.

There are so few mentions of natural disasters in Taldan history outside of plagues and earthquakes after the 1st century AR, in fact, that Taldans romanticized the land, believing it must be under the protection of some supernatural force. Perhaps someone made a pact with an elemental, fey, or nature itself. Others speculate whether the defeat of the Gorothe Lodge during the First Army of Exploration might have been the catalyst of peaceful weather.



TANASHA STARBORNE

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FLORA AND FAUNA

Taldor is home to many strange animals found nowhere else in the world, half of which are the result of the whims of nature (such as the grisantian lions), the other half of which are probably remnants of some experiment conducted by druids or wizards (such as chimeras). To ensure the nobility can enjoy a good hunt at will, many creatures are off limits for the common folk to hunt unless they're proven to endanger one's livelihood or existence. Ethereal undead and haunts are also fairly common, especially arising from unnatural deaths.

Because of its rich variety of environment and access to wealth, Taldor is home to an exceptionally large number of dragons, despite the Dragon Plague being a fresh memory to many ancient dragons. Younger dragons are more likely to be found in Northern Tandak. Older dragons tend to move south, either into the Verduran Forest or Krearis.

The continued aspirations of Grand Duchess **Breatezza Fahlspar** (modest female human cleric of Erastil) to impose Andoren philosophy and Kellid traditions finally culminated in an assassination attempt. If **Renar of Adrast** (brave male human cavalier) had not been on the way to the capital, Skathen (population 3,990), she would have surely perished. Renar was quick to offer her secrecy and shelter, then wrote to Carrius in secret about the truth behind the grand duchess's disappearance. Given the urgency, Eutropia approved an independent investigation organized by the young baron and his parents.

Opparos: As the prefecture that houses Oppara (page 164), Opparos is almost a condensed and exaggerated representation of Taldor as a whole. One can hardly travel a day without seeing a moment in Taldan history on display. Such an environment stokes intense patriotism, for better or worse.

After the last grand duke died during the Exaltation Massacre with no heir, Eutropia appointed **Georgi Backus Talbot II** (visionary male human business magnate) to the post. While a successful merchant and politician, Talbot's effectiveness as grand duke relies heavily on the cooperation of the baron of Oppara. The two clash so frequently a chain of messengers is necessary to make any discussions productive. The only time the two agreed was about sending a team to investigate the heavily defended Glory's Flame lighthouse, which sputtered during Godsrain.

Porthmos: The tyranny of Grand Duke Thestro Briarsmith looms prominently whenever Porthmos is mentioned. Revitalization in the area has been limited because of Thestro's open defiance of Eutropia. The nobles of Porthmos carefully balance their favor with both the empress and grand duke. If they so much as tip too far toward Eutropia, Thestro has his centaur guards escort said noble to the capital, Sardis Township (population 2,780), for a "conversation" that usually ends with incarceration at Porthmos Prison.

Only a few nobles have been fortunate enough to escape said fate by reaching out either to the Lotheed family at Hyden or to Baroness **Diddima Ennoi** (stoic female human wizard) of Stavian's Hold in time for an extraction. The baroness is all too happy to help—her Eastern Front Academy for Alchemy and Arcane Magic has seen an influx of students after imperial scholarships allowed her to recruit students regardless of their social status. Indeed, those from Porthmos have always shown a knack for the arcane arts since time immemorial. The baroness has also set her eyes on the House of the Senses Awakened, believing the academy might be able to operate tuition-free if they can seize the rumored valuables within.

Porthmos Gap: There's debate on which was named Porthmos first, the river or this landmark. The destructive force of the Spawn of Rovagug left treasures buried, minerals exposed, and aberrations swarming the land. Some monsters have fortunately been driven extinct, but wyverns remain a threat due to their mobility.

Sellen River: Recently uncovered lore states Taldaris's last act in his campaign was to name this river after his adopted mother before returning home. The river today is a busy trade route that leads vessels up to Kallas Lake, where it branches out further into the River Kingdoms, Lake Encarthan, and more.

Sophra: Home of the Taldor Phalanx and Taldor's most fortified city, Zimar (population 18,340), Sophra fell immensely out of favor with Eutropia for being the headquarters from which **Maxillar Pythareus** (arrogant male human ex-high strategos) operated. As it's the primary defense front against Qadira, however, demilitarization is unfathomable. The best Eutropia managed was to remove the previous grand duke and appoint the more diplomatic Earl **Gahez Varima** (friendly male human bard).

Historically, the high strategos rules jointly with the grand duke to ensure the prefecture is always prepared to defend Taldor. After several

consultations, Eutropia appointed **Selmali Zamarr** (decisive nonbinary human paladin of Sarenrae) as the new high strategos. Once a well-respected phalanx commander, Selmali faced incredible prejudice under Maxillar's leadership. Though Selmali retired to religion, they found themselves often sent to work with the phalanx they used to command. They might not have climbed the conventional ladder of command, but Selmali is undeniably qualified in both experience and popularity.

Stachys: This town of 380 was revitalized during the War for the Crown by Eutropia's allies, some of whom are now in charge of Meratt. With the empress residing in the country, the Betony Estate it boasts has become a common guesthouse for the nobles lining up to meet her, who are getting impatient enough to sabotage one another to skip ahead.

Tandak: Tandak used to be fully forested and was home to druid lodges that worshipped a grogrisant as a guardian. Today, the prefecture is a vast prairie with swampy coasts. The region relies heavily on its capital city, Cassomir (population 35,020), whose shipyards and trade keep the economy afloat.

Academically, archaeology has increased exponentially, from Nacar-Azen in Blackwood Swamp to the sacred Temple Canyon. Some ventures aim for newer ruins such as Nazalli, lost during the Dragon Plague. Grand Duchess **Cisera Tiberan** (cautious female human alchemist) has been vetting the teams, certain a few are simply sophisticated tomb robbers. This frustrates Admiral **Kasaba** (fierce human female fighter) of the Imperial Navy to no end, as she would rather Cisera focus on expanding the shipyards so the shipwrights can meet their deadlines.

Verduran Forest: The recent rebellion in the region cast doubt over the loyalty of this semiautonomous province. Eutropia's renegotiation was so controversial, the governor resigned. Without oversight, there's been an uptick in illegal harvests. Marquess **Tanasha Starborne** (whimsical female gnome sorcerer), the elected senator of the gnome settlement Wispil (population 9,120), is avoiding the seat as much as she's trying to keep it out of exploitive hands.

Whistling Plains: Contrary to past impressions, the Tzorehiyi Keleshites do have settlements here beyond known trade routes. Most settlement sites are related to sacred or traditional rites, such as burials. Centaurs, warg-riding kholos, and orcs are likewise prominent nomads. Bison-herding is a common trade, with lions—both common and grisantian—posing a significant threat.

Whitemarch: For reasons unknown, an incredible number of warshards landed in Whitemarch, setting off a massive earthquake. Grand Duchess **Vivexis Darahan** (resilient female human fighter) spent months searching for survivors and evacuating them to the capital city, Pol (population 2,390). Since most of Whitemarch's citizens have a military background, she was able to quickly reestablish order.

An unexpected development occurred when an orc delegation from the Gouged Eye Hold surrendered. Taldor has long considered these orcs to be cannibalistic monsters. After hearing what the diplomats have to say, Vivexis sent a request for the orc delegation to visit imperial court. Whatever the hold shared, it appears the grand duchess has decided Eutropia needs to hear it.

World's Edge Mountains: This mountain range is home to a passel of mining hamlets. The marquess of the province has returned to encroaching on the Whistling Plains. Many believe if they capture enough land, the region can become a prefecture. Their misplaced priority has left the harpies at Aroden's Eye, the dwarves in the Sky Citadel Kravenkus, and the undead ravener in the Valley of the Azlanti undisturbed, for better or worse.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

Dalaston (population 220) is a small village in Krearis that became even smaller after the Godsrain agitated a dragon living in the ruin of Dragonscar nearby. Only those of the Blackpeak Brewery, the young noble house of Irini and their halfling brewers, remained behind to protect their livelihood.

The dwarves of the Sky Citadel **Kravenkus** (population 150) all retreated to Maheto after Godsrain, leaving only a token garrison behind to guard the place. The move might have become permanent, as the last communication reported a surge of monsters from the Darklands.



SELMALI ZAMARR

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OPPARA

The Gilded City was, once upon a time, truly tiled and domed in gold. It shone brightly like a miniature sun above the black augite cliffs. Though the last flecks of gold were scraped away during the reign of Cydonus III, opulence continued to flow like the nearby River Porthmos—never ending, for better or worse. Some of the actualized wealth has endured the ages as architecture, including the faux-Azlanti villas and Daronlyr apartments. But these are only the visible records, for beneath the city lies labyrinths of ruins, awaiting with their forgotten histories. Today, grit and moss may yet stain the Uirtamon-era marble edifices of the Senate and imperial palace, but it doesn't tarnish the hope Opparans hold for the days ahead of them.

Oppara is the political, economic, and cultural heart of Taldor, and yet it's different from the rest of the country in many ways. Passionate open-air forums, spontaneous auctions, and seasonal markets are common sights. The city is also a living museum. Any child of Oppara knows which square or street corner might have a particular fountain or statue. They can recite by heart the faces, names, and stories depicted in the city's art and architecture. Ultimately, however, stories change with the telling, and most Opparans

know an alternative version or two of the historical events they're taught.

Sharing such stories is part of the daily routine. For the working class, the early mornings begin with a strong brew of energizing tea or herbs. People chatter over their mugs about news, rumors, sightings, even dreams and the possible omens foretold. For those who can afford comfort, the day starts slightly later, with the conversation occurring mostly over breakfast with coffee. Last are those with the luxury of time, who often catch up on recent gossip from those under their employ as they enjoy their private brunch.

As it's not unusual for these chats to transition into full-on meetings, "second mugs" (cups, for those too posh to use all fingers) are likewise a ritual for when one arrives or begins work. As the day progresses, it's customary to pause and appreciate the splendid scenes of the city, whether by taking in the bustle of the streets or visiting cultural centers like museums and galleries. Lunch periods are commonly long enough so even those with the busiest work schedules can fit in a leisurely stroll or visitation. Dinner is likewise given a cultural touch, as it often hosts readings or recitation of literature, poems, and music along with more story-swapping. What exact

activities and company one might engage in or keep during these breaks is ultimately up to personal preference, ranging from the exciting to tranquil.

The practice of this break, colloquially known as a bask, sets the pace of life in Oppara to be a saunter against what one might otherwise expect of a capital metropolis. Some would argue it's less sauntering and more a balancing act while overburdened by indulgences. Basks have become such a staple, in fact, that a recent pamphlet suggests that, to be a truly cultured and refined Opparan, one requires five basks a day. Each should appeal to the sense of smell, sight, sound, taste, and touch, in said order. Even long-time residents are bewildered by some Opparans' stubbornness on their daily routine of baths, gallery visits, chamber music, pub crawls, and lovers' trysts. As such locals would swear on Cayden Cailean's name, however, why live in Oppara at all if you are not here to bask in what it has to offer?

And bask one can in the city's vibrance nowadays, for Grand Princess Eutropia has been on a mission to revitalize Oppara in image and functionality. While the concept of public education is still too liberal for most of the aristocracy, Eutropia has secured funding for several students from various academies to conduct "public demonstrations" of their work in some form. The students know their true assignments well and slip in opportunities to teach the largely illiterate audience some practical or technical knowledge.

The city is also alive with construction, both restorative and novel. Some projects have paused after workers hit yet another ruin from an Oppara long past. Most convert into an archaeological dig within days. While both the building and excavations have created work opportunities for the destitute, the impact on established businesses has generally been negative. Some shopkeepers therefore take their wares out into the streets on wheelbarrows, pull carts, or animated shelves to seek customers.

The trend quickly caught on and was legalized—complete with a convoluted application process. Traveling vendors are now, for the immediate foreseeable future, a staple alongside acrobats, dancers, troubadours, landscape painters, and other street artists. While most merchants are licensed, a small portion operate off-paper. These compact "storefronts" usually come in small luggage or cloaks that are convenient to pack and take away into the crowd whenever the constabulary shows up. Much to law enforcement's chagrin, residents consider making a purchase from these elusive merchants a fun challenge.

For the elite, Oppara has become a poorly aged bottle of Ligosi Red, or at least one that's been unforgivably tampered with. Movement between the districts had once been segregated by wealth and habit. Never in living memory—so claims the mostly human Senate—has there been so much unsupervised mingling. To the aristocrats' disappointment, Baron Vinmark has deflected these concerns as prejudiced and an insult to fellow Opparans. Given the ex-Ulfen Guard has efficiently implemented what he can of Eutropia's reforms, his position is too strong to contend. The aristocrats thus take out their frustrations on the grand princess's court, Senate, or take their grievances public by the tomb of Comolaudio the Horse Baron, inciting hostilities until order, recess, or removal is enforced.

To appease her detractors, Eutropia cautiously allowed some harmless excesses and corruption to continue. Predictably, to spite the empress, decadence and treachery have reached new heights. Weaponizing exclusivity, the aristocrats found creative ways to differentiate themselves. Poetry and literature in the upper circles are increasingly flowery, referential, and layered with subtext. Costume parties themed around pre-tailoring fashion are considered displays of grandiose confidence in comparison to the current Eurythnia- and Thassilon-inspired fashion trend. Keeping cobble mites as pets, which was banned last year due to infestation, has become a symbolic gesture against the grand princess. The privacy of such acts is guarded not by silence, but by lies and half-truths.

OPPARA

SETTLEMENT 16

METROPOLIS

Historic capital of Taldor and

headquarters of the Lion Blades

Historic Capital of the Taldan Empire

Government Grand Princess (Eutropia)

Population 114,744 (90% humans, 5% halflings, 5% others)

Languages Common (Taldane),

Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Halfling, Hallit, Kelish

Religions Abadar, Cayden Cailean, Iomedae, Norgorber, Sarenrae, Shelyn, Thamir

Threats border tensions, government corruption, magical wild beasts, treasonous schemes

Capital Wealth Oppara is a center of trade for Taldor, importing and exporting only the finest goods. With the right connections, you can consider the settlement level of Oppara to be level 20 when you Earn Income and for determining access to items.

Imperial Pride The citizens of Oppara are eager to talk about the storied history and accomplishments of Taldor. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to Gather Information about Taldor in Oppara.

Carrius II (gentle male human prince) Eutropia's younger brother, revived during the War for the Crown

Grand Princess Eutropia Stavian I (progressive female human empress) Ruler of Taldor

Baron Olar Vinmark (loyal male human mayor) Former Ulfen Guard, appointed mayor of Oppara by Stavian III

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The part of life that remains mostly unchanged for all is Oppara's observed holidays. The majority are religious, especially those from Taldor's pantheon of Abadar, Cayden Cailean, Norgorber, and Shelyn. Other holidays are mostly associated with the empire's accomplishments, such as the inaugural dates of each of the Armies of Exploration. Exaltation Day or Week, where a commoner is elevated to nobility, has become more restrained in the wake of the massacre. Festivities do still take place, though they're usually postponed until after the exaltation in case it turns out to be too early to celebrate the affair.

GAZETTEER

Oppara is divided into 15 districts of varied sizes, with a 16th unadministered area that is functionally a district itself. The wealthier districts are concentrated on the west side of the city, running along the cliffs for a gorgeous view out to sea or over the capital. Going inward toward the city walls are the less prosperous of the districts. The Y-shaped canal also serves as a guide to the stratification of class and wealth in Oppara.

Imperial Square, situated just west of where the canal intersects, hosts the Imperial Palace and its royal apartments, the palatial ground and gardens, and a sizable plaza within the sturdy but intricate iron fencing. The best of what Oppara has to offer surrounds the

palace, from fashionably furnished apartments to jewelers, tailors, and fine dining. Most businesses here are open by reservation only. Whether the business is truly conducted or simply a front for something else is another matter.

Northeast of Imperial Square lies the aristocratic residential area **Westpark**. The villas boast architectural styles from many different dynasties, though any from before the 2900s are likely imitations. Most residences are shielded with magic to reduce noise and deter intruders, but rising paranoia and desire for privacy have led to a spike in private security and obnoxiously tall hedges.

Those of military accomplishment and backgrounds, on the other hand, are more likely to seek a home in **Worldbreaker Hill** for like-minded company. The Ninth Army is rumored to have a base of operations here, though no one has been officially accused of harboring the seditionists. Conveniently sandwiched between the hill and the palace is **Senate's Hill**. The district is home to the Senate, many senators' homes, and shops that cover most needs and services the senators fancy or require. Not far from Senate's Hill is the scenic **Aroden's View**. The tall hill overlooks the rest of the city and contains many ancient monuments and gardens from Taldor's earliest history.

Memorial Park is likewise home to monuments, though it's more focused on recent history. The latest

installation is a wall of carved lilies in remembrance of those who died during the Exaltation Massacre and the ensuing civil war. The quiet city garden is otherwise dedicated to figures of legends and history and those who served beside them. Some figures, especially Iomedae, are conspicuously missing. The nearby six towers and their central column are designated as a separate district named the **Seven Towers**. Their function is still a mystery, but leading theories are either Azlanti artifact or Star Tower.

Oppara has two official city gates. The larger gate and the lively market district nearby are named **Lionsgate** after the pair of lions perched atop it. These animated marble statues have been witnessed jumping down to inspect the ground area as of late, leading to concerns on their upkeep, or if some entity has possessed them. The other entrance and its abandoned industrial district, **Crownsate**, was the first to be approved for renovations, though whether it should be revitalized or repurposed is still contested. Eutropia set a quota of crown-owned housing in anticipation for when renovations move onto the **Narrows**. This slum is currently being managed by religious volunteers after rumors of Urgathoan cults surfaced.

Running along the canal on its east bank is **Canal Row**, where most of the city's upper middle class live. The numerous institutes within also make it a popular hangout spot for academics, be they students or teachers. Meanwhile, Oppara's commerce and cultural activities are centered in the **Grandbridge** district, where most out-of-town visitors choose to stay.

The city's port is divided into **Eastport** and **Westport**. The former has yet to follow the basic building code of using stone. It predictably caught fire and burned down again three days after both Eutropia's first and third Grand Days of Exaltation. Baronet **Hallador** (tenacious male human harbormaster) easily kept Westport from suffering the same fate. Under his purview, the harbor continues to be seedy but efficient.

Out beyond the mouth of the River Porthmos is **Jadrishar Island**. The island fortress is home to the Taldan Imperial Navy, its shipyards, and the navy college. The unrecognized **Grandbridge Vagabond Camp** is likewise impenetrable, having resisted multiple attempts to clear it thanks to Hallador's warnings and the loyalty of his employees in residence. This lawless delta remains the best place in Taldor to lay low or disappear.

LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

Below is a list of locations of interest within Oppara.

Altar of Divine Innovation: This former temple to Aroden located in Westpark was converted to what is effectively Oppara's city hall since the god's death. Its bureaucracy was infamously nightmarish. Cases were processed on the whims of whomever was in office, rather than what was meant to be done. After sweeping dismissals, the government has been slimmed down significantly, leaving two-thirds of the offices here empty. Though now far more efficient, hiring turnover rates are high from overworking.

Baronet **Solmon Menander** (unscrupulous male human investigator) is one of the few civil servants who retained—or rather regained—his job. Originally fired for corruption, he was redeemed when he exposed the conditions within the White Hall. The baronet hopes the elected senators take up some of the empty offices and help with civic duties. He has a list of candidates ready for when the amendment passes, though he's unsure whether they'll agree.

Basilica of the Inheritor: With the death of Father Basri, the last archbishop of Aroden, this massive cathedral in Aroden's View—once called the Basilica of the Last Man—was on the verge of being closed. After some negotiation with allies of the Knights of Lastwall, the basilica was officially named Oppara's first center of worship to Iomedae, where it naturally became a popular meeting spot for those in support of the new crusade against the Whispering Tyrant. Unfortunately, the temple is already running into some problems. A sword relic has gone missing, believed to have been stolen by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Like many cities in Taldor, Oppara is a barony for the purposes of administration. By law, the grand prince is automatically assumed the baron, but the position has often been delegated for practical, political, or satirical reasons. About 20 to 25 baronets assist Oppara's baron, with at least one assigned to each district. While the baronets have some executive powers, how many resources are at their disposal is determined by the baron, overridden by only the emperor or empress. This led to the vicious cycle of well-off districts getting either more resources or competent administrators at the expense of the poorer districts, creating the extreme wealth disparity observed in the city today.

The current baron, Olar Vinmark, has flipped the practices to a degree in following Eutropia's reforms. Alienated by the aristocrats as a result, the ex-Ulfen Guard works out of the Staggering Skald bar in Imperial Square, loaning his office in Westpark to Solmon Menander.

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LOCAL FACTIONS

Cult of the Twilight Child: This group was originally based in Yanmass, and hailed the then recently revived Carrius as Taldor's savior while also keeping him a captive. Despite the death of their leader, many of the cultists managed to escape.

Lion Blades: The Lion Blades of Oppara have divided into three groups, namely the Kith, the Rhapsodic, and the Porthmos. The first refer to those loyal to Dominicus Rell, while the second are those who band together under Laurisa Troomaine. The Porthmos, meanwhile, consist of Lion Blades who think the whole fracture is a distraction from their duties. These Lion Blades use the Porthmos Club as their headquarters, though their current lack of a proper patron is impacting their effectiveness.

Ninth Army: Those who once banded together under Maxillar Pythareus still work to undermine Eutropia's rule.

They recently experienced a pyrrhic victory against the Pathfinder Society, as they sacrificed a branch to push the society out of Oppara.

Cyr Amestrin (devout female human exemplar), the former caretaker of the cathedral's artifacts. Accusations from Cheliex have also been leveled at the cathedral for harboring survivors of the Glorious Reclamation.

Faith's Trial: The Narrows was famous for its unhygienic conditions and hazardous buildings until rumors of Urgathoans in the area prompted Dawnmother **Zenaida Tandleos** (kind female human cleric of Sarenrae) to take action. She requested that the empress fund a small stone clinic where she and fellow Sarenites can provide healing, especially to prevent disease. Recently, some Pharasmians in orange robes came to offer handling the dead, citing that they received a hefty donation from a Ravounel sponsor to set up a funerary home. Zenaida is hesitant to accept, but also anxious as she has yet to convince any other faith in the city to contribute.

Crypt of Princes: After the quakes of Godsrain opened up several fissures, Opparans discovered that the districts of Worldbreaker Hill, Senate's Hill, and Aroden's View are, in fact, burial mounds to Opparan grand princes from pre-Taldor times. After strong pressure from the residents, the fissures were filled in. Luckily, an archaeologist managed to uncover and reinforce an entrance to the crypts from the Seven Towers. The first tomb excavated turned out to be that of Balentrius, the grand prince who named Taldaris heir, giving some rather unexpected insight into the myth of Taldor's founder.

Grand Bridge of the Empire: The last project ordained by Tralian V before he was deposed, the bridge has surprisingly survived over three millennia with only superficial repairs to its mosaic tile road. It remains a popular place to recruit those who wish to bring down the monarchy altogether. Graffiti resembling a swan has reportedly been spotted around the district, though the mark is only visible at night.

Gray Market: Located in south Grandbridge, this market used to have copious amounts of Qadiran wares out in the open. After Eutropia called for a cessation on the raids, the wares are now sold under the table, brought in under the cover of the misty mornings. One of the corsairs, Captain **Seferi** (passionate female human magus), has been highly vocal about her bitterness toward Eutropia, who she once highly supported. Other than spreading some unsavory gossip about a younger Eutropia's escapades, the captain has not taken any further retaliation—yet.

House of the Immortal Son: Yet another temple once dedicated to Aroden, this building in Imperial Square is now an extravagant opera house seeking the finest performances from all of the Inner Sea. With the Kitharodian Academy and Rhapsodic College both at capacity, there's been talk of opening another bard college (in actuality, a shadow school) here. The school intends to focus on training agents who can hold a high profile, especially in upper society, while also conducting their subversive work.

Kitharodian Academy: The largest of Oppara's famed bardic colleges, Kitharodian Academy is a hallmark of Taldan culture. People of all social classes attend student and alumni performances at the Kith, as it's commonly known. But few are aware that the academy is also the primary recruiting ground for the Lion Blades. Most of the school's teachers are former Lion Blades, with Lord **Merriweather Stokes** (disciplined male human Lion Blade) handling most matters of enlistment. Beneath the Kith lies the Lion Blades' shadow school as well as the Library of the Lion—a secret archive containing a vast array of historic information and espionage dossiers.

Oppara Arena: This Azlanti structure at the southern end of the Narrows and Grandbridge has recently been confirmed to be the oldest building in the city. As Oppara's desire for blood sports has greatly waned in recent years, the arena is slowly being converted to an open-air stadium. It recently held its first phalanx competition, a Taldan strategic dance contest, with great success. Chariot racing with both riding horses and dogs has also been proposed. Eutropia has tacitly implied she only approves of the former, but most of the aristocrats would rather see the second.

Rhapsodic College: This smaller bard college in Westport has always been known for the quality of their graduates, even in terms of Lion Blade agents. With the recent discussion of creating a third school, Rhapsodic College administrators expressed to those at Kitharodian Academy that they'll participate in the endeavor on the condition that Kitharodian opens their Library of the Lion archives; the records within would greatly benefit bards who have been commissioned to write history books. Reportedly, the conversation stalled there. As Laurisa Tromaine is a Rhapsodic College graduate, the school is more aligned with her than Dominicus Rell.

Rondelero Academy: This mansion in Worldbreaker Hill once belonged to the high strategos, who seldom lived in it even when he visited the city. Eutropia honored some last requests and converted it to a dueling academy. The custodians of the school grounds are all retired veterans, especially those waylaid by injury. The academy has yet to find a permanent dueling instructor who can tolerate Oppara's stuffiness, however, so student recruitment is unstable.

Scholar's Square: This square in north Canal Row connects several important academies and institutes, including the First Imperial Arcanists' Guild, the Imperial College of Heraldry, the Nicodemus Repository, and Kitharodian Academy. One of the buildings here also serves as the urban division of the Sinora Academia, Taldor's prestigious boarding school. The cafes here are open all day so desperate students and teachers alike can get a drink at any hour.

Screaming Pillars: Oppara's constabulary headquarters in Grandbridge, once known as White Hall, was raided and dissolved last year. Even Eutropia's detractors agreed that the crimes were too severe to forgive when the case reached the Senate. Today, the city itself remains secure as the constabulary of each district were found not liable for what happened and continue to operate out of their own offices. A new headquarters has been temporarily set up at the Altar of Divine Innovation, adding even more duties to Baronet Menander's plate. The building now has a new problem: the screams have not stopped despite it being empty.

Serpent Column: The intertwined columns, atop what turned out to be a massive slate of glass, has become a popular hangout for visiting archaeologists. The lively discussions these scholars have regarding the structure's purpose have broken the unspoken rule of silence in Memorial Park so many times that several tents with sound-dampening wards have been set up.

The Stainless Ink: After their failed attempt on Eutropia's life, the Brotherhood of Silence wisely dispersed. This old chapter house in Crownsgate was sold and converted to a printing house. Within a year, it became an infamous vanity press, producing some of the worst novels Avistan has had to suffer in the memory of Taldane literature. In secret, the printing house also creates and disseminates propaganda pamphlets. Its attempt to publish a scandalously fictional biography on Eutropia was only thwarted because the Mask Marquis in charge of the establishment forgot about the manuscript. By the time they remembered, it had disappeared.

Vagabond Watchtower: While the Brotherhood of Silence may have been disgraced, demand for their sordid services remain. The Mask Marquis (or one of them, at least) negotiated with Harbormaster Hallador and agreed on a price for the abandoned tower at the eastern tip of the Vagabond Camp. The tower hosts both a shrine to Norgorber and Thimir.

War Ministry: Whenever the three military branches of Taldor need to coordinate, its leaders convene at this stately building on Worldbreaker's Hill. Supposedly, Dominicus Rell reached an understanding with the past admiral, general, and high strategos that no Lion Blade shall ever step foot within the ministry. This, in part, motivates Laurisa Tromaine to negotiate for the Lion Blade office to be situated here, should it become recognized as an official entity.

THE OPPARAS NEVER KNOWN

An archaeological site discovered outside of Oppara uncovered a strange rotunda with what appears to be a teleportation circle inside. Instead of teleporting those who use it to different locations, it appeared that the portal transported users to alternate realities, specifically other versions of Oppara. Each of these iterations of the city appears devoid of people, but is full of monsters seemingly under the command of some powerful creature.

So far, five "iterations" of Oppara and their inhabitants have been documented.

- **War-besieged**, ruled by three undead warlords and their armies.
- **Spawn-wrecked**, overrun by abominations thought to be spawns of the Spawn of Rovagug.
- **Flame-licked**, inhabited by ash-covered, scheming ghosts claim to be led by a vengeful Tralian V.
- **Wood-reclaimed**, overgrown with vines and plants; the fey here call the grogrisant king.
- **Dream-sought**, a confusing mindscape made up of every dream unachieved in the city.

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LION BLADE

Taldor's official teeth in the shadows was founded in 1629 AR by Yanual and Izora, children of the late Goscelyn II and half-siblings to the Bastard Prince Penticus IV. Today, the shadow schools below Oppara, Cassomir, and other settlements teach a strict curriculum involving anatomy, politics, and even hypnotic meditation. This grueling program eliminates recruits until only the best remain. About one in ten students become fully recognized agents. The rest often become part of the supporting network as Lion Kiths, who retain a measure of their skills after leaving. Those who don't become a Lion Kith leave to return to their bardic studies under vows of secrecy or cut off all ties.

Most agents require about five to ten years of active field service before they're recognized as senior agents who can become an instructor at a shadow school. It is not unusual for masters of the shadow schools to poach one another's graduates to exchange techniques and skills.

If you wish to play a PC who's a Lion Kith, you can limit your feat selections from this archetype to that of level 6 and lower.

Additional Feats: 4th Focused Fascination (*Player Core* 2 163), Sneak Attacker (*Player Core* 221); 6th Ongoing Investigation (*Player Core* 2 108)



LION BLADE DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Lion Blades, trained in Performance; **Access** You're from Taldor.

Your Lion Blade spy training helps you conceal yourself and your identity. You become trained in your choice of Deception or Stealth; if you were already trained in that skill, you become an expert instead. You also gain the Additional Lore skill feat for Espionage Lore. If you were already trained in Espionage Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice.

You never take circumstance penalties for attempting to take a disguise of a different ancestry, age, and so on, as long as the disguised form is appropriate for your size.

INSPIRING RECITATION

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE CONCENTRATION EMOTION MENTAL

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

Frequency once per hour

You quietly speak or recall coded phrases and metaphors whose meanings inspire you to complete your mission. You gain a +1 status bonus to one skill of your choice until the beginning of your next turn. You can Sustain this effect for up to 1 minute. If you're an expert in Performance, the bonus increases to +2. If you're a master in Performance, the bonus is +3, and if you're legendary, the bonus is +4.

LOST IN THE CROWD

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

You've learned how to move as one with crowds and hide among them, vanishing into a busy street in the flicker of an eye. You move at full Speed in crowds and can use cover from crowds to Hide and Sneak, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to your Stealth checks when in a crowd of at least 10 creatures and a +4 circumstance bonus to your Stealth checks when in a crowd of at least 100 creatures.

CROWD MASTERY

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lost in the Crowd

You use the crowd to your advantage, diverting your foes' attention to potential hidden dangers in the crowd. When determining if your foe is flanked, treat all squares occupied by a crowd as if they were occupied by an ally with a melee reach of 5 feet.

EXPEDITIOUS ADVANCE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

Requirements You're unarmored or wearing light armor.

You advance and retreat quickly. You gain a +10-foot status bonus to your Speed.

INTERPOSING CROWD

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lost in the Crowd

Your enemies can't stop you when there's a host of people

between you. Your movement actions don't trigger reactions as long as you remain in a crowd for the entire duration of the action.

LION'S MAGIC

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

Many Lion Blades enhance their words with a bit of magic. You can cast a 4th-rank *suggestion* as an occult innate spell once per day. At 12th level, you can also cast a 5th-rank *subconscious suggestion* once per day.

SPY'S COUNTERMEASURES

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

Trigger You succeed at a save against a detection, mental, or scrying effect

You've learned how to analyze and fake your responses to the most common magic used against spies. You can attempt to identify the effect via Identify Magic using the magical tradition skill of the effect or Espionage Lore, even if you didn't notice the spell being cast.

If you successfully identify the triggering effect, and it would normally fail or have no effect, you can make the caster of the triggering effect think the effect or spell succeeded. If they would obtain a result, such as receive a piece of information, you decide what that result is. If the effect would influence you to take certain actions, you can make it appear as if you were affected and attempt to play along; if the effect normally establishes a mental link, it functions normally, but you can disregard any commands you receive through the link.

FLICKERING TWIRL

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

You use your movements and disguises to make yourself a flickering blur. You gain concealment until the beginning of your next turn. As usual for concealment involving an obvious visual manifestation, you can't use this concealment to Hide.

SLOWING STRIKE

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

Frequency once per round

Trigger Your Strike hits an off-guard creature and deals damage.

You wound your enemy so they can't move nimbly. The target must attempt a Fortitude save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes a -10-foot status penalty to its Speeds until the beginning of your next turn.

Failure As success, but the penalty lasts for 1 minute.

STUNNING SURPRISE

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE | INCAPACITATION

Prerequisites Lion Blade Dedication

Requirements You must be undetected by the target creature.

You quickly move in to bring your foe down with a single blow. You move up to your Speed then make a melee Strike. If you hit and deal damage, your foe must attempt a Fortitude save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. Regardless of the save outcome, the creature then becomes immune to your Stunning Surprise for 24 hours.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is stunned 1 and can't use reactions until its next turn.

Failure The creature is stunned 3 and can't use reactions until its next turn.

Critical Failure The creature falls unconscious for 1 minute.

JOINING THE LION BLADES

The Kitharodian Academy's faculty of retired agents recruit the bulk of the organization. While the teachers usually pick candidates out of those who completed the initial year of "bardic training," the ambitious and cunning can sleuth out the recruiters. Once they have a target and know the professor's preferences, the student can attempt to obtain a recommendation via persuasion, undertaking a challenge, or even making an impressive threat.

Lion Blades sometimes recruit people encountered while on the job. Political upheavals such as the War for the Crown brought in waves of Taldan loyalists, who joined to secure their survival—or victory—via the Lion Blades' neutrality. For some, that survival can be literal if one's invitation was an ultimatum of membership or death. Both Laurisa Tomaine and Dominicus Rell have used this a handful of times to secure some of their most gifted agents, complete with staged deaths and falsified new identities.

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TALDOR OPTIONS

The following character options are found within Taldor.

ULFEN GUARD

Founded by Hyrotte I in 3129 AR, the Ulfen Guard is loyal to the Primogen Crown only, a promise upheld by a member's dedication to their principals. Other than being responsible for the Grand Princess's safety, Ulfen Guards also occasionally take on missions, open and secretive, on the Grand Princess's orders.

Additional Feats: 4th Reactive Striker (*Player Core* 219); 8th Guardian's Deflection (*Player Core* 145), Shield Warden (*Player Core* 145)

ULFEN GUARD DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites member of the Ulfen Guard, trained in Athletics and Intimidation; **Access** At least one of your parents is Ulfen.

Central to your Ulfen Guard training is the ability to protect an ally. You gain the Additional Lore skill feat for Warfare Lore. If you were already trained in Warfare Lore, you also become trained in a Lore skill of your choice. You gain the Designate Ally action.

It's anathema for you to abandon your designated ally or allow your designated ally to die when you can prevent it. If you violate this anathema, you lose the ability to Designate Ally and any feats that use this ability until you spend 1 day of downtime reaffirming your dedication to your allies.

Designate Ally ♦ Choose an ally you can see, who becomes your designated ally. For the next minute, whenever your designated ally is adjacent to you and you're conscious, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC and Reflex saving throws. You can have only one designated ally at a time, and if you designate a new ally, the previous ally loses any benefits.

DEFENDER'S GRIT

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ulfen Guard Dedication

You can't protect anyone if you're dead. You gain the Diehard general feat. If you start your turn adjacent to your designated ally, you gain a number of temporary Hit Points equal to half your level that lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

GUARD'S FURY

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ulfen Guard Dedication, you can't already use the Rage action

Some Ulfen Guards tap into a well of fury to protect their charges. You can use the Rage action (*Player Core* 2 72). While raging, you take a -1 penalty to AC. If you're adjacent to your designated ally while raging, increase the additional damage from Rage from 2 to 4.

GUARDED MIND

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE FORTUNE

Prerequisites Ulfen Guard Dedication

Frequency once per 10 minutes

Trigger You fail a saving throw against an effect that has the mental trait.

When your enemies try to turn your mind against you, thoughts of your anathema bolster you. You can reroll the triggering saving throw with a +2 circumstance bonus, but you must use the new result, even if it's worse.

WOUNDED PARTY

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ulfen Guard Dedication

Trigger You or your designated ally takes damage, and you're capable of entering a Rage.

Harm to either you or your allies awakens your fury. You Rage.

TIGHT FOLLOWER

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ulfen Guard Dedication

Trigger Your designated ally moves and ends that movement more than 10 feet from you.

You keep up as a protector. Stride up to your Speed closer to your designated ally. Your movement must end within 10 feet of your designated ally.

PROTECTIVE STRIKE

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ulfen Guard Dedication

Trigger A creature moves adjacent to or attempts a melee Strike against your designated ally.

You keep harm at bay. Make a melee Strike against the triggering creature. On a critical success, you interrupt the triggering action.

MAGIC ITEMS

The skilled artisans of Taldor still create all manner of wondrous objects, some of which are exclusively made for Lion Blades.

FAN BUCKLER

ITEM 3

UNCOMMON MAGICAL

Access You're a member of the Lion Blades.

Price 50 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

When collapsed, a *fan buckler* appears to be no more than an elegant wooden fan. Any attempts to discern that there's more to the item require a successful Perception check against the Deception DC of the wielder.

Activate—Unfurl Fan ♦ (manipulate) **Effect** You transform the fan into a wooden buckler (Hardness 3, HP 6, BT 3) or vice versa.

LION'S CALL

ITEM 10

UNCOMMON MAGICAL

Access You're a member of the Lion Blades.

Price 900 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Given only to highly trusted agents by the grand princes back when Lion Blades protected the Primogen Crown, these historic +1 striking authorized (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 32) shortwords allow a Lion Blade wielder to locate resources.

Activate—Find the Pride ◆◆◆ (arcane, concentrate, manipulate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cast *locate* at 5th rank to learn the location of one of the following of your choice: the nearest Lion Blade safe house, shadow school, Lion Blade agent, Lion Blade kith, or a person other than yourself who's in possession of a lion's call.

Activate—Echo the Call ◆ (arcane, concentrate)

Frequency once per day; **Trigger** A creature locates you using another lion's call; **Effect**

You immediately learn the location and appearance of the triggering creature. You can communicate telepathically with the triggering creature while you remain within 1 mile of each other for the next hour.



TALDOGIS BADGE

LION'S PELT

ITEM 6

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Access You're a member of the Lion Blades.

Usage worn armor; **Bulk** 1

Laurisa Tomaine ordered these as prototype uniforms. The fur-lined pauldrons bear the insignia of a lion with a blade in its mouth. The type of blade indicates which bard school one graduated from. When you disguise the armor via its *raiment* rune, you can choose whether to conceal this symbol or not. You can also use the rune's activation to quickly display or hide the insignia.

Activate—Contact Ally ◆ (arcane, concentrate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You cast *message* at 1st rank to a target that you know is also wearing a lion's pelt uniform. If you and the target share an insignia, the spell is heightened to 3rd rank.

Type lion's pelt (leather); **Level** 6; **Price** 250 gp

The armor is a +1 *raiment* leather armor.

Type lion's pelt (chain); **Level** 6; **Price** 250 gp

The armor is a +1 *raiment* chain shirt.

TALDOGIS BADGE

ITEM 2

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 28 gp

Usage worn; **Bulk** —

This badge depicting a hunting dog is used by Eutropia's supporters to indicate their allegiances.

Activate—Bark ◆◆ (concentrate, manipulate, subtle)

Frequency once per hour; **Effect** The hunting dog makes a single bark that only you and a single target of your choice within 30 feet can hear. If the target is a supporter of Eutropia, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks against them for the next minute.

UNIQUE APEX MAGIC ITEMS

These apex items draw upon the power of the Grogrisant.

JAWS OF THE GROGRISANT

ITEM 17

UNIQUE APEX INVESTED PRIMAL

Price 15,000 gp

Usage worn circlet; **Bulk** L

The teeth that fell off the *Mantle of the Grogrisant* were given to the scholars of Houses Fahlspar, Lotheed, Nicodemius, and Zespire, who—after much heated discussion—created this regal circlet. You gain a +3 item bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidation skill checks and Sense Motive checks against creatures that have the primal trait. When you invest in the headband, you either increase your Wisdom modifier by 1 or increase it to +4, whichever would give you a higher value.

Activate—Primal Empathy ◆◆ (concentrate, mental)

Frequency once per hour; **Effect** You gain the ability to communicate with nature as if you were a part of it. You cast *telepathy* at 6th rank, which can only be used to communicate with creatures that have the primal trait.

PAWS OF THE GROGRISANT

ITEM 17

UNIQUE APEX INVESTED PRIMAL

Price 15,000 gp

Usage worn shoes; **Bulk** L

Princess Eutropia commissioned Taldor's Imperial College of Heralds to preserve the paws that fell off the *Mantle of the Grogrisant*. A few weeks later, the college presented this pair of boots. You gain a +3 item bonus to Athletics checks and saves against forced movement. When you invest in the boots, you either increase your Strength modifier by 1 or increase it to +4, whichever would give you a higher value.

Activate—Grogrisant Leap ◆ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The Grogrisant's legendary strength and reflexes empower your movement. You Leap, doubling the vertical and horizontal distance of your Leap action. If you land adjacent to a creature, you can Strike that creature once as part of this action.

POISON

Some of the more covert agents of Taldor's government resort to poisons to complete their missions.

THE DANCERS' SONG

ITEM 7

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INGESTED POISON

Price 50 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ◆ Interact

A pair of conjoined sahksils known as The Dancers created this poison for the Ninth Army. While stupefied by this poison, a creature can't treat any creature as its ally.

Saving Throw DC 23 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 6 days; **Stage 1** 2d8 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** 3d8 poison damage and stupefied 2 (2 days); **Stage 3** 4d8 poison damage and stupefied 4 (3 days)

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BESTIARY

The Nations of the Shining Kingdom have for millennia inspired legend. These six nations boast being home to a plethora of regal beasts, terrifying monsters, and hazards—some still yet to be discovered. For all these nations' splendor and well-documented lore, many of these lands' inhabitants are often the source of nightmares, whispered tales of folklore, and cautionary rumors. While throughout the years it's become difficult to separate children's allegory from actual account, behind every local legend looms another very real—and hungry—threat.

From majestic spires and mountain peaks to ominous vales, shimmering waters and murky swamps to forests and glades and sunny warm plains, these lands teem with both life and undeath, with magnificence and monstrosity. These Kingdoms thrive with bestial guardians of dominions past and the warding terrors of those threatening to rise.

Presented here is a non-exhaustive list of creatures both revered and feared by the inhabitants of the Shining Kingdoms.

SHINING KINGDOMS CREATURES

Creature	Source	Creature	Source	Creature	Source
Abandoned Zealot	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 8	Emperor Cobra	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 245	Mudwretch	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 176
Aiudara Wraith	<i>Adventure Path</i> #150 78	Flame Drake	<i>Monster Core</i> 129	Myceloid	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 181
Ankhrav	<i>Monster Core</i> 20	Flash Beetle	<i>Monster Core</i> 42	Nixie	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 183
Arboreal	<i>Monster Core</i> 24	Fox	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 102	Nymph	<i>Monster Core</i> 244
Augdunar	<i>Highhelm</i> 126	Gathlain	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 105	Onryo	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 135
Banshee	<i>Monster Core</i> 37	Ghoran	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 106	Pagulin	<i>Highhelm</i> 131
Basilisk	<i>Monster Core</i> 39	Ghost	<i>Monster Core</i> 160	Raven	<i>Monster Core</i> 2
Bhuta	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 76	Ghoul	<i>Monster Core</i> 162	Revenant	<i>Monster Core</i> 292
Bison	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 32	Giant Centipede	<i>Monster Core</i> 59	Rhinoceros	<i>Monster Core</i> 293
Bear	<i>Monster Core</i> 41	Giant Eagle	<i>Monster Core</i> 137	River Drake	<i>Monster Core</i> 129
Boar	<i>Monster Core</i> 43	Giant Slug	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 244	Rusalka	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 229
Bog Mummy	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 177	Giant Snapping Turtle	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 269	Sargassum Heap	<i>Monster Core</i> 295
Boggard	<i>Monster Core</i> 44	Giant Toad	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 261	Scythe Tree	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 235
Cairn Linnorm	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 166	Gimmerling	<i>Monster Core</i> 170	Skaveling	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 241
Cairn Wight	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 292	Grimstalker	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 137	Skeleton	<i>Monster Core</i> 312, <i>Book of the Dead</i> 146
Cauthooj	<i>Monster Core</i> 53	Globster	<i>Monster Core</i> 171	Slime Mold	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 193
Cave Scorpion	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 234	Gogiteth	<i>Monster Core</i> 177	Snapping Flytrap	<i>Monster Core</i> 154
Cavern Troll	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 265	Graul	<i>Highhelm</i> 130	Snapping Turtle	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 269
Centaur	<i>Monster Core</i> 58	Graveknight	<i>Monster Core</i> 178	Specter	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 248
Changeling Exile	<i>Monster Core</i> 60	Gray Death	<i>Night of the Gray Death</i> 68	Tarn Linnorm	<i>Monster Core</i> 221
Cinder Dragon	<i>Monster Core</i> 2	Green Man	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 118	Terror Bird	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 264
Combusted	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 80	Grisantian Lion	<i>Monsters of Myth</i> 34	Thunderbird	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 259
Conspirator	<i>Monster Core</i> 110	Guecubu	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 126	Tick	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 260
Dragon		Hag	<i>Monster Core</i> 188	Totenmaske	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 262
Corpseroot	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 81	Harmona	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 132	Twigjack	<i>Monster Core</i> 332
Crocodile	<i>Monster Core</i> 69	Herexen	<i>Monster Core</i> 195, <i>Book of the Dead</i> 112	Vampire	<i>Monster Core</i> 334
Daeodon	<i>Monster Core</i> 43	Herzou	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 67	Verdurous Ooze	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 194
Deathless	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 88	Hippogriff	<i>Monster Core</i> 197	Violet Fungus	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 286
Acolyte		Horned Dragon	<i>Monster Core</i> 119	Vrykolakas	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 276
Dezullon	<i>Monster Core</i> 94	Jorogumo	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 141	Master	
Dog	<i>Monster Core</i> 102	Kelpie	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 154	Vrykolakas	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 276
Draft Lizard	<i>Highhelm</i> 127	Last Guard	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 117	Spawn	
Drainberry Bush	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 99	Leshy	<i>Monster Core</i> 216	Water Orm	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 289
Dread Wraith	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 298	Leucrotta	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 162	Wolverine	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 295
Dream Spider	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 249	Lion	<i>Monster Core</i> 50	Wood Giant	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 124
Duende	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 87	Lizardfolk	<i>Monster Core</i> 226	Yeth Hound	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 302
Dybbuk	<i>Monster Core</i> 136	Morlock	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 174	Zombie	<i>Monster Core</i> 356, <i>Book of the Dead</i> 170
Ecorche	<i>Book of the Dead</i> 90			Zomok	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 303

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PHANTOM COINS

The most striking feature of an aurosath are the countless coins that fill their corpse. Most individuals who become aurosaths die from reasons other than becoming crushed under the weight of their wealth, but they still manifest these coins in their undeath. The mind of a person who rises as an aurosath so desires wealth that it produces facsimiles of the coins that fill their corpse. Unfortunately, these coins fade once they leave the aurosath's body, as they become disconnected from the aurosath's mind.

AUROSATH

Greed can be a powerful force; the runelords of old even devised a school of magic based upon it. When an individual dies surrounded by masses of wealth, greed can even reanimate the dead—sufficient avarice can anchor the deceased's soul to their body. The result is an aurosath, a being so consumed with greed that they're unwilling to donate their corpse to the natural cycle.

Popular lore surrounding the creation of an aurosath often depicts a miser ironically crushed under the weight of their own gold. While such poetic origins can happen, the truth is often grimmer. Paranoia about potential thieves and freeloaders leads to isolation, both mental and physical. A wealthy merchant succumbs to common illness because they were unwilling to pay the fee for a doctor or priest. Another starves, unable to escape the web of traps and barriers they've set up to defend their treasure from robbers.

Heralded by the clinking of coins, an aurosath appears as a bloated cadaver who's clad in faded finery, their bulk nearly bursting at the seams with tarnished coins. Their voices are typically a booming bass, their speech peppered with archaic upper-class turns of phrase. They are single-minded in their desire to accumulate wealth but can be reasoned with so long as they believe that goal will ultimately be satiated. An aurosath can often be found haunting the estates they owned in life. As they brook no competition when it comes to accumulating wealth, they quickly turn to violence when encountering others of their kind. These monstrosities do, however, occasionally command the loyalty of lesser undead and even mercenary mortal servants.

AUROSATH

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LARGE METAL UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +13, Intimidation +12, Mercantile Lore +12, Stealth +10

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +4

AC 19; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13

HP 95, void healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** slashing 5; **Resistances** electricity 5

Smelttable If an aurosath takes 5 or more fire damage from a single attack, the precious metals within their body enter a molten state until the end of their next turn. While in this state, the aurosath takes a -10-foot status penalty to their Speeds, and their strikes deal an extra 1d6 fire damage. They also lose their weakness to slashing damage and their resistance to electricity damage. Finally, any creature currently grabbed or restrained by the aurosath loses 1 round of air if it's holding its breath.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✎ fist +15 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning plus Grab

Fetters of Debt ✎✎ (auditory, curse, linguistic, mental, occult)

Frequency once per 10 minutes; **Effect** The aurosath bellows a plea for gold, remarking that their foes are overladen. Creatures in a 15-foot emanation must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become encumbered for 1 minute. The creature is aware that it can immediately end the condition by giving the aurosath items or treasure worth at least 20 gp. Handing a held item to the aurosath is a single

Interact action. If the aurosath's hands are full, the item falls in their space, but the condition still ends.

Suffocating Wealth As the aurosath holds their victim, the victim is smothered in a stream of phantom coins. A creature who begins its turn grabbed or restrained by an aurosath can't speak and must hold its breath or it begins to suffocate (Player Core 437). The coins produced are ephemeral and melt away to nothing when removed from the aurosath's presence for more than 1 round.



BEIRAN

With pale-blue skin and white hair, the wicked beiran fey are among the most unrepentantly cruel of the First World's spawn. Commonly called ice fey, these wintry tricksters are sadistic and without remorse in their desire to spread the cold wherever they go. Beirans find freezing temperatures to be the most comfortable; the fact that other creatures suffer under such conditions is part of the fun. While a single beiran is unlikely to change the temperature of a given space by more than a few degrees, they're highly social creatures, and it's uncommon to find fewer than a few dozen beirans at any one time.

Though beirans are unapologetic in their rude nature, there's one type of creature they'll bow to and take orders from with no questions asked: winter hags. For reasons unknown, beirans are particularly subservient to these hags and will often flock to one in large numbers. Under a winter hag, the fey will make a bad cold snap worse for a suffering town. Fires will be extinguished, wood ruined, food stolen, all of which suit the mysterious tastes of the winter hag and her preference for joyless landscapes. What the beirans receive from this relationship is uncertain, though some fey academics believe it's possible that the first beirans were created by winter hags, much in the same way that the green men created leshies.

While beirans are most common in northern lands such as Irrisen and the Land of the Linnorm Kings, they also have a surprising presence in the Shining Kingdoms. When Queen Elvanna of Irrisen opened up portals to the Eternal Winter of Irrisen, several of them arrived in the town of Heldren in Taldor, and even today, some still haunt the woods around it. Eighteen years ago in Falcon's Hollow, a particularly nasty batch of beirans were involved in the Carnival of Tears, an icy circus that left many townsfolk dead in its wake before adventurers dismantled it. Winters in Kyonin are often heralded by swarms of fiend-touched beirans flooding in from the Tanglebriar, leaving the Wylderhearts on fey duty for months at a time.

BEIRAN FROSTHUNT

CREATURE 3

GARGANTUAN COLD FEY TROOP

Perception +12

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +8, Deception +8, Diplomacy +8, Stealth +10

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

AC 18; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

HP 54 (4 segments); **Thresholds** 36 (3 segments), 18 (2 segments); **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, cold iron 5, splash damage 5

Troop Defenses (NPC Core 231)

Unseasonable Cold (aura, cold, primal) Wherever the frosthunt goes, winter follows. The temperature within a quarter mile of a frosthunt drops to mild cold, then to severe cold within 500 feet, and extreme cold within 50 feet.

Speed 25 feet, fly 30 feet; troop movement (NPC Core 231)

Primal Innate Spells DC 17; **1st** *chilling spray* (×3; Player Core 2 242); **Cantrips (2nd)** frostbite

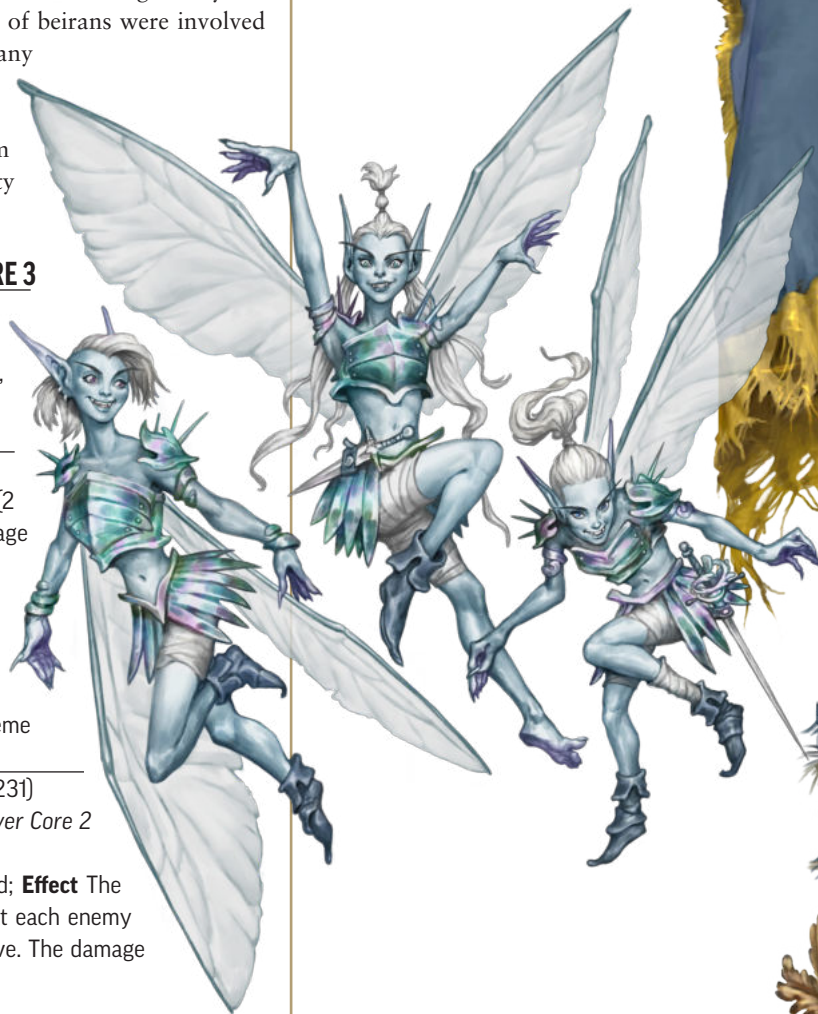
Icy Japes ♦ to ♦♦♦ (cold) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The beirans descend on their prey, biting and clawing at each enemy in a 5-foot emanation, with a DC 17 basic Reflex save. The damage depends on the number of actions.

- ♦ 1d6 slashing damage plus 1 cold damage
- ♦♦ 2d6+2 slashing damage plus 1d4 cold damage
- ♦♦♦ 2d6+5 cold damage plus 1d4 cold damage



WINTER GATHERINGS

When multiple beiran groups gather together, they can enhance their ability to produce colder temperatures. If at least two frosthunts gather within 100 feet of each other and spend 1 week of downtime to focus their primal abilities, the area of their unseasonable cold doubles in size. Additional frosthunts can make this area larger, up to a total of four times the original size. The area remains enhanced in this way as long as the frosthunts remain within 100 feet of each other. The frosthunts can maintain this enhancement by collectively spending 1 day of downtime every month. If the frosthunts ever break apart or fail to maintain the enhancement, the area returns to a normal size after 1 day.



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LIFE IN EXILE

During the Age of Anguish, as corbayrants followed gnomes into the mortal Universe, the Eldest—other than the Green Mother—acted to keep these corbayrants from returning by severing their link with the First World, making it impossible for these creatures to return of their own volition. It's unclear as to why these Eldest forced this fate on the corbayrants, but since then, many have learned of the other Eldest's role in their exile and have sworn their revenge on the deities.

CORBAYRANT

Corbayrants are creations of the Green Mother, one of the fey called the Eldest. In the Age of Creation, she fashioned them from thorns and moss into deadly predators. When gnomes migrated to the mortal Universe, many corbayrants followed but found themselves poorly suited to life outside the First World.

Corbayrants are historically solitary, territorial creatures. They're incapable of reproducing, and without the revivifying properties of the First World, their numbers are doomed to deplete. Recently, a number of corbayrants in the Verduran Forest have overcome their natures to band together. They've been known to take their prey alive, sacrificing their victims in vile experiments in an effort to find a way to propagate corbayrant numbers.

Corbayrants look like massive clawless scorpions covered in bark and thorns. A rotting fog wafts from their bodies. In the rare instance when they deign to speak, they do so in a raspy whisper.

CORBAYRANT

CREATURE 16

RARE **HUGE** **BEAST** **FEY** **PLANT**

Perception +28; blindsight (precise) 100 feet

Languages Common, Fey, Muan

Skills Athletics +33, Nature +29, Stealth +27 (+31 in forests), Survival +27

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +1

AC 38; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +27

HP 295, regeneration 20 (deactivated by cold); **Immunities** blinded, visual; **Weaknesses** cold 15; **Resistances** fire 10, piercing 15

Thorny Hide A corbayrant's body is covered in jagged spines. Adjacent creatures that hit them with a melee attack, as well as creatures that touch them or hit them with an unarmed attack, take 4d6 piercing damage and are exposed to thorn paralysis.

Vitriolic Miasma (aura) 30 feet. Non-corbayrants take a -2 circumstance penalty to saves against poison effects and gain weakness 10 to poison damage while within the aura.

Reactive Strike

Speed 40 feet, climb 40 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +32, **Damage** 3d12+18 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ stinger +32 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 piercing plus corbayrant venom

Ranged ♦ spine +32 (propulsive, range increment 40 feet), **Damage** 3d6+15 piercing plus thorn paralysis

Corbayrant Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 37 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 8d6 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 2** 9d6 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 3** 9d6 poison damage and drained 1 (1 round)

Spine Volley ♦♦ The corbayrant makes four spine Strikes, each against a different target. These attacks all count toward the corbayrant's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after the corbayrant makes their attacks.

Swallow Whole ♦ Large, 9d6 piercing plus thorn paralysis, Rupture 30

Thorn Paralysis (incapacitation, poison) The corbayrant's spines are covered in a paralyzing toxin that cause verdurous thorns to sprout from their victim's body. When a non-corbayrant creature is exposed, it attempts a DC 37 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature sprouts spines like those of the corbayrant. For 1 minute, the creature gains the corbayrant's thorny hide ability.

Allies attempting to aid the victim with touch-range spells and abilities run the risk of becoming infected themselves. At the end of the duration, the spines fall off harmlessly.

Failure As success, but the creature is also paralyzed for 1 minute. It can attempt another Fortitude save at the end of each turn to end the paralysis, but not the spines.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature doesn't receive a save at the end of its turn to end the paralysis.



DAEMON, BIBLIODAEMON

Bibliodaemons are four-armed, weasel-like daemons who personify death by paperwork and incompetent bureaucracy. They're often attracted to places where bureaucrats abuse power or cut corners at the expense of the citizens. By disguising themselves as government officials, the bibliodaemons worsen the problems, forging or losing important documents and escalating the complexity of the bureaucracy. Eventually, major infractions—such as the imprisonment or execution of an innocent person—begin to tear the community apart. The people descend into paranoia and mistrust of their officials, leading to either a revolt against these local governments or complete apathy due to the lack of power to affect change.

Most bibliodaemons work alone to cause this kind of chaos, but in some instances, these fiends have been used strategically. After all, once an area has descended into turmoil, it's easy for another party to step in and take over. During the civil war in Cheliax, bibliodaemons were sometimes summoned to destabilize areas in grabs for power. While none will admit it, bibliodaemons have been present during the various coups and government changes throughout the Shining Kingdoms.

BIBLIODAEMON

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON MEDIUM DAEMON FIEND UNHOLY

Perception +18; darkvision, thoughtsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Daemonic; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Deception +18, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +16, Legal Lore +18, Society +18, Stealth +16

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +6, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items gavel (as +1 striking light mace)

Thoughtsense (mental) The bibliodaemon is aware of non-mindless creatures within 60 feet as an imprecise sense.

AC 26; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +19

HP 130; **Immunities** death effects; **Weaknesses** holy 10; **Resistances** mental 10

Red Tape (aura, divine) 30 feet. When a non-daemon enters or begins its turn within the aura, it must attempt a DC 23 Will save. On a failure, it takes a -2 status penalty to saving throws against linguistic effects for 1 round.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *gavel* +18 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d4+8 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ *claw* +18 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

Divine Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** *dull ambition* (Player Core 2 244); **3rd** *crisis of faith*, *dispel magic*; **2nd** *dispel magic*, *silence*; **1st** *command*, *enfeeble*; **Cantrips** (4th) *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *sigil*

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph) The bibliodaemon can take on the appearance of any Small or Medium humanoid. This doesn't change their Speed or their attack and damage modifiers with their Strikes, but it might change the damage type their claw Strikes deal (typically to bludgeoning).

Death by 1,000 Papercuts ♦♦ (divine) The bibliodaemon launches a torrent of sharp papers from the sleeves of their robes. All creatures in a 15-foot cone take 9d6 slashing damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save). Creatures that fail their save also take 2d4 persistent bleed damage. The bibliodaemon can't use Death by 1,000 Papercuts again for 1d4 rounds.

Inevitable Delays ♦ (auditory, concentrate, divine, linguistic, mental)

Requirements The bibliodaemon's last action was a successful Strike that dealt damage; **Effect** The bibliodaemon intuits the next actions the creature they just damaged will take and explains how it doesn't have the proper clearance to perform those actions. The creature must succeed at a DC 23 Will save or become slowed 1.



PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

The fear of bibliodaemons runs through much of the Shining Kingdoms' governments, fostering several superstitions to prevent them from corrupting the daily work.

- Starting on the first day of a new position, one must walk the perimeter of your assigned district three times a week for a month.
- If one encounters a weasel, they must not return to the office for the rest of the day to prevent the daemon from sneaking in with the official.
- Learning falconry or owning a bird of prey can make the official more alert of missing errors or keeping an eye out for the fiend.



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FAILED MINDSCAPES

How close a prospective Prophet of Kalistrade was to correctly performing the death ritual is reflected in their mindscape. Minor blunders in life result in subtle deviations from the desired idyllic demesne. Colors run between objects, animals have the wrong number of eyes, and sounds distort unnaturally. For those who majorly transgressed, a nightmare realm of unending misery rivaling the tortures of the Hells awaits.

FAILED PROPHET

Following the teachings of Kalistrade is a lifelong commitment. It requires studious adherence to the strictures and taboos laid out in the Prophecies. The ultimate reward for the devout is the promise of a personalized afterlife, filled with a lifetime of wealth and free of Pharamasma's judgment. Not all who learn of these final revelations are up to the task, however. For the fortunate ones, a simple death is the only consequence for botching the ritual. For the less fortunate, the outcome is an undying half-life of torment. Caught between a twisted mockery of their imagined afterlife and the mortal Universe, a failed prophet will know no peace until their body is destroyed.

A failed prophet resembles the skinless corpse of a humanoid ancestry covered in glowing, golden veinlike cracks. On closer inspection, the organs and musculature are unnaturally smooth and shiny, like cured and buffed leather.

CREATING A FAILED PROPHET

To create a failed prophet, apply the following steps to any living creature of at least 10th level that has failed to properly perform the Kalistocrat death ritual.

- They gain the construct trait.
- Increase the creature's Thievery modifier to a high skill bonus of the failed prophet's level (*GM Core* 116) unless it was already higher.
- Increase the creature's AC, attack bonuses, DCs, Perception, saving throws, and skill modifiers by 1.

FAILED PROPHET ABILITIES

Failed prophets gain the following abilities. If the base creature has any abilities that specifically come from it being a living creature, it loses them. It also loses any traits that represented its life prior to the transformation, such as human or humanoid.

Wealthsense The failed prophet can detect concentrations of coinage and other valuables as an imprecise sense with a range of 60 feet. The

failed prophet detects any creature carrying coins and treasure totaling at least the average cost of a consumable item of the failed prophet's level.

Immunities bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious, vitality, void

Weakness spirit 10; this weakness increases to 15 at 15th level.

Resistances cold 10, electricity 10, and physical 10 (except magical bludgeoning); these resistances increase to 15 at 15th level

Broken Mindscape (aura, illusion, incapacitation, mental) 30 feet. A creature entering the aura or starting its turn in the aura must attempt a Will save. Use the moderate spell DC for the failed prophet's level (*GM Core* 121).

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and becomes immune to broken mindscape for 1 minute.

Success The creature is stunned 1 as disjointed visions of the failed prophet's mindscape assail its senses.

Failure The creature's mind is pulled into the failed prophet's mindscape. It's paralyzed for 1 round. While paralyzed, the creature can take any actions with the mental or spirit traits, or that deal mental or spirit damage, as though those actions were purely mental. Such actions only have line of effect to the originating failed prophet and other creatures currently paralyzed by broken mindscape, though they treat all such creatures as though they were adjacent.

Critical Failure As failure, but the duration is 1 minute or until the failed prophet is destroyed, whichever happens first.



Taboos Despite the failed prophet's transformed body, a lifelong adherence to the strictures of the Prophecies of Kalistrade has ingrained the philosophical prohibitions into their soul. Whenever a failed prophet is critically hit by an unarmed attack, is critically hit by or critically fails a save against a touch spell, or is exposed to a disease or poison effect (even though immune), they take a -2 status penalty to their AC, attack bonuses, DCs, Perception, saving throws, and skill modifiers for 1 minute. Breaking other Kalistocratic taboos can also trigger this penalty at the GM's discretion.

Fists Failed prophets have a fist unarmed Strike that deals bludgeoning damage. This attack has the magical trait, reach 5 feet longer than the base creature, and triggers Greedy Grab. Use the high Strike attack bonus and moderate Strike damage of the failed prophet's level (*GM Core 120*).

Greedy Grab **◆ Requirements** The failed prophet's last action was a successful fist Strike that dealt damage; **Effect** The failed prophet attempts a Thievery check against the target's Reflex DC. On a success, the failed prophet pilfers coins and gems from the target with a total value as indicated in the table, to a maximum of what the target is carrying. Valuables in unlocked containers on the target's person can be taken just as easily as those carried. On a critical success, the failed prophet steals double that amount. The failed prophet gains a number of temporary Hit Points equal to the value stolen that last for 1 minute.

Level	Value Stolen
10–12	5d10 gp
13–15	6d10 gp
16–18	7d10 gp
19–20	8d10 gp

This Is My Reality! **◆◆** (concentrate) The failed prophet exerts control over their crumbling mindscape to inflict harm upon those trapped within. This can take the form of falling debris, natural disasters, or anything else the failed prophet can imagine. No matter the form, each creature currently paralyzed by the failed prophet's broken mindscape takes spirit damage with a basic Will save. The save DC uses the high spell DC for the failed prophet's level (*GM Core 121*) and the unlimited use area damage for the failed prophet's level (*GM Core 124*).

FAILED PROPHET

CREATURE 10

RARE MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

Perception +20; darkvision, wealthsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Dwarven

Skills Diplomacy +20, Mercantile Lore +26, Occultism +23, Thievery +23

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +6

Wealthsense 150 gp

AC 30; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +17, **Will** +23

HP 175; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious, vitality, void; **Weaknesses** spirit 10; **Resistances** cold 10, electricity 10, physical 10 (except magical bludgeoning)

Broken Mindscape (aura, illusion, incapacitation, mental) 30 feet, DC 27

Taboos

Speed 25 feet

Melee **◆** fist +24 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 bludgeoning plus Greedy Grab

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 27, attack +19; **5th** (3 slots) *invoke spirits, shadow blast, telekinetic haul*; **4th** (4 slots) *confusion, translocate, vision of death*; **3rd** (4 slots) *force barrage, locate, paralyze*; **2nd** (4 slots) *paranoia, stupefy, telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** (4 slots) *ill omen, item facade, phantasmal minion*; **Cantrips** (5th) *daze, figment, shield, telekinetic hand, telekinetic projectile*

Greedy Grab **◆**

This Is My Reality! **◆◆** (concentrate) 6d6 spirit, DC 30



BROKEN PROPHETS

Many of those Kalistocrats who successfully completed the death ritual have recently awoken from their tombs. The timing of their emergence aligns too closely with the Godsrain to be coincidence. These so-called Broken Prophets wander throughout Druma as if looking for something. Their mindscapes remain mostly intact, though each now contains an eerie horned individual looming in the distance. All attempts thus far to approach the figure cause it to fade or recede from view. Unlike the more commonplace failed prophets, this variety has void healing and isn't immune to healing, vitality, or void.

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GEMPEBBLE

An interesting side effect of the breeding cycle of a goldpebble is the ability to adapt to different environments. After a period of migration, some goldpebbles have taken up residence in the deep caves of the Five Kings Mountains. Due to the manipulation of the snake's mineral-laced scales by their alchemist creator, the scales of these goldpebbles are streaked with gems or other precious stones. Some dwarven clans are attempting to utilize the adaptive nature of these beasts to mine in areas too dangerous or too compact for dwarven miners. They release young snakes into those areas and harvest the gems from the fully grown gempebbles. Gempebbles, however, are just as likely to attack their harvesters as their golden cousins.

GOLDPEBBLE

Goldpebbles are large water snakes with bodies that, to the unassuming eye, appear to be nothing more than river rocks, some glinting with traces of gold. These terrifying creatures mimic their natural surroundings to ambush greedy adventurers.

A Taldan alchemist created the goldpebble with the ultimate goal of breeding a creature capable of reproducing at a high rate while possessing a body that would turn to gold upon death, effectively ensuring an endless supply of wealth. Initially, the experiments were successful, with each shed of the snake's skin producing trace amounts of gold. As the snakes grew, however, the amount of gold didn't, and the snakes themselves soon proved unwieldy and difficult to contain. Unhindered, the alchemist redoubled her efforts, adding alchemical reagents to her experiments and leaning more heavily into inhumane tactics to produce her desired results. These tactics failed to lead to an increase in the amount of gold produced but instead mutated the creatures' venom, giving them the ability to slowly turn a victim's blood to frozen water. Empowered with this new ability, the goldpebbles felled their own creator and escaped to spread across the Inner Sea region.

Goldpebbles are generally solitary creatures except for their biannual mating season. During this time, they're even more dangerous than usual, becoming territorial and protective of their young while attacking in groups. Once the eggs hatch, the breeding grounds are filled with hundreds of tiny snakes slithering in all directions in search of new territory. These young goldpebbles are less in control of their alchemical powers than their adult counterparts and have the potential to freeze the water around them at a moment's notice.

Goldpebbles rely heavily on ambush tactics. Often found hiding in shallow pools, rivers, and lakes, goldpebbles will lure unsuspecting adventurers to their lairs using their gold-flecked scales. Once within reach, goldpebbles attack with a gruesome bite that can poison an unlucky victim, slowly turning their prey's blood into freezing water. Goldpebbles can also chill the waters around them, making it incredibly difficult for prey to survive.

GOLDPEBBLE

CREATURE 5

LARGE **AQUATIC** **BEAST**

Perception +9; darkvision, low-light vision, wavesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +12 (+16 to Swim), Stealth +13

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

HP 90; **Weaknesses** electricity 5; **Resistances** cold 5

Speed 25 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +15, **Damage** 1d8+5 piercing plus 1d8 cold and pebblefang poison

Melee ♦ tail +13 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning plus Grab

Chilling Currents ♦♦ A goldpebble can cause the temperature of all water within a 30-foot emanation centered on itself to plummet for 1 minute. Any creature that starts its turn or enters the affected water takes 2d6 cold damage (DC 19 basic Fortitude save).

Pebblefang Poison (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 21 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 cold damage (2 rounds); **Stage 2** 2d6 cold damage (2 rounds); **Stage 3** 2d6 cold damage and drained 1



LAMP BLIGHTER

Lamp blighters are small fey creatures who haunt dark places. With their pronounced fangs, long claws, and faded, torn moth wings, they resemble nightmarish pixies. They rarely exceed 2 feet in height, and their tendency to hover in mid-air at the level of their victim's eyeballs means that few adventurers will encounter a lamp blighter attacking from the ground. They delight in rending eyeballs from sockets and will often string the eyes of their victims into necklaces that they wear with great pride. Occasionally, they recycle the energy taken from snuffed fires into flame-based attacks; since lamp blighters despise light, they typically resort to this move only in desperation.

Long ago, the pixie-like beings that would become lamp blighters inhabited the Universe in peace, delighted to make their homes in nature. As civilizations gradually encroached upon nature, many of these pixies fled to the First World—but some remained. As they witnessed the destruction of the environments they loved, bitterness and malevolence grew in them. Ages passed, and the desire for revenge gnawed their hearts. They put their arrow-sharp teeth to cruel purposes; they used their claws to wicked ends. They came to hate the lights of civilization, both magical and mundane, and turned their minds to the ways that darkness itself might aid them in vengeance. In this way, the first lamp blighters came to be, and thus they remain to this day.

LAMP BLIGHTER

CREATURE 6

SMALL **FEY**

Perception +15; darkvision, low-light vision

Languages Aklo, Common, Fey

Skills Acrobatics +15, Deception +13, Intimidation +13, Nature +13, Stealth +15

Str +1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3 **Cha** +2

Items +1 shortbow (60 arrows)

AC 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +17, **Will** +14; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 75; **Immunities** blinded; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5, fire 5

Speed 15 feet, fly 45 feet

Melee ♦ claw +16 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d4+7 slashing

Ranged ♦ shortbow +17 (deadly d10, magical, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 24, attack +16; **4th** darkness; **3rd** blindness, dispel magic; **2nd** floating flame (×2); **Cantrips (3rd)** detect magic, ignition, prestidigitation, shield

Eye Pluck ♦ (manipulate) **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** The lamp blighter's last action was a successful claw Strike against a creature with eyes; **Effect** The lamp blighter attempts to pluck out one of the required creature's eyes. The target must attempt a DC 21 Fortitude save. On a failure, the target takes 4 persistent bleed damage and is dazzled for 1 round. On a critical failure, the target's eye is also severely damaged, taking a -4 circumstance penalty on all sight-based Perception checks until the target returns to full Hit Points or the wound is otherwise healed (by magic such as *sound body* or *regenerate*). If all a creature's eyes are severely damaged in this way, that creature is blinded for the same duration.

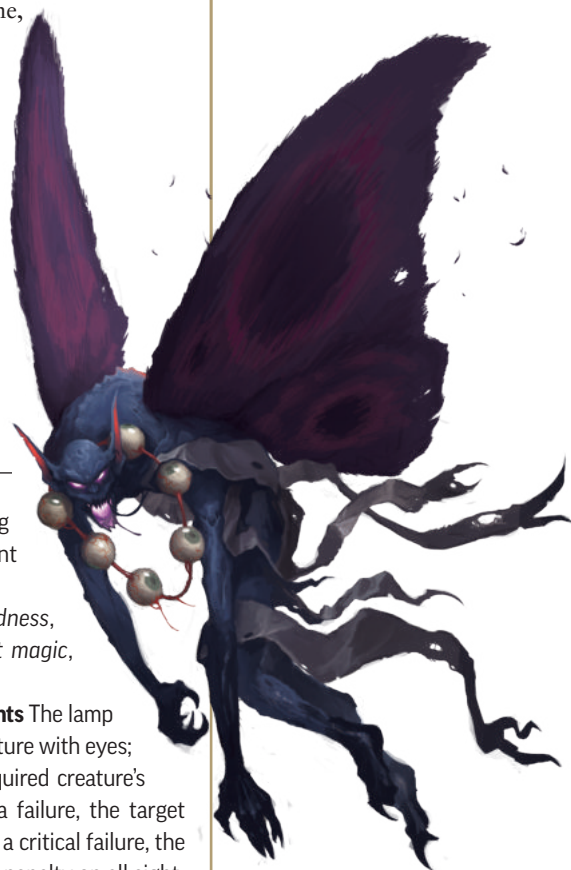
Fear the Darkness ♦♦ (concentrate, emotion, fear, mental, primal) **Requirements** The lamp blighter must be in an area of darkness; **Effect** The lamp blighter evokes the terror of being unable to see in the dark. Each creature within a 20-foot emanation that doesn't have darkvision must succeed at a DC 23 Will save or become frightened 2.

Snuff the Light ♦ (concentrate, fire, primal) The lamp blighter extinguishes light sources in a 10-foot emanation. They extinguish all non-magical light sources automatically and attempt to extinguish magical light sources with a +16 counteract modifier and a counteract rank of 3. If the lamp blighter successfully extinguishes any light, their next successful claw or shortbow Strike deals 1d6 persistent fire damage.



TREACHEROUS TACTICS

While most lamp blighters prefer to lurk in darkness, some occasionally disguise themselves as friendly pixies to lure unsuspecting adventurers into a trap. They usually accomplish this ploy through clever use of shadows, draping their wings across their faces, and exaggerated pantomiming. The illusion is often ruined when a lamp blighter grows frustrated and reveals their fang-filled mouths.



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DEATH RATTLE

A shroudwing relies on ingesting bone fragments from the corpses of its meal to act as gastroliths. Using its beak and razor-sharp claws, it rakes bone into pieces small enough to swallow whole, which help to grind and digest its food. The presence of these swallowed skeletal fragments create the harrowing rattle of the shroudwing's infamous call. Over time, as these bone fragments become smoother with use (and therefore less effective), the shroudwing will vomit up the now nearly polished pieces of bone in exchange for fresher, more jagged ones. To worshippers of Urgathoa, these discarded fragments are prized, collected, and utilized not only for ceremonial purposes, but also more decorative uses, such as jewelry.

SHROUDWING

These unsettling birds are thick-bodied, long-legged creatures standing 4 to 5 feet tall with an 8-foot wingspan. They possess black feathers, clouded white eyes, and a menacing obsidian bill hooked at the tip like a curled claw. Sometimes called soul-eater crows, shroudwing is a carrion feeder known to roam graveyards and sites of collective death, absorbing lingering spirits and consuming the decaying corpses. They can be found digging up grave sites, shoveling the earth and breaking into caskets or tombs with their massive, hooked beaks, as well as lurking at execution sites, burial mounds, or feeding on travelers' corpses left behind on roadsides.

Due to their size, shape, and propensity for burial grounds, it isn't uncommon for a shroudwing to be mistaken for a grieving widow when seen at a distance—only when an unfortunate creature gets close enough does it discover the danger it's in. Though not predatory or outright aggressive, shroudwing is exceptionally territorial; they'll protect and defend both their feeding site as well as their nesting area from anyone who might trespass upon it.

While many might know these unusual birds by name and sight, even more know the shroudwing by sound. When threatened, the shroudwing emits a haunting, fear-inducing death rattle that can be heard for miles. They prefer nesting in covered brush, and their mating season occurs in the winter months. Shroudwing has a particular fondness for the collection of skulls and have been known to decorate nests with them as well as to use them in mating rituals, with the male presenting the female with the freshest and cleanest skull it can find.

SHROUDWING

CREATURE 4

MEDIUM BEAST

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +13

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

AC 20; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +8

HP 60

Speed 20 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ beak +12 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus Knockdown

Melee ♦ talon +12 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing plus grave blight

Death Rattle ♦ (concentrate, emotion, fear, mental) The shroudwing emits a guttural, haunting call that instills a sense of fear almost impossible to shake. Each non-shroudwing creature within a 30-foot emanation must attempt a DC 18 Will save. Regardless of the result, creatures are then temporarily immune to Death Rattle for 1 minute.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is off-guard until the start of the shroudwing's next turn.

Failure The creature is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature is frightened 2.

Grave Blight (disease) **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 1d6 persistent poison damage every hour, sickened 1, and can't reduce the value of the sickened condition while taking persistent poison damage (1 day); **Stage 3** 2d6 persistent poison damage every hour, sickened 2, and can't reduce the value of the sickened condition while taking persistent poison damage (1 day)

Soul Feeding ♦♦ (concentrate, death, divine, manipulate) **Requirements** The shroudwing is adjacent to a dying creature; **Effect** The shroudwing attempts to devour the dying creature's soul. The creature must attempt a DC 18 Will save or their dying condition increases by 1 and the shroudwing regains 2d8 Hit Points.



TORN QUARTET

The guillotine stands as the epitome of capital punishment in Galt. Yet despite its heinous reputation, most citizens consider it a clean and efficient means of political execution—at least, compared to the other options. One such alternative is the practice of drawing and quartering, a method where each of the victim's four limbs is tied to a different horse. The horses are then spurred to run in opposite directions, with agonizing and gruesome results for the condemned. The locus of pain and resentment from such a death has been known to reanimate into an unusual conglomerate monster. Never again quite whole, a torn quartet is simplistic in its desire to mete out violence, usually starting with those responsible for its death.

A torn quartet appears as four floating pieces of a humanoid cadaver, tethered together with ropes of spectral energy that each sport a single limb. One section might include a head, but it's largely nonfunctional. When one section is separated from its fellows, it drops to the ground and thrashes until reunited.

TORN QUARTET

CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +23; **darkvision**

Languages Common, Necril (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +27, Athletics +27

Str +5, **Dex** +8, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

AC 33; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +26, **Will** +23

HP 240, void healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** slashing 10

Bound Limbs A torn quartet ordinarily has four severed limbs tethered to a central point by near-incorporeal ropes. A limb is essentially cut away from the central point and rendered nonfunctional each time the torn quartet loses 60 Hit Points (so at 180 Hit Points, the torn quartet has three functional limbs, at 120 Hit Points, it has two functional limbs, and so on). Each functioning limb can Grapple separate creatures within reach, or multiple functioning limbs can Grapple the same creature; for each additional limb used to Grapple a creature, the Escape DC increases by 2.

Replacement Parts A torn quartet can spend 1 minute tearing apart the corpse of a humanoid creature that was killed within the last hour to regain 60 Hit Points and restore one of its nonfunctioning limbs. A torn quartet can't have more than four limbs.

Split Reactions A torn quartet has a number of reactions per round equal to its number of still-functioning limbs, which it can use only to make Reactive Strikes. It can't use more than 1 reaction on the same triggering action, even if a creature leaves several squares within its reach, and the torn quartet must use a different limb for each Reactive Strike it makes. Whenever one of the torn quartet's limbs is rendered nonfunctional, the torn quartet loses one of its reactions.

Reactive Strike ➤ See Split Reactions.

Speed 10 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ limb +25 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+13 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Flurry of Limbs ♦♦ The torn quartet makes a number of limb Strikes up to its number of functioning limbs, each against a different target. These attacks count toward the torn quartet's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after the torn quartet makes all its attacks.

Tear Asunder ♦ **Requirements** The torn quartet has a creature grappled or restrained by at least two limbs; **Effect** The creature takes 5d6 slashing damage for each limb currently grabbing or restraining it (maximum 15d6), with a DC 30 basic Fortitude save. On a critical failure, the creature also loses a random body part, and one of the torn quartet's limbs is now no longer grabbing or restraining it.



DEATHLY MASSES

The horrid execution method isn't exclusively reserved for individuals. In some cases, multiple people are drawn and quartered simultaneously. There are accounts of these group executions resulting in multiple torn quartets at once. Rather than function as individual undead, the quartets amass together, sharing limbs as a single, massive creature. These torn mobs are particularly powerful and capable of dozens of attacks at once.



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DRACONIC HERITAGE

During the time of the Dragon Plague (3660–3672 AR), Taldor faced intense attacks by multitudes of frenzied dragons. The areas between northern Taldor and the Verduran Forest were the most heavily impacted by these attacks. The region became brutal in its attempts to slay all dragons, leading to a near extinction of drakes and dragons across Taldor. This change in the ecosystem, in the years before the reappearance of dragons, led to the evolution of vorvoraks. Magic infused into the ecosystem caused vorvoraks to evolve from crocodiles native to the region and gave the species their unique magical abilities.

VORVORAK

Those trespassing on abandoned canals might come face-to-face with a vorvorak, a large creature that resembles a dragon or crocodile. These territorial beasts keep hoards that they disguise with magical illusions, using their natural talent for spellcasting. Often mistaken for dragons, vorvoraks are commonly referred to as canal dragons or mud dragons. However, they aren't truly related to dragons but rather evolved from local crocodiles and exposure to innate magic in the region of Taldor.

Vorvoraks are solitary creatures, preferring to hunt in the early morning or early evening. In general, vorvoraks make their lairs in areas with some submersion. Such places let them hide their hordes and use their brown, mossy bodies as a natural form of stealth. Due to their evolution and magical contamination, vorvoraks have limited innate magical abilities, allowing them to control the water around them and infuse it with their own poisonous bile.

All vorvoraks share a common trait: hoarding treasure. Many fill their lairs with coins, gems, and anything shiny they take from their victims, with some older hoards containing relics of the surrounding imperial nations. The condition of the items is of no importance to the vorvoraks; a hoard is just as likely to contain junk as items of true value.

A fully grown vorvorak is around 24 feet long and weighs approximately 3,000 pounds, with muddy brown scales, a serpentine neck, and hard fins on their back that resemble wings.

VORVORAK

CREATURE 10

HUGE BEAST

Perception +19; darkvision, low-light vision


Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +22, Intimidation +19, Stealth +15 (+19 when submerged in mud or water)


Str +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2


AC 29; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16; +2 status vs. fear effects


HP 200; **Immunities** poison; **Weaknesses** cold 10


Sweeping Tail  **Trigger** A creature within reach of the vorvorak's tail uses a move action or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** The vorvorak attempts a tail Strike against the triggering creature. If the attack is a critical hit, the vorvorak disrupts the action.

Speed 40 feet, climb 30 feet, swim 30 feet; canal walker

Melee  jaws +23, **Damage** 2d4+13 piercing

Melee  claw +21 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+13 slashing

Melee  tail +21 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d6+13 bludgeoning

Ranged  spit +17 (range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d12+6 acid plus vorvorak bile

Primal Innate Spells DC 26; **5th** *control water*; **4th** *hydraulic torrent*, *mirage*; **3rd** *aqueous orb*, *slow*; **2nd** *mist*, *vanishing tracks*

Canal Walker A vorvorak ignores difficult terrain caused by swamp terrain features.

Vorvorak Bile (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 28

Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds;

Stage 1 2d8 poison and sickened 1 (2 rounds); **Stage 2** 3d8 poison and sickened 2 (2 rounds); **Stage 3** 4d8 poison and sickened 3 (2 rounds)



WALCOFINDE

Forever entombed, walcofindes are vengeful undead creatures inhabiting the enclosed spaces in which they were sealed and eventually perished. As they ultimately succumbed to a slow death by starvation and suffocation, walcofindes are similar to zombies in their hunger and rage. What sets them apart are their vicious claws of stone-sharpened bone, protruding through worn down, fleshless fingers as a result of desperate and futile attempts to escape.

Walcofindes are bound to their death site. These “wall-coffined” undead can manifest their forms within the structure where they were sealed, possessing the walls and stealthily traversing along them. Walcofindes’ manifestations adopt the patterned appearance of the structure’s materials, but not its physical properties. They take the form of hungry, grasping humanoid torsos emerging from the walls like harrowing extensions of their eternal prison. Unable to ever fully leave their structures, these undead are destined to be a part of it forever.

Despite their decaying forms, walcofindes retain the intelligence they would’ve had in life; for example, a walcofinde who was previously a soldier could understand enemy tactics and assess the appearance and equipment of their foes, allowing them to strategize and prioritize targets as well as organize with other nearby walcofindes to formulate an attack.

WALCOFINDE

MEDIUM UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +5; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +11

Str +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

AC 17; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

HP 35, void healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, sleep, unconscious; **Weaknesses** vitality 5

Speed 25 feet; Wall Glide

Melee ♦ claw +9 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+3 slashing plus Grab

Sneak Attack A walcofinde deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to off-guard creatures.

Structural Possession ♦ (manipulate, morph) A walcofinde can merge themselves with any wall they can touch within their sealed chamber and can create a manifestation of themselves through any part of that wall on either side within 100 feet. This manifestation appears as the rotting upper half of the walcofinde protruding from the wall, but their skin is patterned as if they were the same structural material as the wall they’re emerging from. While manifested, the walcofinde’s claw attack gains a reach of 10 feet, but they can move only by using Wall Glide. Any damage done to the manifestation affects the walcofinde themselves. A walcofinde can Dismiss their structural possession to retreat back into their sealed chamber.

Wall Blend ♦ (concentrate) **Requirements** The walcofinde is manifested using Structural Possession and isn’t observed by any enemies; **Effect** Until the next time they act, the walcofinde’s manifestation changes their visual appearance to match the surrounding wall. They have an automatic result of 31 on their Stealth checks to Hide.

Wall Glide (concentrate) ♦ to ♦♦ **Requirements** The walcofinde is manifested using Structural Possession; **Effect** The walcofinde’s manifestation Strides, submerging into the wall and reemerging from the wall at the end of their movement. If the walcofinde takes 2 actions to Wall Glide, their manifestation can Stride twice before reemerging. In either case, they can move only within walls that are within 100 feet of their sealed chamber.



ETERNAL GUARDIAN

While many know immurement to be a slow and horrible form of punishment, there are other accounts of this process being used in cultural or divine rites. Those buried alive were sometimes a knowing sacrifice to bestow a structure with strength, bless its construction, or become its undead guardian. Rising as a walcofinde, depending on the circumstance, could be considered an honor, a gift from the gods that enables a creature to continue strengthening or defending a site even after death. While humans are commonly practitioners of this rite, dwarves and halflings have historically participated as well.



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This appendix contains brief explanations and page references for the content presented in this book, including new rules, locations, deities, and organizations. New rules content is marked with an asterisk (*).

Abadar God of cities, law, and wealth. Known as the Master of the First Vault. *Divine Mysteries* 34–37

Absalom The largest city in the Inner Sea region, Absalom was founded by Aroden and is located on Starstone Isle.

Age of Anguish The age ranging from –4294 AR to –3502 AR taking place after the dust from Earthfall had settled. The age was full of conflict as the peoples of Golarion struggled to rebuild and survive.

Age of Creation The age in which Golarion came to be, before the emergence of mortals.

Age of Darkness The age following Earthfall, ranging from –5293 AR to –4294 AR.

Age of Destiny The age ranging from –3502 AR to 1 AR during which many of Golarion's civilizations became well-established and flourished.

Age of Enthronement The age ranging from 1 AR to 4606 AR kicked off by the god Aroden when he raised the *Starstone* from the Inner Sea and founded Absalom. The age was characterized by the expansion of nations and the ascension of several new deities.

Age of Legend The age of humans and other mortals taking place after the Age of Serpents and before Earthfall. The age is characterized by the prominence of ancient empires like the Azlanti Empire.

Age of Lost Omens The age brought about by the death of Aroden, ranging from 4606 AR to the modern day.

Age of Serpents The age in which the first mortals came to be on Golarion taking place sometime after the Age of Creation. Characterized by the serpentfolk empire, the first of Golarion's great empires.

aiudara Powerful gates created by elves to allow travel across great distances. Also known as elf gates.

Aiudeen This major elven ethnic group lives mostly in Kyonin.

Akiton Fourth planet from the sun known as the Red Planet.

Alijæe One of the three subgroups that make up the Mualijæe elves, Alijæe live in the northern Mwangi Expanse. *The Mwangi Expanse* 32–41

Alkenstar A city-state located in the central Mana Wastes. The city is known for unique technologies, including firearms.

ancestry feats* 148

Andoran A relatively young nation in southern Avistan known for its adherence to democracy and personal freedom.

aphorite A type of nephilim with connections to Axis, the Plane of Law. *War of Immortals* 52

Arcadia One of Golarion's continents, lying west of the Inner Sea region past the ruins of Azlant.

archetype* 50–51, 74–75, 76–77, 146–147, 170–171, 172

archetype artifact* 124–125

archetype feats* 98, 122–123

Aroden God of humanity, innovation, history, culture, and fulfillment of destiny. Known as the Last Azlanti. Now deceased.

Asmodeus God of contracts, oppression, pride, and tyranny. Known as the Prince of Darkness. *Divine Mysteries* 42–45

Aspis Consortium A prominent trade organization that spans the Inner Sea region and often opposes the Pathfinder Society. Known for its unscrupulous practices. *Character Guide* 65

Aucturn Eleventh planet from the sun known as the Stranger.

Avistan One of Golarion's continents. It makes up the northern half of the Inner Sea region.

Axis A massive planar city that's known for its adherence to law and home to the monitors known as aeons. *GM Core* 179

azarketi Amphibious humanoids who live among the seas of the Inner Sea region, said to have descended from the people of Azlant. *Ancestry Guide* 12–15

Azlant One of the greatest nations during the Age of Legend. The empire was destroyed during Earthfall, and its ruins remain as islands in the Arcadian Ocean.

Belkzen A region in northwestern Avistan. Known as the home of several orc clans.

bestiary* 175–187

Bleaching A process brought on by ennui that decolors and ages a gnome, typically culminating in the gnome's death.

Boneyard A plane where the souls of the dead travel in the afterlife. Home to the monitors known as psychopomps. *GM Core* 179

Brevoy A nation in northeastern Avistan. Known for its political uncertainty.

Broken Lands The Broken Lands are a region in northeastern Avistan consisting of Brevoy, the Lake of Mists and Veils, Mendev, Numeria, Razmiran, the River Kingdoms, and the Sarkoris Scar.

Calistria God of lust, revenge, and trickery. Known as the Savored Sting. *Divine Mysteries* 46–49

Casmaron One of Golarion's continents. Located immediately east of the Inner Sea region.

Cayden Cailean God of ale, bravery, freedom, and wine. Also known as the Accidental God. *Divine Mysteries* 50–53

Cheliox A nation in southwest Avistan. Known for its ties to diabolic rule.

companions* 77, 99–100, 123

conrasu A people who are made of cosmic force given consciousness and housed within unique exoskeletons. *The Mwangi Expanse* 106–109

Darklands The immense area of caverns, vaults, and passages beneath the surface of Golarion.

Desna God of dreams, luck, stars, and travelers. Known as the Song of the Spheres. *Divine Mysteries* 54–57

Droskar The dwarven god of cheating, exploitation, and toil. Known as the Dark Smith.

Druma A nation in southern central Avistan. Known for its prominent trade and great wealth.

Earthfall A cataclysmic event in –5293 AR, in which a rain of meteorites fell upon Golarion and caused massive destruction.

Eldest A group of deities who keep their attention on the First World.

Elemental Planes A set of planes located within the Inner Sphere that surround the Universe. These include the planes of air, earth, fire, and water.

Elysium A plane full of unbound wilderness and home to the celestials known as azatas. *GM Core* 179

Empyrean Lords Powerful celestial beings, demigods, and gods. *Divine Mysteries* 192–199

Erastil God of family, farming, hunting, and trade. Known as Old Deadeye. *Divine Mysteries* 58–61

Eye of Dread The region in central Avistan consisting of the Gravelands, Lake Encarthan, Molthune, Nirmathas, Oprak, and Ustalav.

familiars* 99–100

Findeladlara Goddess of architecture, art, and twilight. Known as the Guiding Hand.

Firebrands A rebellious organization known for its members' daredevil acts and resistance against oppression. *Firebrands*

First World A plane that overlaps the mortal Universe and is said to be a "rough draft" of existence. It is home to vibrant landscapes and fey. *GM Core* 177

Five Kings Mountains A region in southeast Avistan considered the center of dwarven civilization in the Inner Sea region.

Galt A nation in eastern Avistan. Known as a land of constant political upheaval and revolution.

ganzi A nephilim with connections to the chaotic plane of the Maelstrom. *War of Immortals* 52

Garund One of Golarion's continents. Its northern portion makes up the southern half of the Inner Sea region.

gear* 172–173

Geb A nation in eastern Garund that's a haven for undead. *World Guide* 76–77

geniekin An umbrella term for planar scions descended from beings from the Elemental Planes. *Ancestry Guide* 98–119

Golarion Golarion is the most important world in the Lost Omens campaign setting.

Gorum God of battle, strength, and weapons. Known as Our Lord in Iron. Now deceased.

Gozreh God of nature, the sea, and weather. Known as the Wind and the Waves. *Divine Mysteries* 62–65

Gravelands The region in central Avistan formerly known as Lastwall. A land where undead and other horrors roam.

Green Faith A philosophy that proclaims natural forces are worthy of attention and respect. *Divine Mysteries* 246

Hallit The language of the Kellid people of the far north.

Hellknights A set of knightly orders with a strict focus on enforcing law and order. *Character Guide* 76–85

House Thrune Thrune is the ruling noble house of Cheliax.

Impossible Lands The region in eastern Garund that consists of Bophan, Geb, Jalmeray, the Mana Wastes, and Nex. *Impossible Lands*

Inner Sea This sea cradled between Avistan and Garund was created by the reshaping of the region during Earthfall.

Inner Sea region The collective name for the continent of Avistan and the northern portion of Garund, surrounding the Inner Sea.

Iomedae God of honor, justice, rulership, and valor. Known as the Inheritor. *Divine Mysteries* 66–69

Irori God of history, knowledge, and self-perfection. Known as the Master of Masters. *Divine Mysteries* 70–73

Irrisen This nation in northwestern Avistan is known for its constant winter and its rule by winter witches.

Isgar This nation in southern central Avistan is a vassal of Cheliax and home to several goblin clans.

Isle of Terror A small island in the center of Lake Encarthan that serves as the Whispering Tyrant's center of operations. It's racked with terrible storms and home to undead horrors.

Jaidi Ancient Azlanti goddess of agriculture, hard work, and self-sufficiency. Known as the Blessing and Bounty. *Divine Mysteries* 177

kitsune Shapeshifting humanoids whose true forms resemble foxes. *Ancestry Guide* 120–125

Kols Dwarven god of duty, honor, and promises. Known as the Oath-Keeper. *HIGHHELM* 121

Kraggodan A dwarven Sky Citadel located in the southern Mindspin Mountains in Nirmathas.

Kyonin A nation in central Avistan. Known as the center of elven culture in Avistan.

Lake Encarthan A large lake located in central Avistan, Encarthan is used to facilitate trade throughout the region.

Lamashtu God of aberrance, monsters, and nightmares. Known as the Mother of Monsters. *Divine Mysteries* 74–77

Lastwall A destroyed nation that was founded to watch over Gallowspire, the former prison of the lich Tar-Baphon.

Lion Blades A secretive group of spies, the Lion Blades defend Taldor and its interests from enemies. 170–171

magic items* 52–53, 100–101, 124, 149, 172–173

Mendev This nation located in northeastern Avistan is a launching point for crusades against the demons of the Sarkoris Scar.

Milani God of devotion, hope, and uprisings. Known as the Everbloom. *Divine Mysteries* 151

Minkai A large empire located in eastern Tian Xia. Known for its recently quelled civil instability.

Molthune This nation in central Avistan is dominated by its military and is at war with Nirmathas.

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Mualijae A major elven ethnic group consisting of three subgroups, Mualijae live in the Mwangi Expanse. *The Mwangi Expanse* 32–61

Mwangi Expanse This area in northern central Garund consists of most of the regions in and around the Mwangi Jungle, including the nation of Vidrian. *The Mwangi Expanse*

Necril The language of ghouls and other intelligent undead.

Nethys God of magic. Known as the All-Seeing Eye. *Divine Mysteries* 78–81

Nidal This nation along the southwest coast of Avistan is watched over by Zon-Kuthon.

Nirmathas A nation located in central Avistan, Nirmathas is known for its vast wilderness and war with Molthune.

Norgorber God of greed, murder, poison, and secrets. Known as the Reaper of Reputation. *Divine Mysteries* 82–85

Osirion A nation in northeastern Garund, Osirion boasts countless tombs and temples from the great empire of Ancient Osirion.

pantheon* 23

Pathfinder Society A globe-trotting organization dedicated to exploration and the reclamation of lost relics. *Pathfinder Society Guide*

Pharasma God of birth, death, fate, prophecy, and time. Known as the Lady of Graves. *Divine Mysteries* 86–89

Prophecies of Kalistrade A philosophy dedicated to achieving wealth through deliberate conduct.

psychopomp A family of monitors spawned within the Boneyard to convey souls to the Outer Planes. *Monster Core* 274–277

Qadira A nation located in southeast Avistan, Qadira is the westernmost satrapy of the great Padishah Empire of Kelesh.

Ragathiel Empyrean lord of chivalry, duty, and vengeance. Known as the General of Vengeance. *Divine Mysteries* 197

Ravounel This young nation in southwest Avistan is known for its successful uprising against Chelax and continued push for individual freedoms.

Razmir God of law, luxury, obedience, and the nation of Razmiran. Known as the Living God. *Divine Mysteries* 156

Razmiran A nation located in central Avistan. Known as the home of Razmir and his church.

River Kingdoms This region in northeast Avistan is made up of dozens of small kingdoms struggling for dominance.

Rovagug God of destruction, disaster, and wrath. Known as the Rough Beast. *Divine Mysteries* 90–93

Runelord A powerful wizard who ruled in ancient Thassilon or a modern wizard practiced in ancient runelord teachings. Each runelord is tied to an aspect of sin magic. *Rival Academies* 114–119

Sarenrae God of healing, honesty, redemption, and the sun. Known as the Dawnflower. *Divine Mysteries* 94–97

Sellen River A major river that flows through the Broken Lands and Shining Kingdoms regions.

serpentfolk A family of serpentine humanoids. Also known as sekmins. *Monster Core* 302–305

Shackles A collection of islands off the western coast of Garund, the Shackles are known for rampant piracy.

Shelyn God of art, beauty, love, and music. Known as the Eternal Rose. *Divine Mysteries* 98–101

Shining Kingdoms The region in southeast Avistan consisting of Andoran, Druma, the Five Kings Mountains, Galt, Kyonin, and Taldor.

Silver Ravens This rebel group helped liberate the city of Kintargo and establish the nation of Ravounel. *Character Guide* 66

skill feats* 53

spells* 53, 98–99, 148–149

Starstone A unique gemstone that crashed to Golarion during Earthfall. It was eventually raised by Aroden and placed within the Starstone Cathedral in Absalom. Mortals can attempt to ascend to godhood by reaching the stone and taking the Test of the Starstone.

Starstone Isle Another name for Kortos.

Taldor A nation located in southeast Avistan. This empire in decline seeks to reclaim former glory.

Tar-Baphon A necromancer killed by Aroden, Tar-Baphon rose again as the lich-king known as the Whispering Tyrant; he threatened the Inner Sea region for centuries before being imprisoned. In 4719 AR, he broke free to terrorize the region once more.

Thuvia A nation located in north-central Garund, Thuvia is known for its production of the sun orchid elixir.

Tian This group of human ethnicities originally hailed from the nations of Tian Xia, and its members are common along major Avistani trade routes, including the Crown of the World.

Tian Xia One of Golarion's continents. Located far to the east of the Inner Sea region, past Casmaron.

Torag God of the forge, protection, and strategy. Known as the Father of Creation. *Divine Mysteries* 102–105

Treerazer A powerful demon lord banished to Tanglebriar, a swamp in Southern Kyonin. Known as the Lord of the Blasted Tarn. Now deceased. *Divine Mysteries* 159

Ulfen This human ethnicity is common in the northern reaches of Avistan.

undine A type of geniekin descended from a being from the Plane of Water. *Ancestry Guide* 116–119

Urgathoa God of disease, gluttony, and undeath. Known as the Pallid Princess. *Divine Mysteries* 106–109

Usaro This city is in the central Mwangi Jungle.

Ustalav A nation located in northern central Avistan. Countless terrors roam the region.

Verduran Forest This large forest is in southeast Avistan, nestled between Andoran, Galt, and Taldor.

Whispering Tyrant Another name for the lich Tar-Baphon.

wizard school* 148

Worldwound An enormous rift that opened in the nation of Sarkoris, allowing the demonic hordes of the Outer Rifts to spill forth and destroy the region. It has since been closed, and the demon-blighted land is now known as the Sarkoris Scar.

Zon-Kuthon God of darkness, envy, loss, and pain. Known as the Midnight Lord. *Divine Mysteries* 110–113

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Oh, dear, oh, dear, I wish I had never seen that filthy sword at all.



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